



## **Economic Development Digital Advisory Board**

Tuesday 26 November 2019 at 2.00pm

Meeting to be held at: Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street,  
Gateshead, NE8 1HH

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## **AGENDA**

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	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1. Apologies for Absence (Members)</b>	
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	
Please remember to declare any personal interest where appropriate both verbally and by recording it on the relevant form (to be handed to the Strategy & Democratic Services Assistant). Please also remember to leave the meeting where any personal interest requires this.	
<b>3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24 September 2019</b>	<b>1-8</b>
For approval as a correct record	
<b>4. Progress Update</b>	<b>9-18</b>
<b>5. Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board Review – Progress Update</b>	<b>19-25</b>
<b>6. The North East Digital for Growth Report</b>	<b>25-29</b>
<b>7. Date and Time of Next Meeting:</b> Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 2.00pm	

Contact Officer: Jonathan Lunness  
Tel: 0191 4247536  
Email: [jonathan.lunness@northeastca.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.lunness@northeastca.gov.uk)

**To All Members**

## Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board

24 September 2019

Agenda Item 3

(2:00pm - 3:50pm)

Meeting held: Committee Room B, South Shields Town Hall

### Present:

Chair Cllr G Miller

Councillors J Adams, J Anglin (Substitute)

Co-opted Member G Hall, J Walker, A Westwood (Substitute), G Currey

Officers N Robason, P Melia, G Armstrong, G Woods, S Cuthbertson,  
B Poulter, K Connolly, J Lunness

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Malcolm, C Marshall, K Shaw and M Brain and Co-opted Members B Farhat, S Glendinning and S Hanson.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 March 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 MATTERS ARISING

The Advisory Board received an update from the Chair regarding the membership of the Board. It was advised that Mr T Salmon had been replaced with Mr S Hanson as the co-opted member from the Federation of

Small Business.

## 5 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL PROGRESS UPDATE**

Submitted: A report of the Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Digital (previously circulated and attached to Official Minutes).

The Advisory Board considered the report which provided an update on activity and progress under the Economic Development and Digital theme of the Combined Authority. The report was introduced by G Currey, B Poulter and P Melia.

The report provided an overview of the activity of Invest North East England and set out the key inward investment successes in the NECA area during 2018/19:

- VBites have taken over the ex-Walkers Crisps Factory in Peterlee creating 300 jobs
- SNOB – company building a new facility on the Sunderland/South Tyneside International Advanced Manufacturing Park
- Parker Bioscience Filtration – Investing in new equipment in Gateshead
- BGL Group in Sunderland creating a new “Tech Hub” with 40 new positions
- Vantec opens new Safety and Training Innovation Centre in Sunderland
- Trotec Laser UK moves to new HQ premises in South Tyneside.

The Board were informed that the INEE team had led on a number of significant enquiries on sites in the region, both from UK and International investors. The sourcing of new leads for the North East is a vital part of INEE’s role. The first lead generation contract with OCO Global had recently been completed with the company securing the new contract which commenced in July. Details of the specification of the contract were presented.

The North East Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) is to be developed in partnership and facilitated by the NELEP. NECA has a representation on both the Steering Group and the Working Group. NECA Leaders and Chief Executives have provided strategic guidance to Economic Directors and Heads of Transport in developing the content of the LIS. The draft LIS will build on the North East’s strengths and assets across five key priority themes:

- A clean growth future through energy and environmental assets
- Transforming manufacturing: smarter, greener, global

- Improving health at a time of demographic change
- Digitalisation and growth in the knowledge economy
- Driving a productivity culture and improving standards of living across our region.

Amongst the matters discussed by the Advisory Board were the following:

- the performance of the NELEP in comparison to other regions in the UK regarding job creation and working age population, noting the strong performance of the region;
- staffing at INEE, including a new graduate intern whose role includes generating and identifying leads;
- Marketing and Communications for 2019/20, including six promotional videos and the use of Pay for Clicks as a means of lead generation;
- previous and upcoming events and exhibitions attended or sponsored by INEE for 2019/20;
- the new trade service structure, introduced by the DIT, including the changes to contracts and procurement;
- A summary of the European Structural and Investment Funds, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Strength in Places Fund;
- the state of preparedness and preparations for Brexit in the North East and the Government's request of weekly reports outlining concerns and issues of local authorities;
- the scope of the Advisory Board's remit relating to the recently encompassed Digital Agenda.

Members discussed the report at length. During the discussion, it was noted that:

- effective lead generation, particularly in-house lead generation, as opposed to third party, is important and the staffing changes at INEE to encourage this were welcomed;
- the use of Pay for Clicks as a method of lead generation was welcomed by Members, noting that it will be kept under review for efficiency and that while it may take time to produce results, social media engagement is vital;
- concerns were raised regarding the proposed changes to contracts and procurement in relation to the DIT's trade service structure. Members felt one contract encompassing the Northern Powerhouse would not serve the region or the NECA area well and that the Advisory Board should continue to raise concerns regarding this in the future;

- work has been undertaken to mitigate the effects of Brexit in the region and is ongoing, including preparation for possible food or medical shortages, and queues at ports;
- discussions with the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NoTCA) and the NELEP are ongoing to explore regional approaches to the digital agenda, with an update to come at a future meeting;
- updates regarding the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing (CESAM) were discussed, including the involvement of Sunderland University, Newcastle University and businesses which are interested in the site;
- the possible uses and functions of 5G were discussed, including in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, and how the region can harness this data and make the most of developing opportunities.

**RESOLVED – That:**

- i. the report be noted;
- ii. an update regarding the scope of the Board’s remit relating to the Digital Agenda be brought to the Advisory Board to a future meeting.

**6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Submitted: A report of the Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Digital (previously circulated and attached to Official Minutes).

The Advisory Board considered the progress update which invited the views of Members on the role and remit of the Advisory Board.

Previously it had been agreed that the Board would focus on:

- The inclusion of the digital agenda within the theme;
- The operation of the Advisory Board and appropriate membership and representation going forward, including the role and responsibilities of individual members and
- Processes and mechanisms for undertaking the business and tasks of the Advisory Board.

Members discussed the relationship of the Advisory Board with the Leadership Board, including how best they could carry out their role in order to strengthen outcomes and act effectively. The Chair expressed his view that the Board should be one of action in improving NECA, not just discussion.

Members were invited to give this matter further consideration and submit their comments either directly to the Chair or the Lead Officer. The outcome

would be reported to a future meeting.

**RESOLVED – That:**

- i. Members of the Advisory Board would submit their comments on the role and remit of the Advisory Board to the Chair or the Lead Officer.
- ii. The Chair would draft proposed recommendations to be reported back to Members of the Advisory Board for further comments at a future meeting, before being presented to the Leadership Board.

**7 SKILLS AGENDA**

Submitted: A report of the Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Digital (previously circulated and attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an overview of the current skills environment in the NECA area and the influence of the wider evolving skills environment. Mr G Wood, Economic Development Manager at Durham County Council, delivered an associated presentation (circulated after the meeting and attached to Official Minutes).

The presentation provided information on the following:

- the current skills situation in the region;
- emerging challenges facing skills in the region;
- the fourth industrial revolution, this is the move away from automated factory processes to intelligent, integrated digital systems such as the industrial Internet of Things that are transforming the way we work;
- sector pressures, namely including the construction, engineering, health and social care and digital sectors;
- planned and possible interventions

In discussion, it was noted that:

- The skills agenda is complex and vast. There is a need to ensure that the region is developing the right skills for the jobs currently available and for the future required workforce. Members expressed concern that there was no sense of priority for the region and little progress in this area;
- upskilling workers in the region is important and sectors such as construction and health and social care were recognised as posing a challenge for the future;
- the region faces significant challenges regarding basic skill levels and

- qualifications amongst working age adults;
- The decrease in the Adult Education Budget compounds the situation putting pressures on the Further Educational establishments with regards to the provision of basic training and upskilling required. Vocational and technical education do not receive enough support or attention from some institutions and the Government, causing a disconnect in the employment market;
  - An emerging challenge is the aging population leading to longer working lives, many may need re-trained to fit the future skills requirements to be able to continue to work;
  - early years schooling in the region is good in terms of the skills agenda, but there are struggles at secondary level across the region;
  - family and society pressures and influences are a factor to be considered when tackling the skills agenda in the region. Societies perceptions of some career paths, such as apprenticeships or certain sectors, can cause difficulties in attracting people to these areas;
  - the Local Industrial Strategy sets out the future skills and employability framework for the region. It looks to improve the basic adult skill level, to support people with disabilities and health conditions into employment and support progression from low pay;
  - money from the ESF had been helping the region with the skills agenda, however the Government has not provided commitments for the continuance of this funding, meaning uncertainty for the region in terms of funding streams;

The Chair, on behalf of the Advisory Board, thanked Mr G Wood for the presentation.

It was suggested that Councillor Henig, the Thematic Lead for Finance, Skills and Employability, may consider determining a focus for NECA in relation to the Skills Agenda, in liaison with the NELEP. Mr G Wood to report feedback to Councillor Henig and a further update would be provided at a future Advisory Board meeting.

**RESOLVED – That:**

- i. The report and presentation be noted;
- ii. The Advisory Board recommended that the Thematic Lead for Finance, Skills and Employability consider a focus in relation to the Skills Agenda;
- iii. It was requested that a response from the Thematic Lead for Finance, Skills and Employability be submitted to a future Advisory Board meeting.



North East Combined Authority

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**8 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 26 November 2019 at 2:00pm



## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

**Date:** 26 November 2019

Agenda Item 4

**Subject:** Economic Development and Digital Progress Update

**Report of:** Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Digital

### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on activity and progress under the Economic Development and Digital theme of the Combined Authority.

The report provides a presentation of activity of Invest North East England; an update on the development of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership Local Industrial Strategy; and an overview of the current activity within the European Structural and Investment Fund programme – including European Development Fund and European Social Fund grant allocations, commitments and ongoing bids and calls.

The report also provides an update on the Strength in Places Fund and an overview of the latest position with regards to Brexit and the withdrawal agreement.

### **Recommendations**

Advisory Board members are requested to note and provide any comments on the update report.

## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

### **1.0 Background Information**

1.1 This report provides an update on activity and progress under the Economic Development and Digital theme of the Combined Authority, including:

- Invest North East England and Trade activities
- Local Industrial Strategy
- European Structural and Investment Funds Programme
- Brexit.

### **1.2 Invest North East England (INEE)**

1.3 Guy Currey, Director of Invest North East England, will provide some insights and make a presentation about recent investment attraction activity. Themes that will be covered include:

- Recent investment successes
- Current projects - update
- Marketing and events:
  - Events supported this year e.g. PPC campaign
- High Potential Opportunities.

### **2.0 Local Industrial Strategies**

2.1 The Government has requested that LISs are developed by LEPs – and in some cases Mayoral Combined Authorities – and submitted for refinement and eventual approval. Guidance published by Government in October 2018 highlighted that “Local Industrial Strategies will be long-term, based on clear evidence and aligned to the National Industrial Strategy”.

2.2 LISs will inform priorities and allocations for significant funding streams including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF), which it is planned will replace EU funding once the UK has exited the European Union. Already, smaller funding streams that have been created are requiring that proposals are aligned with LISs.

2.3 LISs need to link strongly to the Government’s Industrial Strategy whose aim is to boost productivity by backing businesses to create good jobs and increase the earning power of people throughout the UK.

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### **2.4 *The NELEP Local Industrial Strategy***

2.5 The NELEP LIS is being developed in partnership and facilitated by the NELEP team. NECA has representation on both the Steering Group and the Working Group. Significant evidence pieces have been produced to feed into the LIS, most importantly a review of productivity by Steer and Cambridge Econometrics and a review of Sectors, Competencies and Assets by Technopolis.

2.6 This draft LIS builds on the North East's strengths and assets through five key priority themes:

- A clean growth future through energy and environmental assets
- Transforming manufacturing: smarter, greener, global
- Improving health at a time of demographic change
- Digitalisation and growth in the knowledge economy
- Driving a productivity culture and improving standards of living across our region.

2.7 Within these themes the draft identifies how the North East will make its contribution to the programmes and priorities set out in the UK Industrial Strategy – through Sector Deals, Grand Challenges and the Foundations of Productivity. Through the LIS a range of priorities for support will be identified including through Government funding schemes, private investment, and regional and local resources, including the forthcoming UK SPF. It is being viewed as a delivery plan for the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). On 19<sup>th</sup> September, NELEP Board approved the draft LIS for submission to Government. No date has yet been given for the Government's response or final approval.

### **3.0 *European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)***

3.1 The European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) programme continues to be delivered in the North East. The region is split into two areas: (1) More Developed (Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland); and (2) Transition (County Durham). An update on European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is provided below.

#### **3.2 *European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)***

3.3 The notional allocation for the More Developed area is £176.9m, and in the Transition Area is £86.3m; a total for the NELEP area of £263.2m. The NELEP area now has a total project pipeline of c£204m representing 77% of the total allocation.

## Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board

Approximately £168m of this pipeline is legally committed with a further £35m of applications under appraisal.

- 3.4 The latest calls for projects closed on 30 September 2019. MHCLG is currently appraising the outline applications submitted and it is expected that an updated position will be presented to the regional ESIF Committee at the end of November 2019. This will include an update on the pipeline of projects across the four priority axes listed below, including whether the North East LEP area is on target to commit all of its notional allocation of ERDF grant.
- Priority Axis 1 Promoting Research and Innovation
  - Priority Axis 3 Enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs
  - Priority Axis 4 Supporting the shift towards a Low Carbon Economy in all sectors
  - Priority Axis 5 Promoting Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
  - Priority Axis 4 and 5 Sustainable Urban Development (Low Carbon and Climate Control).
- 3.5 The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee funding for ERDF projects that are contracted by the end of 2020. All contracted ERDF projects must be completed by the end of the programme period, 30 June 2023. Each application for ERDF will be required to demonstrate that it delivers good value for money and domestic strategic priorities.
- 3.6 MHCLG is expected to confirm the arrangements for an ERDF Reserve Fund shortly. The Reserve Funds are being set up to ensure that the UK makes best use of remaining programme funds up to 2023.
- 3.7 ***European Social Fund (ESF)***
- 3.8 Across the NELEP area there is a notional allocation of £224.7m (More Developed £161.3m, Transition £63.4m). As at September 2019, c.£97m has been legally committed in the More Developed area (60%) and c.£52m in the Transition area (82%). Subject to take-up and projects progressing to the contracting stage, it should be noted that commitment levels, including the pipeline applications and live/future calls, could increase to c.97% in the More Developed area and 110% in the Transition area.
- 3.9 The increase in commitment levels for ESF reflects the considerable technical assistance support reported previously, particularly in relation to the Skills for Growth

## Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board

call which closed in August 2019, the Inclusive labour market call which closed in September 2019, and the current live Inclusive labour market call which closes on 2 December 2019. In addition, the commitment figures also reflect recent extensions to the National Lottery Community Fund (previously Building Better Opportunities programme) co-financed projects.

- 3.10 On 16 September 2019, the DWP issued a further ESF Inclusive Labour Market project call in the NELEP area focused on the following investment priorities:
- 1.1 Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people (£1.1m Transition region, £3m More Developed region);
  - 1.2 Sustainable integration of young people (£3m More Developed region);
  - 1.4 Active inclusion (£2.955m Transition region, £1.169m More Developed region).

All ESF projects must be completed by December 2023 (projects must be completed no later than 3 years and 6 months after the proposed project start date). The call closes at midnight on 2 December 2019.

A regional event to promote this call took place on 13 September 2019 organised by the North East Technical Assistance team. Further follow-up work with prospective lead applicants and delivery partners will continue until the call deadline.

- 3.11 A further ESF call is expected to be issued in December 2019 in order to deploy the NELEP area's remaining allocation under Priority Axis 2 Skills for Growth. A regional event to promote the call is likely to be planned shortly after the call launch date.

### 4.0 Strength in Places Fund

- 4.1 The previous update provided information on the Strength in Places Fund (SIPF).
- 4.2 In Wave 1 twenty-three bids across the UK were invited to develop full stage bids for submission by 18 September 2019. Two of these bids are in the NECA area: North East Cluster for Healthy Ageing and Independent Living (NE-CHAIN) led by Newcastle University, and the Centre for Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing (CESAM) led by the University of Sunderland.
- 4.3 It is expected that the outcome of SIPF Wave 1 bids will be announced in spring 2020.

Strength in Places Wave 2 was launched in May 2019 with the deadline for Expressions of Interest (EOI) on 9 October 2019. An update on Wave 2 EOIs will be provided at the next meeting. EOI awards will be announced from June/July 2020.

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Selected proposals will enter a bid development stage in which up to £50K seedcorn funding will be awarded to support development of full business cases over 6 months.

### 5.0 **Brexit**

5.1 The Board will be aware that there has been much Brexit preparatory activity at local and regional levels in the lead up to the March and October Brexit deadlines. At the time of writing, a General Election has been called for 12<sup>th</sup> December in order to try to break the parliamentary deadlock.

### 5.2 ***Up-date on Activities***

5.3 The Information Sharing Network established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in January 2019, with nine Local Government Chief Executive leads representing each of the nine English regions, continues to be in place but reports only by exception. Martin Swales, Chief Executive of South Tyneside Council, continues to lead for the north east in this structure. Daily reporting has been stood down but may be reinstated after the election depending on the outcome.

5.4 There continues to be communication between regional partners to inform intelligence, including key infrastructure bodies, business representative groups, Local Resilience Forum, Universities, Colleges and the Voluntary & Community Sector as part of the North East Brexit Group.

### 5.5 ***Brexit Lead Officer roles***

5.6 Each Local Authority has nominated a Brexit Lead Officer; responsible for leading the development of a Brexit plan in each Local Authority. Combined Authorities have also been asked to nominate a Brexit Lead Officer.

5.7 Brexit Lead Officers report through the regional Chief Executive and are able to highlight issues and concerns through the MHCLG Regional Information Network. This will also ensure any trends or patterns across the region are identified and can be acted upon.

### 5.8 ***BEIS Readiness Structure***

5.9 As in March and October, the NELEP is expected to be asked to report weekly on business intelligence / impact, particularly feedback coming through the North East Growth Hub. As with previous arrangements there will be sharing of intelligence and key messages across key partners and the reporting structures.

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### **5.10 *National Campaign***

5.11 Government has developed and delivered a national campaign to raise awareness of preparatory activity required by both citizens and business.

### **5.12 *Brexit funding***

5.13 Central Government has allocated Brexit Funding to Local Authorities, Combined Authorities and Local Resilience Forums to support Brexit preparations and activity. The amounts were reported to the Leadership Board in September.

### **5.14 *NE Brexit Group***

5.15 The cross-partner North East Brexit Group continues to meet and provides a forum for sharing intelligence across sectors. This information and intelligence has informed action such as the Brexit Toolkit on the Growth Hub, as well as the Work Programme.

5.16 The Brexit Group is also identifying the resources and interventions that may be required for the NELEP Area, particularly if the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

## **6.0 Reasons for the Proposals**

6.1 This report provides an update on Economic Development and Digital theme activities and requests views and comments from the Board.

## **7.0 Alternative Options Available**

7.1 There are no alternative options associated with this report.

## **8.0 Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation**

8.1 A further update will be provided to the Board at subsequent meetings.

## **9.0 Potential Impact on Objectives**

9.1 The activities under the Economic Development and Digital theme will support NECA in its aims to promote economic growth and regeneration in the area.

## **10.0 Financial and Other Resources Implications**

10.1 Details of the Brexit funding received are set out in the report.

**11.0 Legal Implications**

11.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**12.0 Key Risks**

12.1 There are no specific risk management issues arising from this report.

**13.0 Equality and Diversity**

13.1 There are no specific equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

**14.0 Crime and Disorder**

14.1 There are no specific crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

**15.0 Consultation/Engagement**

15.1 There are no specific consultation and engagement issues arising from this report.

**16.0 Other Impact of the Proposals**

16.1 There are no further impacts arising from the proposals.

**17.0 Appendices**

17.1 None.

**18.0 Background Papers**

18.1 None.

**19.0 Contact Officers**

19.1 Vince Taylor, Assistant Director of Economic Policy, Sunderland City Council,  
[vince.taylor@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:vince.taylor@sunderland.gov.uk)

**20.0 Sign off**

- 20.1
- Head of Paid Service: ✓
  - Monitoring Officer: ✓

## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

- Chief Finance Officer: ✓

**21.0 Glossary**

21.1 None.



## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

**Date:** 26 November 2019 **Agenda Item 5**

**Subject:** Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board Review – Progress Update

**Report of:** Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Digital

### **Executive Summary**

In March 2019 the Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board agreed that a review should be undertaken in relation to its role and remit. This report provides an overview of the work undertaken, a summary of the results of the review and recommendations for moving forward.

### **Recommendations**

The Advisory Board is recommended to consider the report and provide comments.

## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

### **1. Background Information**

- 1.1 It was previously agreed that a review should be undertaken in relation to the role and remit of the Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board (EDDAB).
- 1.2 It was considered that the Advisory Board should be re-shaped in line with the new Economic Development and Digital theme (formerly the Economic Development and Regeneration Advisory theme) and the revised North East Combined Authority (NECA) geography.
- 1.3 Members agreed to focus on:
  - The inclusion of the digital agenda within the theme;
  - The operation of the Advisory Board and appropriate membership and representation going forward, including the role and responsibilities of individual members;
  - Processes and mechanisms for undertaking the business and tasks of the Advisory Board.

### **2. Review Process**

- 2.1 The Board agreed that the views of individual Board members should be gathered and fed into the review. Telephone conversations would be arranged between board members and the Chair's office and a summary of these would be prepared and shared with the Board on an anonymised basis.
- 2.2 Each conversation followed the same format. A short briefing note was shared with Board members prior to their telephone conversation and included: the reason for the review; the current Board membership; EDDABs relationship with the North East Leadership Board (NELB); and examples of agenda items. The briefing note also included a set of questions for members consideration - these are:
  - 1) Does this picture [in the briefing note] reflect your understanding of how the EDDAB works?
  - 2) Your thoughts and views about the shift in focus to include the digital agenda within the theme?
  - 3) Your thoughts and views about the operation of the Advisory Board including the role and responsibilities of individual members?

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- 4) Are there any specific improvements in the Board's operation that you would like to see?
  - a) Agenda content - both format and subject matter
  - b) The way discussion takes place
  - c) Any other points about the EDDAB and how it operates, for example how the Board's business is undertaken both within the quarterly meetings and outside of those

2.3 The conversations with Board members have now taken place and a summary is provided below.

### 3. Overview of Findings

3.1 While several members feel the Advisory Board works effectively, others think that a review of the EDDAB's Terms of Reference could bring greater clarity to its function and remit and strengthen its relationship with the Leadership Board.

3.2 All members are clear that adding Digital to the Board's remit is a good idea, though clarity is needed about the areas it intends to focus upon. The Board also needs to be cognisant of how its digital scope fits with the Strategic Economic Plan, Local Industrial Strategy and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's digital strategy. The latter is the subject of another report on this agenda.

3.3 Most members feel that EDDAB reports are generally quite informative and interesting while the meetings are structured and involving. There was a suggestion that input from both frontline and academic experts should be sought on specific issues being debated by the Board as these arise. Several members suggested that the addition of a digital expert to the Board from the business sector might be explored.

3.4 It was suggested by a number of members that EDDAB should have an annual forward plan. This would help ensure that opportunities and challenges can be identified and the right people are engaged in order to achieve stated goals.

3.5 A proposal was made for a 'Part 1' and 'Part 2' agenda. Part 1 would be for brief updates and Part 2 about specific issues. Part 2 issues would need to focus on what can be achieved in the NECA area in respect of EDDAB's remit. Members

## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

also said that the structure of Board reports could be refined so that they promote greater conversation, debate and allow for advice and opinion to be shared.

- 3.6 Members suggested the Board could address the following issues: skills; financial assistance and incentives for businesses; property and property development; low carbon; infrastructure (other than digital) including priorities and links to key development sites; productivity; and energy.
- 3.7 It is felt that it could be helpful for meetings to have a more informal air in order to open up conversations, with each member asked to contribute to the issues under discussion to help give meetings a more inclusive feel.
- 3.8 Members reflected on the possibility of deep dives and task and finish groups taking place in future, advising that these need to have a specific focus with target outputs known in advance so that they generate useful information that adds value.
- 3.9 It is felt that any task and finish groups should have an EDDAB co-ordinator and a clear understanding of what needs to be delivered.
- 3.10 Finally, it was suggested that the gap between quarterly meetings could be addressed with progress updates being provided, notification of key announcements and developments, and general communication taking place between meetings to help develop members' ownership of the EDDAB's agenda.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Board is asked to consider the findings of the review work and identify the issues that should be taken forward. Any proposals requiring amendments to the EDDAB's Terms of Reference would then be presented to the Leadership Board for approval.

### **5. Reasons for the Proposals**

- 5.1 The review is required to update the scope and purpose of the Advisory Board in line with the recently revised Economic Development and Digital theme of the NECA.

### **6. Alternative Options Available**

- 6.1 There are no alternative options associated with this report.

**7. Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation**

7.1 Once the Board has agreed the issues and potential changes to take forward, a review implementation timetable and programme will be established.

**8. Potential Impact on Objectives**

8.1 The recommendations put forward are anticipated to strengthen the contribution of the EDDAB theme in support of the NECA and its aim of promoting economic growth and regeneration in the area.

**9. Financial and Other Resources Implications**

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**10. Legal Implications**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**11. Key Risks**

11.1 There are no specific risk management issues arising from this report.

**12. Equality and Diversity**

12.1 There are no specific equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

**13. Crime and Disorder**

13.1 There are no specific crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

**14. Consultation/Engagement**

14.1 There are no specific consultation and engagement issues arising from this report.

**15. Other Impact of the Proposals**

15.1 There are no further impacts arising from the proposals.

**16. Appendices**

16.1 None.

## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

### **17. Background Papers**

17.1 None.

### **18. Contact Officers**

18.1 Vince Taylor, Assistant Director of Economic Policy, 0191 561 1113  
[vince.taylor@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:vince.taylor@sunderland.gov.uk)

### **19. Sign off**

- 19.1
- Head of Paid Service: ✓
  - Monitoring Officer: ✓
  - Chief Finance Officer: ✓

### **20. Glossary**

20.1 None.

## **Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board**

**Date:** 26 November 2019

**Agenda Item 6**

**Subject:** The North East Digital for Growth Strategy

**Report of:** Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Digital

### **Executive Summary**

Following the revisions to the Economic Development and Regeneration theme to incorporate the digital agenda, it is the role of the Advisory Board to provide advice to the Leadership Board on relevant policies, strategies and initiatives that can support the NECA to meet its objectives for economic development and growth.

As a starting point for this work, this report and the presentation to be provided by the NE Local Enterprise Partnership's Digital Programme Lead, provide an introduction to the North East Digital Strategy for Growth.

### **Recommendations**

The Advisory Board is recommended to consider the report and presentation and provide views and comments.

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### **1. Background Information**

- 1.1 The digital agenda and continual developments in the use of new technologies are of key importance to economic growth.
- 1.2 Globally, places at the forefront of providing the best digital connectivity to business as well as to residents and communities alongside effective and efficient digitally enabled services, will be positioned to realise the greatest benefits.
- 1.3 Following the revisions to the NECA boundaries and its themes, the Economic Development and Regeneration theme became the Economic Development and Digital theme, raising the profile of the digital agenda in terms of its importance to promoting economic growth across the NECA area.
- 1.4 The Advisory Board is therefore tasked with advising the Leadership Board on the digital agenda and the associated implications and opportunities for the NECA. This will include building an understanding of regional, national and global strategies, developments and initiatives and how the NECA can benefit from any alignment and involvement, or as it is very well placed to do, lead the way.

### **2. Digital for Growth – The North East’s Digital Strategy**

- 2.1 Launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the Digital for Growth Strategy provides a good platform for the Advisory Board to start its conversation in relation to the above and a presentation will be given by Laura Partridge, Digital Programme Lead for the NE Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 2.2 The presentation will provide the opportunity for board members to start to develop a collective understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities for the NECA and how it can play a role in the development and delivery of the strategy.

### **3. Digital Strategy Overview**

- 3.1 The purpose of the strategy is to support the delivery of the NE Strategic Economic Plan “More and Better Jobs”, identifying where digital programmes can be developed to strengthen the economy.
- 3.2 The vision is:  
“To present a collaborative, cohesive and ambitious North East digital economy that is leading the digitalisation of industry.

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We want the impact to improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, study and visit the North East and for the businesses who invest and trade here.”

- 3.4 The development of the strategy will be based around four initial priorities:
- Data
  - Infrastructure and connectivity
  - Digital collaboration and enterprise
  - Workforce
- 3.5 The proposed focus and remit under each of the priorities and how individuals and organisations in the NECA area are, or can get involved in the work, will be outlined in the presentation.
- 4. Recommendations**
- 4.1 The Advisory Board is recommended to consider the report and presentation and provide views and comments.
- 5. Reasons for the Proposals**
- 5.1 To provide the basis for the Advisory Board to start developing its thinking and advice to the Leadership Board on the digital agenda and the recently launched North East Digital Strategy for Growth.
- 6. Alternative Options Available**
- 6.1 There are no alternative options associated with this report.
- 7. Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation**
- 7.1 Any next steps will be considered and identified as part of the discussion.
- 8. Potential Impact on Objectives**
- 8.1 The digital agenda is of significant importance to economic growth and the Advisory Board’s support and advice to the Leadership Board will assist the NECA in meeting its objectives.

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### **9. Financial and Other Resources Implications**

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **10. Legal Implications**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **11. Key Risks**

11.1 There are no specific risk management issues arising from this report.

### **12. Equality and Diversity**

12.1 There are no specific equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

### **13. Crime and Disorder**

13.1 There are no specific crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

### **14. Consultation/Engagement**

14.1 There are no specific consultation and engagement issues arising from this report.

### **15. Other Impact of the Proposals**

15.1 There are no further impacts arising from the proposals.

### **16. Appendices**

16.1 None.

### **17. Background Papers**

17.1 None.

### **18. Contact Officers**

18.1 Beverley Poulter, Lead Policy Officer, 0191 561 1150,  
[beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:beverley.poulter@sunderland.gov.uk)

## Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board

### 19. Sign off

- 19.1
- Head of Paid Service: ✓
  - Monitoring Officer: ✓
  - Chief Finance Officer: ✓

### 20. Glossary

- 20.1 None.