

Enterprise M3 Board

29 November 2016

Digital Taskforce Update – Item 8

Enterprise M3 Board members are asked to:

NOTE the current progress with delivering the Digital Taskforce programme since the last update to the Board and endorse plans for future activity as agreed by the Digital Sub Group.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Enterprise M3 LEP recognises the importance of the digital economy in driving innovation, productivity and competitiveness. We commissioned a study in November 2015 which consistently ranks the Enterprise M3 area as one of the UK's leading digital economies. The report recommended a number of actions to further explore our digital sector in order to better understand its growth needs and to build momentum in collaborative efforts to boost its profile and competitiveness.
- 1.2. At the Board meeting on 29 September, a paper was presented which gave an update on digital activity and highlighted the range and scope of Enterprise M3's current and proposed activities to support the digital sector. It was agreed to establish a small Digital Sub Group of interested Board members to take forward this work.
- 1.3. This report gives a brief update on progress since the last report to the Board (29 Sept), and proposed next steps.

2. Update

- 2.1. The Digital Sub Group held its first meeting on 31 Oct (Mike Short; Malcolm Parry and Andrea McCallum representing Hampshire County Council; Jude Robinson and Lucy Crabtree EM3) and discussed and agreed the following actions
- 2.2. It was agreed that any further activity should be grounded in a strong evidence base, and that it would be useful to refresh evidence on digital work done by other LEPs, and update some of the data used in the Regeneris study including local evidence on the following key areas:
 - broadband coverage & speed; level of uptake
 - Local innovation index (inc high tech patents)
 - (digital) skills profile
 - Existing evidence of business needs/concerns
- 2.3. The importance of linking to other relevant local groups with a digital theme was highlighted and it was agreed to map what data they have and to gather their views on business needs.

- 2.4. The next step is to build on this work and the previous work done through the Civil Service Fast Stream secondee to better understand the needs, challenges and concerns of our local businesses. We will be designing a business survey to identify needs and opportunities, which will add to our evidence base to inform our future strategy. Digital South have offered support in the design and administration of the survey.
- 2.5. We also identified areas of our own work where there are synergies with the digital agenda and we are exploring the following themes with our team and action groups:
- How we can maximise the impact of the Science and Innovation Audit, should it be successful, particularly around skills and how it might enable better investigation into future digital skills needs
 - Gain a better understanding of the pipeline of skills talent and how local education and training provision matches current and future demand for digital skills.
 - Clarify and promote digital strategy requirement for relevant future LGF projects, to cover elements like digital skills, use of data, links to housing etc.
 - Explore potential to influence developers to build in digital connectivity to housing as part of the planning process (where currently not covered)

3. Next steps

- 3.1. The next meeting of the Sub Group will be held on 10th January where we will report findings of the data update exercise and discuss the design and administration of the survey.
- 3.2. Jude will be attending a local Digital Leaders roundtable session on 24 November organised by Business South and Kathy and Jude are attending a national conference on 1 December supporting digital adoption and growth in SMEs.
- 3.3. We will shortly be advertising for a Digital Manager post (initially 6 months fixed term contract) to provide some additional resource and expertise to co-ordinate this area of activity and ensure it has a sufficiently high profile going forward.

Jude Robinson
Head of Strategy & Policy
21 November 2016.