

Enterprise M3 Board
Covid 19 Sub Group - Zoom meeting
15 June 2020 – 15:30-16:30
DRAFT MINUTES

Directors in attendance:

Dave Axam – EM3 Board Chair - **CHAIR**
Deborah Allen – RFAC Chair
Linda Cheung – Communications Lead
James Cretney – PMG Chair
Cllr Colin Kemp – JLB Chair
Stacey King – LIS Group Chair
Mike Short – Nominations Committee Chair
Kathy Slack – Enterprise M3 Chief Executive

Apologies received:

Rob Carr – Accountable Body Representative
Cllr Rob Humby – JLB

EM3 in attendance:

Rachel Barker – Enterprise M3 Director – Operations
Justine Davie – Enterprise M3 Office Manager and Executive Assistant

1. Welcome from the Chair

1.1. Dave Axam welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1. Apologies recorded for Rob Carr and Cllr Rob Humby.

3. Declaration of Interest

3.1. No declarations of interest received.

4. Response to Economic Intelligence

4.1. Kathy Slack provided a presentation on the information requested from MHCLG on projects to support local recovery. There was currently 21% of the working population in EM3 area furloughed and the sectors hit the hardest were hospitality, leisure, retail and professional services. There was concern whether some business sectors would be able to make a comeback if social distancing continued for a long period of time.

4.2. Areas needed to be considered for support were those which had strengths and opportunities for growth. However, it was recognised that there could be issues with potential mismatches between available labour and skills and the job vacancies. It was acknowledged that there was an opportunity around the clean growth agenda including to focus on growth in the green economy and ICT and digital.

4.3. Requests from Government:

- Identify how accelerated funding from Government support the delivery of capital projects in order to stimulate the economy over the next 18 months (by January 2022).
 - Identify how new shovel-ready projects support economic recovery.
 - Submit information in priority order to MHCLG by 18 June 2020.
- 4.4. Government was specifically looking for projects that modernised town and city centres, provided physical infrastructure to improve the local economy; improved human capital including business support, enhanced the innovation ecosystem and improved digital connectivity. The factors that would be important for projects to demonstrate were deliverability, impact on the economy, additional activity, value for money and a clear description of the project.
- 4.5. A positive meeting had been held with Government regarding drawing down the additional LGF capital funding for 2020/21 which would put Enterprise M3 LEP in a strong position for receiving further funding.
- 4.6. Enterprise M3 Team have been out to local authorities, higher education and further education partners. There had been 30+ projects submitted for funding and there were four projects already in the pipeline. Work was also taking place on potential projects relating to digital connectivity fibre spine, supporting town centres, digitalisation of further education colleges and local co-working space.
- 4.7. The details on projects would need to be inputted into the Government spreadsheet by 17 June and to be submitted to Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) on 18 June. It was hoped that information on funding would be received in early July to indicate whether EM3 had been successful. The funding was for capital projects although a plea for some revenue funding would be included in the letter accompanying the spreadsheet
- 4.8. The Covid-19 Sub Group provided governance for the bid submissions but it was emphasised that any spend proposals would still go through the Programme Management Group (PMG) with suitable due diligence carried out. It was proposed that the EM3 Team would sift and prioritise the projects against a set of criteria. Government was looking for ideas for projects at this stage and due diligence would follow later. Any projects received after the deadline could be considered through the pipeline process and be included in any future funding allocation. It was agreed that funding available needed to be communicated externally to highlight that there could be further opportunities for funding.
- 4.9. It was expected that a number of the 30+ projects received would not be included on the list submitted to Government. The list submitted needed to contain strong projects which could deliver and would have a significant impact. It was suggested that there should be some impact in relation to the response to Covid-19 in the submission.
- 4.10. There was some discussion on making the submission more ambitious and do some cross-LEP work if possible. It was felt that due to the timescales there was limited potential for the development of large cross-LEP projects however there could be some projects that could be developed into a larger project with a wider impact for any future submissions. It was highlighted that the capacity of the EM3 Team needed to also be taken into consideration along with Government security of continued funding for LEPs.

- 4.11. It was agreed that projects that had stalled due to the impact of Covid-19 could also be considered to help put them back on track if the outputs were significant. The Group was advised that a letter had been sent to current project sponsors to see if there were any opportunities to accelerate any work.
- 4.12. The Sub-Group approved the proposed process against the key criteria of digital and clean growth, deliverability and impact. An additional criteria of the ability to deliver a strong message for the Enterprise M3 area was added. It was agreed there should be a mixture of projects, some of which may be stronger in some areas of the criteria than others. It was also agreed there should be a spread of projects across the Enterprise M3 area. The projects submitted would need to demonstrate that they could be delivered and were meaningful and memorable. Sub Group members accepted that they would not sign off final list to be submitted to MHCLG but noted that projects would need to go through the normal approval process and PMG before any expenditure could be agreed. An additional PMG meeting was planned for the end of June.
- 4.13. It was agreed that the package should be around £30-50m depending on the strength of the projects against the criteria. The spreadsheet would contain the outline list which would be accompanied by a letter from the Chair which would contain a list of potential other projects.

End – 1630