

GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD

10.00am 14 JULY 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Humphreys (Chair) Ash-Edwards, Lamb, Nicholson, Mac Cafferty, Parkin, Platts and Walsh

Business Partners: Trevor Beattie, Clare Mason, Dean Orgill, Andrew Swayne, Caroline Wood

PART ONE

1 RATIFICATION OF CHAIR

1.1 John Peel read the following statement:

“At its meeting on 21 April 2020, the Board agreed to a number of recommendations as to its Operating Principles, one being the process by which the Chair of the Board would be nominated for the 2020/21 term. Since the previous meeting, a confidential nomination and voting process was undertaken in accordance with that agreement Councillor Humphreys was nominated by fellow Board Members to the role of Chair of the Board for the 2020/21 municipal year”.

1.2 The Board unanimously agreed to appoint Councillor Humphreys as Chair of the Board for the 2020/21 municipal year.

2 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

2a Declarations of substitutes

2.1 Caroline Wood was present as substitute for Henry Powell.

2b Declarations of interests

2.2 Andrew Swayne declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chairman as Ricardo as one of their workstreams was referenced on the agenda.

2c Exclusion of the press and public

2.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Board considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the

business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

2.4 **RESOLVED-** That the press and public not be excluded.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as the correct record.

4 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 “The Board is focussed on supporting the region through the COVID 19 pandemic and has commissioned analysis from Hatch to identify what the key issues are and what support the Board can offer. The Board welcomes the financial support from national government to businesses, employees and specific sectors, but will continue to lobby for help where it is most needed to support the region’s businesses, residents and communities and make sure the levelling up is happening here, in our region. As lockdown measures ease, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank partners for all they are doing to open the city region economy in a safe and sustainable way, supporting social distancing measures and allowing businesses to re-open. I would like to thank the highways authorities for the short-term changes made to road layouts to support changes to the way people travel and use public spaces safely and effectively. I would particularly like to thank local authority partners for all their work in administering the government’s support grants to businesses. The government set out a package of measures to support businesses including small business grant funding and grant funding for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses. The local authorities in our region have awarded over £200 million to over 15,000 eligible businesses and are now working on discretionary grants to support other businesses most in need at this critical time.

“Network Rail are undertaking the second stage of their consultation on the Brighton Mainline Upgrade proposals, which include the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme As outlined in our Five-Year priorities, this part of the transport network is vitally important to the prosperity of our region and the Board are keen to see these essential improvements taken forward with urgency. Network Rail are holding a consultation event with Board Members on Wednesday 29th July at 10am via Zoom. The Greater Brighton Support Team will also be preparing a formal response from the Board to the consultation.

“On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Nick Juba for his contribution to the Board since its inception. Nick is stepping down as CEO of GBMet at the end of the August so this will be his last meeting”.

5 GREATER BRIGHTON COVID 19 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that presented the economic, social and health impacts of COVID-19 to the Greater Brighton region and initial recommendations towards co-ordinating sustainable recovery at a City Region level.

- 5.2 Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the pandemic would undoubtedly have very serious impacts however, he believed there were reasons to have optimism. The Institute for Public Policy Research had estimated that a drive to insulate homes and fit low carbon heating could create 1.6 million jobs and the LGA had estimated that a low-carbon and renewable energy economy could create nearly 700 jobs by 2030. Councillor Mac Cafferty explained that brave steps taken by the Greater Brighton region in changing the focus of the economy could enhance the economy for the long-term.
- 5.3 Councillor Nicholson stated that many businesses were very close to cashflow difficulties and there may be opportunity for the Region to use its financial power to establish a regional public bank to support businesses. Councillor Nicholson observed that the food and hospitality sectors were two of those that would suffer the highest impact of the pandemic and an economic plan was perhaps needed for those sectors.
- 5.4 Councillor Platts stated that she was very concerned for employment prospects for young people. The Greater Brighton region had, through its colleges and universities an opportunity to train people to become experts in emerging fields and by working together, that could be achieved.
- 5.5 Andrew Swayne stated that the region needed to act at speed to respond to the pandemic and its impacts and that would include such matters as accelerating the water and energy plans.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED-**
- 1) That the Board note the high-level findings of the report on the economy of the region, the sector analysis and the review of the Board's Five-Year priorities and recommendations in light of the impact of COVID 19.
 - 2) That the Board agree that an Action Plan against the recommendations is brought the Board at the next meeting in October, following engagement with the Board and partners.

6 COAST TO CAPITAL UPDATE

- 6.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that set out ten projects shortlisted by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government (DCCLG) following a call from the Secretary of State for projects that could help LEPs to stimulate post-crisis economic recovery at a local level. The report detailed thirty further projects that had not been shortlisted but were proposed to be added to the Greater Brighton Investment Programme pipeline.
- 6.2 Councillor Platts asked if adaptations were required to the Local Industrial Strategy in order to better align it with current matters.
- 6.3 Jonathan Sharrock clarified that the LEP were working with Hatch to update their extensive data on the region to reflect the economic impact of the pandemic.

- 6.4 Councillor Walsh asked when it was likely that decisions on the projects submitted would be known.
- 6.5 Jonathan Sharrock replied that a definite date was not currently known but it was hoped a response would be received by the end of government recess.
- 6.6 Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the pandemic had exposed a structural weakness in that the region may be over reliant on the expansion of Gatwick Airport and that it was perhaps time to reassess priorities and focus.

6.7 **RESOLVED-**

1. That the Board acknowledges the importance of the shortlisted projects outlined in paragraph 3.4 and 3.5 and supports these projects going forwards.
2. That these new projects be added to the Greater Brighton Project Pipeline.
3. That the Board also agrees that the projects in Appendix 1 should also be added to the pipeline of Greater Brighton projects.

7 GREATER BRIGHTON PLACE NARRATIVE & INWARD INVESTMENT

- 7.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that outlined the basis behind the city region's place narrative, how this was key to attracting investment and the preferred approach to securing inward investment through the utilising of existing resource and the establishment of a pro-active desk. The report was commissioned at the request of the Board at its meeting in November 2019.
- 7.2 Councillor Lamb stated that it was imperative that the Board monitor asks and there was no clear grasp of what the Board was collectively delivering. Councillor Lamb stated that strategies developed and approved must lead to outcomes.
- 7.3 Councillor Nicholson agreed and stated that it was important to establish ground rules and red lines. Councillor Nicholson noted that the Board had available resources and could use them in the short-term.
- 7.4 Councillor Lamb stated that he did not feel it was viable to allocate further resource to something that wasn't working. Councillor Lamb suggested the Board could consider delegation of specific areas to each Board Member to focus upon and deliver. Councillor Lamb highlighted that Crawley Borough Council were not currently receiving the economic benefit of being a member of the Board.
- 7.5 The Chair noted that there was no request for further financial commitment recommended within the report and delegation was certainly something that could be considered.
- 7.6 **RESOLVED-**

- 1) That the Board recognise and accept that post-Brexit and post-COVID, the role of place narrative and inward investment is key to Greater Brighton's recovery and future growth and approve the overall direction of the narrative and proposed approach towards inward investment.
- 2) That partners agree that a level of funding is required for an Inward Investment Desk service. The report suggests that the minimum level of funding for an efficient service is £250,000 per year, although there are options beneath this. The Board agrees that work should commence to identify the most appropriate potential sources for this funding, including Local Enterprise Partnership and national government funding, to resource the desk from 2021/22.
- 3) That the current team utilise existing resource to continue to develop and deliver elements of the plan, where possible, and report back on progress at the end of 2020 the work undertaken to date.

8 GREATER BRIGHTON INFRASTRUCTURE PANEL UPDATE - ENERGY AND WATER PLANS

5.1. RESOLVED-

- 1) That the final Energy and Water Plan documents, which are based on detailed research, modelling and stakeholder engagement, are approved by the Board.
- 2) That the Board supports the projects arising from the plans and is committed to securing funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and National Government and supporting delivery.
- 3) That the Board notes that progress with the projects are reported back on an annual basis (with any exceptional items being raised on an ad-hoc basis)
- 4) That the Board supports the Greater Brighton 10 pledges and film as part of a communications package to raise the profile of the work planned and commits to the launch and the signing of the pledges at the next Board meeting in October.
- 5) That the Board agreed that the Greater Brighton Infrastructure panel continues, both to oversee implementation of the Energy and Water Plans (via the working groups) and to consider other Infrastructure areas.
- 6) That the Board agrees that the Greater Brighton Energy Group (*and Water Group if wished*) continues to implement and deliver the Energy Plan, including potential development of collaborative multi-stakeholder projects, a Local Energy Fund, and a special purpose delivery partnership

9 GREATER BRIGHTON INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 9.1 **RESOLVED-** That the Board note the report and the Investment Programme Update at Appendix 1.

The meeting concluded at 12.15pm

