

5th November 2020

SEP Consultation

Purpose of Report

This paper presents an update on the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP hereafter) following consultation

Thematic Priority

Cross-cutting across all six thematic priorities.

Freedom of Information

This paper will be made available under the MCA Publication Scheme.

Recommendations

LEP Board Members are asked to note the consultation responses and changes made and to adopt the Strategic Economic Plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following agreement of the draft SEP at the LEP Board (5th March), and the Boards agreement to commence public consultation, the consultation began on the 3rd August and was open for 6 weeks. The delay in commencing the consultation from the decision date was as a result of the national lockdown decision and the requirement to commence activity on a Renewal Action Plan.
- 1.2 This paper summarises for members the comments received as part of the consultation and presents a final version of the SEP for approval.

2. Proposal and justification

- 2.1 Following the 6 week period of public consultation, over 800 individual comments were received from the general public, voluntary sector, businesses and Local Government. The comments were broadly supportive, with several useful suggestions, clarifications and additions recommended. Following detailed consideration of the consultation responses a revised SEP has been developed reflecting the comments received.
- 2.2 All comments received were categorised and responded to. Consultation responses varied in length from several pages to short comments. A presentation will be delivered to LEP Board Members to present the comments received.

- 2.3** The web-consultation asked respondents to rate (using a likeart scale) whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about the SEP:
- The focus on three key areas of growth, inclusion and environmental sustainability
 - The ambition to channel resources into those opportunities with the potential to deliver the most improvement to the lives of our people, rather than spreading our focus across a wider range of projects
 - A desire to blend growth with prioritisation on fairness and inclusion – even if this compromises the rate at which our economy grows
 - A focus on those businesses that have the most potential to grow
 - Championing vocational educational opportunities, and
 - Protecting our environment should be a key focus of our economic plan

Responses to these questions showed strong support for the SEP's ambitions and focus with between 60% and 91% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with these statements.

- 2.4** The longer responses received, demonstrated further support to these ambitions and focus.

Categorisation of these comments showed that:

- over 270 comments (35%) either directly or indirectly agreed with SEP ambitions
- over 150 responses (19%) suggested changes that have been actioned in more detail; this included wording changes, clarifications, suggested examples and emphasis changes.
- more substantive comments around the role of environment, culture and health in the SEP and elements of inclusive growth and innovation have also been addressed, where feasible.

Of the responses received, 46% required no immediate action due to:

- the detail being captured in implementation plans or other SCR LEP and MCA publications;
- comments being broader than the LEP's remit (e.g. Government policy);
- the comments not focusing on the new SEP but being a retrospective comment on the approach agreed by the LEP to date (e.g. suggesting a different focus to that of inclusion, sustainability and growth);
- Some responses were contradictory or making a broader point including against the scientific basis for a climate emergency.

- 2.5** Having undertaken the detailed consultation, and reviewed all responses, a final draft SEP has been produced and is included as Appendix A to this paper for approval to be adopted.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

3.1 Do nothing or do less

The previous SEP was a 10 year plan and so a revision could have been delayed or could have simply updated the targets / metrics. This option was discounted due to a desire to consider growth in the context of the wider policy objectives of inclusion and sustainability. The SEP is a non-statutory document and therefore did not require formal consultation. This was discounted as widespread engagement was the preferred model in the development stage and also it is poor practice to miss out the consultation phase.

3.2 Different approach

The LEP could have chosen to follow a different economic growth model, but in early discussions the focus on the three pillars were agreed.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

The SEP will help to secure additional funding from Government including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The costs associated with the completion of the SEP including research have been accounted for within the existing approved budget.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this paper.

4.3 Risk Management

A senior officer has been appointed to project manage the LIS and SEP programme, this is to ensure that activities are managed in accordance with the milestone plan, and external risks to delivery are mitigated. A residual risk is that if the work is not completed, the LEP and the MCA Boards will have a weaker strategic direction and reduced ability to secure additional funding.

The LEP paused development of its local industrial strategy reflecting decision making delays from UK Government on this agenda. Major risks to the SEP are largely external to the LEP (e.g. current public sector financing) and reflect current socio-economic conditions as well as the limitations of funding for LEPs and MCAs (availability of funding for SEP is contingent on Government awarding funding to local areas).

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The SEP is focusing on the economic wellbeing of residents in South Yorkshire. Through it we are seeking to mitigate against increasing levels of exclusion and improve economic conditions for all. Inclusive growth is central to the agenda and the strategy considers all aspects of society to understand where opportunities are not available or where particular barriers are preventing residents from accessing opportunities. Further consideration of inclusion will occur through review from Sheffield Hallam's Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

5. Communications

- 5.1 A detailed engagement plan was developed. All partners and stakeholders have been engaged in the development of the SEP and had the opportunity to review and comment on draft documents.

BEIS and HMCLG have been regularly engaged.

Once adopted, the vision, objectives and priorities in the SEP will be communicated widely through all the channels.

6. Appendices/Annexes

- 6.1 Slides on Consultation
6.2 Final SEP

REPORT AUTHOR POST

Jonathan Guest
Senior Economic Policy Manager

Officer responsible Felix Kumi-Ampofo
Organisation Sheffield City Region
Email felix.kumi-ampofo@sheffieldcityregion.org.uk
Telephone 0114 220 3445

Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: