

REPORT TITLE	UPDATE ON LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DEVELOPMENTS
REPORT OF	ROSE BOYLAN, POLICY & STRATEGY MANAGER

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out a brief overview of latest developments at the Liverpool City Region (LCR), including activity underway to implement the City Region devolution deal.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Committee is requested to note and comment on latest developments.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

Committee have requested regular updates and consideration of City Region developments.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 N/a

3.0 LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

A wide range of activity continues, of which the following is just a small extract. This includes the portfolios of Economic Growth and Culture which Wirral has the lead for.

The focus for these portfolios is to:

- a) Develop a world class Cultural offer;
- b) Promote growth through key growth sectors -
 - Advanced Manufacturing*
 - Digital & Creative*
 - Financial & Professional*
 - Health & Life Sciences*
 - Low Carbon Energy*
 - Maritime and Logistics*
 - Visitor Economy*
- c) Maximise investment through investors and developers;
- d) Promote development of strategic sites and infrastructure;
- e) Support economic growth through the Single Investment Fund;
- f) Develop an industrial Strategy for LCR - Government is producing a National Industrial Strategy which aims to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole country for post-Brexit Britain.

In coming months, the City Region will produce an Industrial Strategy which will align to the 10 Pillars that underpin the National Strategy:

- Investing in Science, Research and innovation
- Developing skills
- Upgrading infrastructure
- Support business to start and grow
- Improve procurement
- Encourage trade and inward investment
- Deliver affordable energy and clean growth
- Cultivate world leading sector to build our competitive advantage
- Drive growth across the whole country
- Create the right institutions to bring together sectors and places

3.2. LCR Skills Strategy

- a) Work is currently underway to produce a business-led skills Strategy for the City Region. The economic performance of the LCR has significantly

improved in recent years, as noted in the Single Growth Strategy. However we know that improving and increasing the right skills, to the right levels, in the right way and developing the existing talent in the City Region is essential for sustainable growth.

- b) In addition, a strong strategy is required to inform funding of the devolved Adult Education Budget, which will take place from 2019/20. This will enable the Combined Authority to commission specific activity and provision based upon locally determined strategic priorities (and need). Government have confirmed that the Strategy needs to be in place by March 2018, and in recent months work has been underway to produce a draft Strategy for consultation which was recently agreed by the Combined Authority.
- c) The draft Strategy has been developed in a participative approach with a wide variety of stakeholders and interested parties involved, including:
- insight from the LCR Employer Skills Survey, with input from 1,856 employers taking place in 2017. It was supplemented by a range of focus groups and inputs from employers on a series of subjects included Advanced Manufacturing and Apprenticeships.
 - Input from 60 senior stakeholders through 1:1 interviews and group discussions (including Metro Mayor, Combined Authority Portfolio Leads, Employment and Skills Board, Council Lead Officers, Directors of Children's Services, Chair and Managing Director of Local Enterprise Partnership, LEP Sector Managers, Senior Business Leaders, Senior Leaders of College and Independent Training Providers);
 - Attendance of 60 people at 4 workshops to design the overall strategy and approach; and
 - Input from 50 businesses on the proposed actions at a targeted consultation as part of the LEP's Insight Programme.
- d) Draft Skills Priorities
- Productivity in key sectors has improved but the scale is not yet sufficient to pull the LCR up to regional and national averages. There are strong opportunities for further growth and for activity to scale up;
 - Employment and skills levels have improved: the overall employment rate is up, unemployment is down and skills levels have improved, but there remains an overall attainment gap as well as some differences for particular groups;
 - The attainment of Level 2 GCSE qualifications of 16 year olds in the City Region has not closed the gap to national rates: this means that young people spend the time between 16 and 19 gaining these qualifications rather than developing the Level 3 technical skills that employers value;
 - A number of specific gaps still remain (eg fewer females, black and minority ethnic people and people with a disability in work). Not all areas of groups in the local population have been able to participate in the successes of the best;
 - Overall wage rates have not improved significantly and the LCR lags national rates in its productivity levels when measured by GVA per hour worked. The number of residents in employment is too low to close the overall productivity gap with England as a whole;
 - There are significant and multiple challenges in relation to economic inactivity and particularly in receipt of sickness benefits;

- Employers are finding it harder to recruit skilled people and there are specific skills gaps in a number of key growth sectors, including Digital, Construction and Manufacturing.

This final phase of consultation on the Strategy has been running from 8th December 2017 to 15th January 2018, and the revised Skills Strategy and Action Plan will be presented to the Combined Authority on 2nd February 2018 for approval.

3.3. Creation of the Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board

One of the Metro Mayor's election pledges was to establish the LCR Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board, to *"give a voice to all disadvantaged and marginalised groups and bring together representatives from the social economy, faith and community groups, large and small businesses, trades unions and young people"*

There is a political commitment to ensuring 'inclusive growth' at both a national and local level. Establishing the Advisory Board provides an innovative fairness and social justice input to Combined Authority policy making, to ensure inclusive growth benefit are pro-actively considered as part of the decision making and policy development process.

Lynn Collins, Regional Secretary of the TUC, has been appointed as the first independent chair of the Advisory Board, and an initial membership is currently being established. The Advisory Board is intended to reflect the following perspectives and to ensure that there are members drawn from each of the six local authority areas within the City Region:

1. Disability
2. LGBT+
3. Black and minority ethnic communities
4. Gender
5. Young people
6. Senior citizens
7. Social economy
8. Trade Unions
9. Business
10. Faith communities
11. Poverty

3.4. Conclusion

Further updates on all of the above will be brought back to this Committee as the detail emerges in coming months. As previously stated, the above is just a short snapshot of LCR activity, and further detail on all of the most recent developments can be found here <http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/>

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Devolution arrangements propose the devolution of financial resources to the City Region.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/a

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

At this time, no additional cost is expected to be incurred by LCR local authorities as a result of arrangements to deliver the devolution deal.

7.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Wirral, along with City Region partners, continues to brief members and officers; circulate information and raise awareness of LCR developments through a wide range of approaches and communications.

8.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct equality implications associated with this report as it deals with the issue of devolution at a strategic level. Equality analysis will be carried out as part of the detailed implementation as appropriate.

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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	12 July 2013
Cabinet	8 August 2013
Cabinet and Council	19 September 2013
Cabinet and Council	10 March 2014
Council	19 November 2015
P&P Regeneration & Environment Committee	18 January 2016
P&P Regeneration & Environment Committee	2 March 2016
Council	13 September 2016
Cabinet	14 November 2016
Council	8 December 2016
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6 December 2016
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24 January 2017
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	29 March 2017
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4 July 2017
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19 September 2017
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee	29 November 2017