**STOKE ON TRENT & STAFFORDSHIRE**

**LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**27 FEBRUARY 2019**

**Responses to Draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Consultation – January / February 2020**

**1. Background**

* 1. During the week commencing 13th January the draft LIS was disseminated for consultation to individuals and organisations including the LEP Board, Government departments, CEOs and Leaders at County Council, City Council, District/Borough Councils, LIS Steering Group and Working Group, the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), Growth Deal and Economic Growth District Directors and local business networks. Responses and feedback to the draft were requested by 11 February.
  2. Almost 30 responses were received from a broad range of organisations and these are summarised and condensed in the attached paper. Individuals’ full feedback can also be made available.
  3. Metro Dynamics have received all responses and are working through these one by one to review and make amends to the current draft of the document. A revised final draft of the LIS will be completed by 29th February. Metro Dynamics at this point will highlight how each comment has been addressed and the rationale for doing so.
  4. In the meantime Metro Dynamics have provided the following summary response to feedback received:
* Good level of response, from a wide range of different organisations and groups reflecting views from business, local authorities, HE and FE, sustainability groups and the VCSE.
* All very clear about the importance of the LIS and supportive of the work that partners are doing.  Also encouraging to see partners reflecting the links between individual local strategies and the LIS.  Clear sign that we have made collective progress on “joining up” and working together.
* As well as a number of detailed drafting comments and suggestions for additional case studies and companies (all helpful), comments fall into four broad categories:

1. Drawing out more clearly the cross-cutting priorities and themes that link together action on the foundations of productivity e.g.
   1. Construction – huge opportunity but with big skills requirement – not just about modern methods of construction
   2. 5G
   3. Research strengths – can be more confident in our national strengths.
   4. Business investment and growth – helping large businesses grow as well as SMEs.
2. Strengthen skills section – to be clearer about the importance of a wider range of flexible, evolving technical and employability skills, increasing graduate retention (as well as relocations) and role of schools.  Avoid over focus on existing sector requirements – which are important, but we know they are and will continue to change and evolve.
3. Strong view from a range of groups that we can further strengthen what we say about sustainability and natural capital and the opportunity to use our expertise in energy, manufacturing and construction alongside our natural environment and assets to make a big contribution to transition to zero carbon, which will involve lots of business opportunities for firms and people in our patch.  We think this is doable but need avoid just making sweeping commitments without actions – LIS needs to reflect reality of investment needed to get a stubborn social and economic issues.  We don’t think, for example, that simply including the UN sustainable development goals helps (although you could reference them)
4. Similarly strong views on increasing visibility of social value and progress region has made on this issue.  Easy to include.
5. A question about whether the strategy should include new targets – updating the previous SEP targets.   These metrics could be easily worked up by the LEP as part of the implementation plan – looking at current trends and the impacts of potential projects and investments.

It should be noted that the final version of the document will be shorter and as punchy as possible, removing any duplication and putting as much of the evidence as possible in a supporting evidence pack / annex so the strategy itself is very action focussed.

* 1. All comments will be reviewed and amends will be incorporated and the final draft of the LIS will be provided to the LIS Steering Group for consideration, in the light of the detailed comments received by all submitting stakeholders and LEP Board deliberations, at their meeting on Wednesday 25th March.

**Recommendation: That Board Directors note the consultation responses providing any appropriate feedback for consideration at the LIS Steering Group.**

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