

Greater Brighton Economic Board

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Agenda Item 23

Subject: Greater Brighton Blue/Green Governance and Investment Plan

Date of meeting: 1st February 2022

Report of: Chair Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board

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LA(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Greater Brighton Economic Board ('the Board') agreed at the July 2021 meeting to host a Climate Summit and create a regional investment plan for blue/green infrastructure. The October 2021 virtual summit was attended by 185 people on Zoom and has had nearly 300 views on YouTube.
- 1.2 Since agreeing to proceed with creating a Blue/Green Investment Plan the scope and scale have developed to become more ambitious, requiring new governance arrangements to support and oversee the work. The proposed approach will help the Board over the next decade more effectively draw on public funding and private investment opportunities.
- 1.3 This Investment Plan will be the product of an ambitious collaboration between the public and private sector, with expertise being provided by the universities. It will outline the region's investment requirements to become leaders in the UK's green industrial revolution. The narrative set out will show strong and co-operative regional leadership and will distinguish us in the south east as forerunners in developing an innovation led low-carbon economy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board agree new governance arrangements are needed for a refreshed and revised Infrastructure Panel, reporting into the Board, with an independently appointed Chair (see appendix 1 for draft Terms of Reference).
- 2.2 That the Board agree to a selection process to nominate a local authority Member and a Business Partner to sit on the revised Infrastructure Panel. The University Business Partners will also nominate a representative to sit on the panel.

- 2.3 That the Board agree to the establishment of a Scientific, Technical and Advisory Panel (STAP) led by the Universities of Sussex and Brighton to secure research funding and create a roadmap to net zero targets.
- 2.4 That the Board agree to commission work to prepare a Blue/Green Investment Plan to shape our regional narrative, package up our environmental project pipeline and showcase opportunities for investment.
- 2.5 That the Board agree to commit existing budget (£40,000) for the commission of the Investment Plan, along with potential seed funding from private sector Infrastructure Panel members, and BHCC funding already identified (£30,000).
- 2.6 That the Board seek to secure an additional £180,000 from stakeholders so that the total funding for year 1 of the work amounts to £250,000.
- 2.7 That the Board agree a progress report will be brought to the July 2022 Board meeting.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 It is important that the Board follows up on previous commitments to transition to a low carbon economy and to the next steps announced at the Greater Brighton Climate Change Summit if progress is to be made.
- 3.2 The Greater Brighton Economic Board is a well-established body which offers local leadership on a number of work strands that are pushing the city region to transition to net zero. The overarching partnerships with local authorities, further and higher education partners, business and economic partnerships provide a unique opportunity to show leadership, showcase the infrastructure on our patch, the innovative work taking place and the gaps of investment needed to deliver on our GB10 Pledges.
- 3.3 Operating in a competitive funding and investment environment requires us to have a strong, consistent and compelling narrative, and a practical plan. This master plan will be explicit about the resources, needs and constraints in the City Region and will set out our aim to establish a partnership of the key players to help us stand out. A concise and tangible plan, clearly demonstrating the level of ambition, will mean that the City Region is well positioned to respond quickly to funding announcements and incentives, and will also provide greater confidence to those committing funding.
- 3.4 The Greater Brighton Energy and Water Plans were developed by the Infrastructure Panel with the aim of unlocking sustainable growth.
 - The **Energy Plan** identifies proposals to accelerate the delivery of energy projects that will boost resilience and security and at the same time help reduce carbon emissions to zero.
 - The **Water Plan** builds on work around the water environment that's already in progress across a number of organisations to set out a range of opportunities to address ongoing challenges in new,

innovative ways, compared to current, 'conventional' approaches.
The intention is to move new development towards 'water neutrality.'

- 3.5 The Greater Brighton **GB10 Pledges**:
- The Board has overseen development of GB10 Pledges that sit above the Energy and Water plans. These 10 environmental pledges are approved actions agreed and ratified by the Board in October 2020 with progress reported on at the October 2021 Board meeting.
 - The GB10 Pledges and the underlying Energy and Water Plans are very much linked to the economic recovery and future prosperity of the City Region.
- 3.5 The Blue/Green Investment Plan would be the first 'product' of the revised Infrastructure Panel, with delivery by quarter 3 of 2022/23. This master plan, to encompass all existing environmental plans, is a clear commitment on who can assist with net zero transition and tangible steps on how to get there. The aim of the plan is to trigger investment from Infrastructure Panel members and wider stakeholders. As well as stimulating private sector investment, this resource could be used as a 'pitch document' to use in government funding negotiations as well as a guide for public agencies when considering location and investment options.
- 3.6 Timescales for delivery will encompass quick wins as well as longer term research projects. The timeline as we head towards our climate related targets over the next decade will feature key milestones on route, funding rounds and investment decisions.
- 3.7 The refresh of the Infrastructure Panel governance will include the appointment of a new independent chair. The suggestion is that this is Sir Dieter Helm, who was the keynote speaker at the Climate Summit. Dieter is Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Oxford and has previously been an Independent Chair of the Natural Capital Committee, providing advice to the government on the sustainable use of natural capital. If Dieter agrees to be the new Infrastructure Panel Chair this can be funded in whole or part by Southern Water.
- 3.8 Proposed membership of the refreshed Infrastructure Panel includes a local authority Member (TBC) and a Business partner (TBC) from the Greater Brighton Economic Board, sector representatives (Southern Water, UK Power Networks, Go Ahead Bus Group, Shoreham Port, South Downs National Park) as well as private sector stakeholders, University representatives, BHCC Chief Executive. The aim is for the group to be no larger than 12 people to make it functional.
- 3.9 Infrastructure Panel members will contribute seed funding to a research pot with a bigger intention to invest. Being part of the panel will give opportunities to contribute to research and drive the strategy to deliver outcome rich work which meets our collective carbon targets. The thinking is also that by aligning existing public money we will be able to attract and stimulate private investment.

3.10 The purpose of the governance refresh is to get the principal investment agencies together to devise a programme of action that delivers the best return on investment. The panel will agree priorities and scope of delivery, approaches taken and methodology used. The idea is that Infrastructure Panel members will become the key investors in blue/green regional projects, providing a platform for securing more public funding and stimulating private investment. The refreshed Infrastructure Panel will need to agree the focus of its work and timeline, defining the methodology for charting progress and informing investment priorities.

3.11 The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) will bring together senior and well-established academics, local authorities and private sector specialists in the Greater Brighton region to inform the climate action decisions of Greater Brighton stakeholders. The Purpose of the STAP will be:

- to provide strategic direction and influence on decision-making for research-oriented projects with direct applications towards Greater Brighton's net zero goals.
- to help monitor and strengthen alignment of research and development spending/procurement with the broader vision for net zero
- to help ensure that the net zero carbon strategy and policy objectives are implemented and properly evaluated.
- to provide advice and constructive challenge on how the impact of research and development, and innovation activities align with the delivery of net zero.
- to ensure the timely delivery of net zero objectives including the wider decarbonisation and energy targets within the region.
- to ensure systematic horizon scanning activities are undertaken to understand uncertainty and opportunity.

3.12 In order to keep regional stakeholders informed of strategic and operational progress of the work, a wider communication will be required for interested parties not included in new governance arrangements. This might take the form of establishing a stakeholder group or a regular email communication.

3.13 To support the delivery of this workstream, a new part time post will need to be resourced to coordinate and deliver this work. Exploration is needed to see if this post could be funded by partners and seconded to the Greater Brighton Team. Alternatively, this would be funded from the Infrastructure Panel pot.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 There is a danger that working in silos will miss opportunities that attract investment and accelerate progress. By working collaboratively, we show regional leadership to businesses and residents who share a desire to see action on the ground to bring transformative change. With the perception

being that the focus of government funding is up north on 'levelling up' the country, a unified voice is needed to secure money to scale up the innovative projects taking place on our patch. Successfully transitioning to a low carbon economy and net zero will require us to pull together and ask for help where needed, rather than work in a disconnected way.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 We will consult with the Greater Brighton Programme Board to help ensure regional engagement.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The main benefit from this work will be to shape the thinking of local government and business partners into how they approach a post-carbon economy for the area. Once shaped amongst the partners, it will result in a proposition that can be communicated to investors and Government to drive interest in the activities of the region. This approach will help the Board to more effectively draw on public funding and private investment opportunities.
- 6.2 Reviewing the arrangements to oversee and deliver this work will ensure robust governance is in place, with all the right partners engaged to share the task of sourcing funding and creating a clear roadmap to net zero.
- 6.3 The first output from this project would be the Blue/Green Investment Plan, which would include a co-ordinated pipeline of investment projects that support transitioning the city region to a net zero economy. It would form the strategic narrative and each of the projects in the pipeline would have an outline business case in readiness to pitch for investment.
- 6.4 By working together on shared problems and solutions in relation to the climate emergency, we will work smarter and faster, and show leadership to people who live, work and study in our region.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Total funding of £250,000 will be required in year 1 to support the delivery of the Investment Plan and support the STAP. This includes a contribution from the Greater Brighton Economic Board operational Budget of £40,000 to commission the plan plus a contribution of £30,000 from Brighton and Hove City Council which has already been committed. Additional contributions from the Infrastructure Panel members of £180,000 will also be sought. The breakdown of the contributions from panel members has yet to be agreed. The intention will be for further funding opportunities or contributions to be explored for future years investment.
- 7.2 A part time post will be required to support the work. The grade, cost and hours are still to be determined. Preferably this would be from partner resources, however if this is not possible it will be met from the new Infrastructure Panel Pot.

Name of finance officer consulted: Rob Allen Date consulted (19/01/22):

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The recommendations that are proposed fall within the Board's remit.

Name of lawyer consulted: Joanne Dunnyaglo Date consulted 14/01/22

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Blue Green Investment Plan will seek to ensure that the benefits are shared across the City Region. In addition, one of the ongoing aims of the work is to address inequalities by looking at how access to energy and water can be made affordable for all Greater Brighton residents.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Delivering sustainable growth is a priority for the Board, and this became increasingly important over the last 18 months as the City Region looks to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Growing economic, cultural and demographic constraints within the city region require us to be more resourceful with our amenities.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Infrastructure Panel Draft Terms of Reference