**Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force**

23rd September 2020 – 10.30am

**Virtual Meeting via WebEx**

***Notes of Meeting (published WMTC)***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Item** |
| **10/20** | **Attendees:** Diane Savory, Steve Jordan, Gareth Edmundson, Dorian Wragg, Nigel Jobson, Darren Stevens, Nigel Jobson, Joe Roberts, Nicola Inchbald, Ian George, Tracey Crews,  Patrick Molyneux, Madeline Howard, Tim Atkins, Bruce Gregory  **Apologies:** Antonia Shield, Nigel Moore  **Guests:** David Oakhill & Mark Sheldon – CBC, Neil Madle – CityFibre, Dev Chakraborty – GFirst LEP  Introductions to Madeline Howard and Nicola Inchbald |
| **11/20** | **Declarations of Interest**  Attendees to inform JP of any interests. |
| **12/20** | **Notes of Previous Meeting**  Notes agreed as a correct record. |
| **13/20** | **Action Matrix and Matters Arising**  Action matrix produced to track progress moving forward. DS not received all mobile numbers for WhatsApp group. **Action** TC to chase those who have not responded. |
| **14/20** | **GFirst Recovery Strategy**  LEP Recovery Strategy – LEP Task Force set up in April – all local authorities represented on the group, private and voluntary sector, membership groups from County and higher and further education. Recovery Strategy threefold – collects evidence, identify challenges and put in place interventions. LEP produced a sector specific economic recovery plan to inform the place based plans produced by the 6 districts and boroughs. Predicting a big hit of job losses at end of October when the furlough scheme ends, awaiting announcement 24/9/20 on whether there will be any extensions provided to existing scheme.  **Cheltenham Recovery Strategy**  Needed to keep services running and to retain ambition to keep things going regardless of challenges faced. Challenges financially are significant but Cheltenham in good position in relation to other authorities. CBC prepared message to government which retained our strong ambition to deliver a strong recovery for Cheltenham. CBC first authority to put recovery strategy in public domain with an aim to build back stronger. Themes in strategy mirrored by internal within CBC. Strategy has set an organisational statement and encouraged staff to think about what we could do as a council to support the borough. Need to be agile and flexible to try new things and ensure financially sound in the future.  ***CERTF discussion***: Following the Government’s change of plans, are there any thoughts on whether we need to change what we are doing? Reviewed the LIS across exec team, focussing on key sectors with cyber biggest sector. More focus needed on cyber sector as sector which is booming and businesses doing better than pre-covid. Not changing direction specifically – getting views on office use etc.  Government money for build better and projects need to be oven ready – are there any more incentives we can offer? Work ongoing on project pipeline maintained by Growth Committee senior officer group - if Government offer money go to project pipeline and do call out to potential projects. Predicting there will be another round of funding available following the comprehensive funding review. |
| **15/20** | **City Fibre Presentation**  County lagging behind in full fibre rollout. Working towards full fibre rollout by 2025. City Fibre investment will deliver up to gigabit speeds across Cheltenham. Supporting 5G rollout. Separate discussion needed on what City Fibre can do for Cheltenham linked to public assets. Money invested in Cheltenham could yield many benefits long term. £25m private investment for Cheltenham, building in Gloucester at same time. Announcing contractor working within Cheltenham and Gloucester in due course, work to start early 2021 and will be in town for approximately 2 years; not clear on location of team base at present. Looking on how West Cheltenham/NW Cheltenham growth can be incorporated going forward. Work to commence in new year. |
| **16/20** | **Culture Strategy**  Culture Board set up three years ago – Cheltenham Festivals, Cheltenham Trust and Borough Council. Town as whole didn’t have a plan to maximise culture and response was to prepare a Culture Strategy – looking at 10 year road map. Creative Tourist appointed in December, consultation started in January which is now complete and being fed back to Culture Board. Strategy will cover key issues such as the visitor economy, recovery plan etc. Aim going forward is for Culture Board to align strategy with its members. |
| **17/20** | **Catalyst Site : Minster Innovation Exchange**  Live project for a number of years, originally Workshop Cheltenham. Opening of Minster Innovation. Development aimed at future and younger generation re. cyber and digital sectors etc. Ground floor for accessible public services, including Growth Hub, 1st and 2nd floors focussed on innovation space and work space. Looking for space specifically for cyber businesses on site. Need to look at current workforce and how we can up-skill; need more talent. Workspaces such as this and Hub8 (workspace for cyber and tech industries) are the future, huge growth in sector but need new talent.  ***CERTF discussion***: Opportunity to encapsulate two biggest strengths - culture and cyber. Cheltenham could own cyber and culture as a town. MIE estimated to be Autumn 2021. Look at best practice of Northgate Project (Oxford) - halfway through building as digital training and university skills project – Cheltenham could be bigger and better. Need to bring stakeholders together - working closely with GlosColl - how we connect with academia better, can provide links to industry that are needed. Working collaboratively to bring together academia and industry. |
| **18/20** | **Planning Reform Proposals**  Overview of Government planning reforms, currently out for consultation, new planning system starting late next year, transitional arrangements will last 2.5 to 3 years. The Government White Paper sets out the reforms in three broad pillars, Planning for Development, Planning for Beauty and Sustainable Places and Planning for Infrastructure with main emphasis to move from current planning system to a more zonal planning system. Proposing three zones; Growth, Renewal and Protected.  ***CERTF discussion***: Emphasis on housing delivery in the White Paper – as a group may need to focus on balance between developing housing and economic development. Future role and flexibility og High Street. |
|  | **Standing Items** |
| **19/20** | **Update from Chair on ministerial engagement**  No update from Chair due to current ministerial portfolio changes. |
| **20/20** | **Updates from CERTF Members**  Landlords’ group has undertaken review of public realm particularly around Promenade; Canada Life and Cheltine working on plans and have information to share with group.  Number of skills bids that Cynam are involved in  Devolution and Local Government reorganisation –White Paper timetable has slipped, now not expected before new year at the earliest. |
| **21/20** | **CERTF communications**  Moving to Cheltenham presentation from last meeting circulated with agenda papers. Website now live. Any comments, new stories etc welcome, please contact [David.Jackson@marketingcheltenham.co.uk](mailto:David.Jackson@marketingcheltenham.co.uk) |
| **22/20** | **Any Other Business**  **Vacant CERTF representation**  Voluntary sector representation in hand, confirmation expected mid October. Green growth/sustainability -Agree to undertake a promotion piece to seek appropriate member.  **Request for short bio and headshot**  Bio and headshots. Send to [David.Jackson@marketingcheltenham.co.uk](mailto:David.Jackson@marketingcheltenham.co.uk).  **Reflections following Prime Minister’s statement:**  Younger people are ready to get back to office, need to monitor what is going on in the market.  At peak 30% of working population furloughed, now down to 11%. May be extended furlough scheme but will be sector specific for hardest hit sectors. Three companies will continue to work out of Hub8 as secure environment. Need to encourage people and confirm safe space to work collaboratively.  Government intervention – arts council, big announcement for funding in 1st/2nd week October.  Golden Valley Development, in dialogue phase with bidders, positive outcomes, progress good. All feeds in to growth of cyber eco system, lots of commercial interest.  Next meeting: 4 November 2020 |