

OSE Board – 14th November 2019
Item 5 Appendix B

ASELA Productivity Strategy Short/Medium Term Action Plan – October 2019

Introduction

At the July meeting of ASELA Leaders a presentation of the emerging work to develop the South Essex Productivity Strategy was given. Members were supportive of the work to date which outlines work across 4 programmes:

- Vibrant Places – leverage our location and connectivity to create an environment for higher skilled employment, with a clear proposition to businesses and residents. Support local community inclusion and develop a clear South Essex identity
- Enterprise Growth – support our existing businesses, attract new businesses and capture innovation
- Future Work – improved visibility of opportunity and training for both residents and business, connect people to opportunity and bring forward a Higher Education offer
- Data Transformation – Use data to better effect in driving productivity and the use of data as a raw material to drive innovation through new products and services

This paper describes the next phase of our work in bringing the Productivity Strategy to life. There are two strands to this, the first part being a short to medium term action plan which will demonstrate how we will start to implement the actions outlined in the strategy. The second part is how we will develop a longer term implementation plan for the strategy as a whole.

The principles for the development of the action plan are:

- A targeted approach to working with businesses with highest capacity for productivity improvement (sector, size, ownership, etc.)
- A 'geographically conscious' and outward facing approach that actively re-enforces and develops the South Essex growth corridors while recognising local distinctiveness and needs
- An approach to delivery that is 'underpinned by' rather than 'led-by' the existing economic growth evidence base
- All activities undertaken are to appropriately reference and be delivered in close consultation with the other key ASELA work streams and projects

Short to Medium Term Delivery

This has been derived directly from the ASELA Productivity Strategy and have been informed by a range of South Essex officers in order to ensure deliverability, strategic fit and viability. Each of the actions within the four programmes has been considered and areas of more immediate opportunity and action identified. The following outlines the actions proposed within each of the programmes that will be taken forward over the next 12-18 months. We will deliver the following against each of the four programmes:

Vibrant Places:

- Define and publish a productivity-focussed South Essex inward investment vision, targeting high-value business investment
- Develop and publish an investor prospectus, developed in-line with other ASELA work streams, promoting proposition/infrastructure/key sites/lifestyles/etc
- Publish a 'South Essex Creates' vision and work programme; linked with the Thames Estuary Production Corridor to develop cultural and creative industries across South Essex
- Prototype/pilot and evaluate a South Essex Inward Investment Ambassador project; leveraging the established international networks of South Essex businesses to catalyse investment

Enterprise Growth Programme:

- Develop and launch private sector business support model (the Boston Model) that leverages the business service sector (accountants, solicitors, marketers) to generate new business growth
- Develop the scope/plan for a new small scale business investment vehicle for South Essex (targeting SME market with best growth potential)
- Develop and agree a new South Essex 'Innovation Concordat' with academic partners to agree a new approach for supporting innovation in the private sector

Future Work:

- Convene a new 'Skills Leadership Group' for South Essex; bringing together public and private stakeholders to develop a single, clear and comprehensive skills interface aligned to existing programmes of work
- Establish a new project to expand higher education research base across South Essex; linked to the proposed 'innovation concordat'
- Targeted activity to improve South Essex utilisation of apprenticeships and apprenticeship levy potential

Data Transformation:

- Put in place the proposed South Essex 'Data Transformation' team
- Develop and publish a South Essex online 'Data Observatory' as a single source for economic and social data
- Commence partner engagement programme (targeting: MNCs (google, FB), Large Companies, Local Authorities, Universities, etc.)

Medium to Long Term Delivery

In parallel with the Short to Medium term activity outlined above, development work will also be underway to fully develop the programmes outlined in the Productivity Strategy. This wider programme will be completed by early 2020, and will build on the short-medium term activity. It will more fully define the full range of activity required to realise the aims of each programme.

The Productivity Strategy is ambitious and as a result is very broad in its coverage. There will be requirements arising from it that will influence the wider ASELA programme – for example, our inward investment proposition will need to fit with our overall South Essex proposition. A key part of the longer term delivery planning will be to ensure these links are made, and the right expertise is being used.

Resourcing

To enable both the shorter and longer term programmes to be delivered in a co-ordinated way it would be of huge benefit for this to be led by a dedicated core team, supported by staff across the ASELA local authorities. This dedicated team would include:

- Senior Officer/Programme Manager x 1
- Researcher x 1
- Administrative Officer x 1

In addition, the ASELA authorities would need to ensure that dedicated officer time from each of the economic growth teams was available as required. It is suggested that this resource would need to be in place over an 18 month programme is delivered over an 18 month period, which in outline would be:

- Initiation – 3 months
- Delivery – 12 months
- Securing long term delivery – 3 months

Further revenue funding may be required to progress some specific items listed above.