

Enterprise M3 Board

25 March 2024

EM3 Policy Projects – Item 8

Enterprise M3 Board Members are asked to:

NOTE the suite of policy projects undertaken by EM3 in Q3 and Q4 of 2023/24; and,

CONSIDER how the legacy from these policy projects can inform future economic development practice across Hampshire and Surrey.

1. Background

- 1.1. Enterprise M3 embarked on an ambitious portfolio of policy projects to address several issues affecting the competitiveness of the region and ensure a substantive, strategic response to key objectives set out in 2023/24 Delivery Plan.

2. Aims

- 2.1. The focus of the policy projects was to:

- Actualise EM3's Low Carbon, High Growth vision
- Bridge a policy vacuum related to sustainable economic growth
- Marshall intelligence to direct new approaches to economic growth
- Demonstrate how to transition data and insights into actionable solutions to address potential barriers to economic growth
- 'Shift the dial' in advocating and piloting new and better models for economic growth i.e. moving beyond just telling a story

3. Work Undertaken

- 3.1. EM3's Head of Policy, Intelligence, & Communications has conceived and overseen the portfolio of policy projects with a range of local and national partners. These projects are as follows:

- **Green is Good**, that directly relates to both EM3's Low Carbon, High Growth vision as well as the policy vacuum related to sustainable economic growth. This project has several strands:
 - Net Zero webinars to SMEs - to raise awareness of the business benefits centred on the transition to sustainability and drive demand for EM3 Growth Hub's Net Zero Support Service.
 - Improving the region's business case - A mini-documentary shown on SKY Digital, 'The Path to Sustainability', featuring businesses across Hampshire and Surrey. Shown on SKY Digital on 10th and 13th March.
 - Sustainability Masterclass – to develop a pool of green business champions across Hampshire and Surrey. Delivery date – 21st March.
 - Thought leadership – a policy briefing on the business case for the green transition. Delivery date – disseminated during w/c 25th March.
 - Legacy building – led by Hampshire Chambers of Commerce, a policy roundtable to consider a collaborative, coordinated approach to sustainability across Hampshire and Surrey. Delivery date – 26th March.

The Green is Good project has been managed by Farnham-based company and sustainability experts, [Accelar](#), with support from [Avery & Brown](#) (also Farnham-based),

the University of Surrey, and a number of local authorities, including Hampshire and Surrey.

- **AI Readiness** that directly responds to a pertinent statistic from an EM3 Economy, Skills, and Labour Market dashboard, that highlighted that highly skilled workers employed in the EM3 region are potentially exposed to workplace Artificial Intelligence (AI) impacts. In response to this, EM3 teamed up with one of the leading authorities on AI – the [Institute for the Future of Work](#) (IFOW) – to:
 - build capacity in business support organisations to improve their service offer on AI to SMEs. The aim here is also to engage business support organisations from multiple localities to initiate a coordinated and collaborative approach to AI within the business support ecosystem. Workshop delivered on 12th March 2024.
 - assist businesses in their understanding of how workplace AI can boost growth while sustaining and creating high-quality jobs. The aim here is to develop and ‘test’ new resources for helping SMEs on AI adoption and scale this approach nationally. Workshop delivered on 19th March 2024.
- **Impact Investing** to help local partners better understand how to leverage institutional funding to deliver sustainable economic growth. This directly addresses the need to bring innovative methods, partners, and funding to unlock the true growth potential of localities in Hampshire and Surrey; thereby delivering complex economic development goals against the backdrop of a climate challenge, rising inequalities, and a productivity challenge. EM3 teamed up with leading impact investing intermediary [The Good Economy](#) to deliver this project, in partnership with the [Future Towns Innovation Hub](#) at the University of Southampton (to be the local advocate for impact investing post-EM3). This project combined an online, introductory webinar (8th February); an in-person workshop (29th February); and 1:1 specialist support from The Good Economy consultants (activity is ongoing) to local partners in working up their propositions to institutional funders.

4. **Other policy activities**

- 4.1. EM3’s Head of Policy has also commissioned HCC’s Economic Business Intelligence Service to expand the range of ‘deep dive’ reports that illustrate different facets of the regional economy such as Innovation, Creative and Cultural Sector, Exports, Sectors, the Green Economy, and measuring true economic growth. The aim is to improve understanding and inform subsequent economic development policy and practice across Hampshire and Surrey.
- 4.2. Support was also provided to the Future Towns Innovation Hub in developing its Smart3 project, which aims to equip place-leaders with the tools and methodologies they need to create transformative projects that enhance sustainability, resilience, quality of life, and prosperity in their communities.

5. **Discussion**

- 5.1. How can the rich evidence base and portfolio of projects undertaken by EM3 LEP in 2023/24 inform the revision of Hampshire and Surrey County Councils’ economic strategies and the design of their economic development services?
- 5.2. What appetite exists for cross-border collaboration to generate multiple economic development outcomes, thereby competing with Combined Authorities and pan-regional partnerships such as the Western Gateway, the Great South West, and the Midlands Engine?
- 5.3. How can local partners be encouraged to leverage private/institutional capital to deliver long-term sustainable economic growth and use this approach to frame a new model for economic development?

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