

Subject:	Update on Greater Brighton Bid for Devolution		
Date of Meeting:	18 October 2016		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
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LA(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This report provides the Greater Brighton Economic Board ('the Board') with an update on progress on the City Region's bid for Devolution.
- 1.2 The period covered by this report is 20 June 2016 to 20 September 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board note the report.

3. UPDATE ON GREATER BRIGHTON DEVOLUTION BID

- 3.1 The recruitment process for the Greater Brighton Policy & Projects Manager post was completed. Unfortunately, the process was unsuccessful and the appointment of a consultant team is currently being explored.
- 3.2 Fortnightly catch-up meetings continue between the Greater Brighton and the Three Southern Counties (3SC) core teams, to update on progress and to identify and take forward areas of joint work.
- 3.3 A draft deal document is under development, to enable discussions to recommence with Government. It is anticipated that this be progressed over the coming months.
- 3.4 Proposals for a Sub-National Transport Body to align with Government expectations are being jointly developed by Greater Brighton and the 3SC. It is anticipated that the proposals be presented to the Board at its next meeting, on 31 January 2017.
- 3.5 The City Region's devolution bid commits Greater Brighton to delivering 22,500 homes in ten years. This is within existing Local Plan numbers, but represents a 55% uplift in the current rate of completions. To achieve this target the City Region would need to do everything it can in terms of finding and bringing forward sites, dealing with blockages such as transport and other infrastructure, ensuring a flow of finance and developing new delivery mechanisms. The City Region has been clear with officials that it would also need ALL of its Devolution

Deal asks to be granted to be able to achieve the target, including raising the HRA borrowing cap, flexibility in the use of Right to Buy Receipts, better access to surplus sites from national public bodies and certainty over HCA funding.

3.6 In order to progress this, the Greater Brighton Housing & Growth Sites Working Group continues to meet regularly. In particular, it has taken forward:

- The City Region's "layer by layer" plan, to identify the interventions needed for the City Region to deliver its commitment to 22,500 homes in the next 10 years (with a focus on large sites (100+ units));
- Modelling the additional housing that could be developed through HRA borrowing uplifts;
- Work on potential for the development of key station sites with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and Network Rail, and;
- The City Region's One Public Estate bid (please refer to section 3.9 for further information).

3.7 The Greater Brighton Housing & Growth Sites Working Group has also been exploring alternative delivery models and recently looked at a Living Wage Housing Joint venture proposal between Brighton & Hove City Council and Hyde Housing to deliver 1,000 low cost homes for rent and ownership. If successful, the model could potentially be applied to the wider City Region.

3.8 The work of the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board ('the Strategic Planning Board') is also continuing. An updated Local Strategic Statement (LSS2) was agreed in March 2016. Work is ongoing on the implementation of the strategy, which will include unlocking housing sites and delivering infrastructure. There is also progress on a study to be commissioned on defining the Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas for the Coastal West Sussex and the Greater Brighton area, building on the existing background papers produced by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners in May 2015. This study will help to inform the future decision on how and whether to take forward work on a strategic plan for the area.

3.9 An Expression of Interest for the One Public Estate programme was submitted on 06 May 2016. Applications from over 30 partnerships involving over 100 councils were received. Greater Brighton was successful in progressing to the next stage. The City Region was awarded £50,000 to develop a final Services and Assets Delivery Plan and a funding submission for £597,000 was submitted July 2016.

3.9.1 At the time of writing, the outcome of the City Region's submission is unknown. The National One Public Estate programme is expected to announce its final decision during week commencing 26 September 2016.

3.9.2 Work has commenced to establish the necessary governance arrangements to not only ensure that the City Region successfully delivers the commitments made in its bid but also, to seize the future benefits of taking a more strategic and joined-up view of the City Region's combined public estate. It is proposed that a Greater Brighton Strategic Property Board ('the Property Board') be established, to provide direction, oversight and accountability. The Property Board will bring together senior officer representatives from local, regional and national public sector partners as a local strategic assets forum. It will also include one

independent business representative, as well as one advisor from the National Programme and one advisor from the Government Property Unit. Members will work collaboratively to identify and take forward opportunities across the public estate to:

- Create economic growth (new homes, employment floorspace and jobs);
- Enable more integrated customer-focused services;
- Generate capital receipts, and;
- Reduce running costs.

3.9.3 It is proposed that the Property Board will meet quarterly, with its inaugural meeting on 25 October 2016. A report on this is featured elsewhere on the agenda.

3.10 Work has continued in relation to Employment & Skills, with a specific focus on meeting the City Region's commitment to create 1,000 new apprenticeships in 1,000 days. The Employer Skills Task Force, which was established in June 2015 and comprised around 30 members from the business community and local education institutions along with experts, practitioners and apprenticeships, developed eight recommendations to enable the City Region to meet this target, including the creation of an apprenticeship brokerage company. It also launched an Employer Pledge during Apprenticeship Week in March 2016 and to date, 45 employers have made a total of 106 pledges and all employers have been contacted and connections established with schools and colleges. This includes employers engaging directly with schools and helping promote the importance of apprenticeships. Further work to engage employers is ongoing prior to establishment of the brokerage.

3.10.1 A Greater Brighton Employer Action Group has been established to identify and take forward the steps needed to create the brokerage service. The Group is chaired by Gavin Stewart, Chief Executive of the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership, and made-up of employers and training providers.

3.10.2 The Greater Brighton Employer Action Group is responsible for undertaking detailed financial modelling and for exploring resourcing options; it is likely that a request for a contribution towards funding will be brought back to the Board in the near future. The aspiration is that the service will become financially self-sustaining within 3 years of operation. Longer-term it is envisaged that funding will be secured from levy payers and training providers including the FE colleges in the region. Work will take place to actively pursue major employers who are likely to be levy payers, including NHS, universities and other public sector organisations, to secure sustainable funding for this service. Contributions will be sought from district councils, large private sector employers and the public sector.

3.10.3 The Greater Brighton Apprenticeship Brokerage service will help the City Region to meet its devolution commitment to have employed 1000 apprentices in 1000 days by providing a clear support service to help employers navigate the training landscape and secure the training that they need for their staff. A report on the creation of a Greater Brighton Apprenticeship Brokerage Service is featured elsewhere on the agenda.

3.11 The University of Brighton (UoB) and the University of Sussex (UoS) have commenced work on the development of a Smart Specialisation Strategy for the City Region. In essence, the work will support the formation of an effective local economic growth strategy by identifying sectors in the local economy that are large enough and specialised enough to provide comparative advantage for the City Region. It then aims to understand the problems the firms face, and what can be done to support their growth, and the economic development of the wider region. The work is being led by Professor Marc Cowling, who is Professor of Entrepreneurship at the UoB and an expert on local economic growth policy, and Professor Paul Nightingale of the UoS, who is an expert on innovation and led the Sussex side of the 'Brighton Fuse' project on the local Digital Creative Industries cluster. This research will report back to the Board at its next meeting, on 31 January 2017.

3.11.1 The City Region's Smart Specialisation work will feed into the wider 'Innovation South' Science and Innovation Audit. This multi-LEP area proposal, which includes Enterprise M3, Coast to Capital, Dorset, Kent & Medway, the Solent and Thames Valley Berkshire LEPs, was submitted on 02 September 2016.

3.12 The City Region has begun conversations with the Department for International Trade, to maximise opportunities for inward investment and export.

3.13 The Digital Working Group will be reconvened in Autumn 2016 to progress three key areas of work:

3.13.1 The development of the Greater Brighton Digital Strategy, to act as the 'guiding mind' for the City Region and to set high ambition;

3.13.2 The development of the Greater Brighton Creative Industries Council, bringing focus to the many fragmented aspects of support that are currently available from Government, and;

3.13.3 Digital infrastructure, to enable Greater Brighton to be the best connected City Region in the UK, with Ultrafast (1 gbps) available in nearly all urban locations and superfast (30 mbps) in the rest. A review of the technical and business solutions to enable this continues.

4. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

4.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. The City Region's devolution bid will commit Greater Brighton to deliver a number of initiatives such as new housing, infrastructure and jobs through a number of different schemes. These initiatives will be addressed in separate business cases and reports presented to the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant
Date:10.10.2016*

Legal Implications:

- 4.2 As detailed in the body of the report what is outlined is a major venture, and should enhance the council's capacity to meet a number of its pressing duties including housing, planning & aspects of new duties under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act.
- 4.3 It is clear that a considerable number of high & low-level legal agreements will flow from the various arrangements to be put in place & may take time to finalise each.
- 4.4 Resources available from the council are limited in officer time, in undertaking the legal documents required. It is possible that these could not be adequately supported from within existing resources / budgets.
- 4.5 It is not considered that any adverse human rights implications arise from the report's recommendations. However this will need to be closely reviewed depending on the final nature of emerging arrangements.

*Lawyer Consulted: Marten Matthews, Senior Projects Lawyer BHCC
Date:10.10.16*

Equalities Implications:

- 4.3 None.

Sustainability Implications:

- 4.4 None.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 4.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

None

