

MINUTES of a meeting of the **D2 JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY** held on 12 May 2022 at County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor B Lewis (Derbyshire County Council)
(in the Chair)

<u>Amber Valley Borough Council</u>	<u>High Peak Borough Council</u>
Councillor T Harper	Councillor A McKeown
<u>Derby City Council</u>	<u>North East Derbyshire District Council</u>
Councillor C Poulter	Councillor J Kenyon
<u>Erewash Borough Council</u>	
Councillor C Hart	

Also in Attendance –

Amber Valley Borough Council – S Gladwin
Chesterfield Borough Council – H Bowen
Derby City Council – T Bagshaw
D2N2 LEP – F Horsley
Derbyshire County Council – E Alexander and J Battye
North East Derbyshire District Council – M Broughton

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor K Buttery (Amber Valley Borough Council), Councillor A Dale (North East Derbyshire District Council), Councillor T Gilby (Chesterfield Borough Council), and Councillor G Purdy (Derbyshire Dales District Council) and W Morlidge (D2N2 LEP).

10/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** There were no declarations of interest.

11/22 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

12/22 **D2N2 ROUND UP** Frank Horsley attended the meeting and provided the Committee with an update on current issues and progress on key work items including the implications of the Levelling Up White Paper and funding.

Mr Horsley also provided an update with regard to management arrangements at the LEP. A permanent Chief Executive had now been recruited as well as vacancies for three Business Board members.

There had been an uncertainty around the role LEPs on the back of the recent Levelling Up White Paper; however, it was noted an increased focus on economy, skills and health was apparent in the White Paper, which was welcomed. It was also recognised the LEP would need work with D2 and N2 authorities as county deal work progressed on reviewing the LEP functions and how they would embed in any future combined authority.

Councillor Poulter advised the bid for the Great British Railway headquarters to be based in Derby was ongoing and support would be needed from leaders; on line voting was to open soon.

13/22 OVERVIEW OF RECENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TO DRIVE LEVELLING UP AND AID ECONOMIC GROWTH Over the period March and April 2022, Government had published details of three major funding streams available to the County, City and district authorities – the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), Levelling Up Round 2 (LUF2) and Multiply. The funding announcements were in direct support of the wider Levelling Up agenda and its 12 stated ‘missions’.

The total funding available to the D2 geography from these three streams was:

- Multiply - £5.14m made up of £3.763m directly allocated to the County Council and £1.340m to Derby City
- Shared Prosperity Fund – total of £25.7m directly allocated to the City and eight district authorities
- Levelling Up Fund Round 2 – potentially over £100m available to the City and eight district authorities – based on priority local authority areas.

All three funding streams require investment plans to be submitted to Government within challenging timescales:

- Multiply – submitted by 30 June 2022
- SPF – submitted between 30 June and 1 August 2022
- LUF2 – submitted between 31 May and 6 July 2022

A detailed summary of each of the funding streams was presented and the Committee was invited to undertake a wider discussion on how best to maximise these opportunities, and to ensure a comprehensive, joined up approach to the development and delivery of priority projects in light of the Government’s devolution agenda.

A number of opportunities were available as detailed below:

- Potential to develop new ways of working across D2 and craft meaningful projects that have resonance with other Government agendas e.g. devolution.
- Building on existing strong partnerships e.g. business start-up and other Vision Derbyshire projects, to join up more fundamentally, perhaps around administering delivery: how can we work better together to achieve agreed outputs and outcomes?
- Government had recognised the value of culture-led regeneration through the allocation of up to two, large scale (£50m) LUF2 schemes. Opportunity for consideration of culture-led regeneration schemes e.g. within World Heritage Site.
- Alignment to East Midlands Freeport (specifically mentioned in the prospectus) – opportunity for delivery of additional projects that can't be met by Freeport retained business rates.
- Potential to deliver some county-wide projects e.g. 'smart counties' as part of Vision Derbyshire programme – picking up Project Gigabit.
- Potential to “pool” a small element of some funds to support shared delivery of county-wide projects that benefit all geographies. For example, if employment & skills or business support programmes emerged as a common theme for all nine areas, it would be possible to pool funds to create one administration point, one delivery mechanism etc.

All members of the Committee were in favour of shared funding and pooling of resources, where appropriate, subject to confirmation from their respective authorities.

RESOLVED that the Committee (i) notes the summary of the funding opportunities, including the challenges and opportunities outlined in the report; and

(ii) to further consider and continue wider discussions on how best to maximise the funding, opportunities, ensure a comprehensive approach to the proposed programme and embed joint working in preparation for devolution discussions.

14/22 PROGRESS UPDATE ON D2 VISION DERBYSHIRE BUSINESS START-UP PROJECT An update was provided on the key success areas regarding the D2 Vision Derbyshire Business Start-Up Project.

The need for such a scheme had been acknowledged in the Derbyshire Covid Economic Recovery Strategy and project proposals had been developed through the active involvement of officers in all ten local authority areas. The project was developed with a primary offer of free, one to one, bespoke support to individuals wishing to set up their own business and a grant of up to £10,000 for new entrepreneurs to help kick start their new business.

The service was open to Derby and Derbyshire residents who were starting their own business or had set up a business within the last year. The focus was on supporting clients to build a viable and sustainable business. To date, there had been an 'informal' focus on those clients aged between 17 and 30, or who were aged over 50 and who had lost their jobs or livelihoods during Covid.

The project had provided a strong example of joint working, with all ten local authorities being involved, utilising shared funding and shared objectives. There had been a high degree of collaboration with other partners including the D2N2 Growth Hub, Push the Button Project, the University of Derby, the Chamber of Commerce and Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire, particularly through the CRF 'Accelerator' programme. Further connections were being made with the Department of Works and Pensions, the YMCA and Federation of Small Businesses.

The Committee was informed that at the time, 327 clients had registered for support and 235 of those were "live" or being actively supported, with the remainder having been closed or referred to other schemes. The level of activity across each geographical area was presented.

The project had received 26 applications for grants and seven had been approved. Six were going through appraisal, three were currently being contracted, four had been referred to other schemes eg. Green Entrepreneurs & CRF Accelerator Fund, five were awaiting further information and one had been withdrawn. £30,756.01 worth of grants had been awarded. Private Sector investment is £72,020.01 based on client investment (a leverage of 1:2) generating a total of £102,776.02 investment into the local economy.

In terms of continued project development, an 'agile and flexible' approach had been adopted, specifically in relation to accommodating changes to grant application processes to make sure it was fit for purpose and meeting the identified needs. For example, the introduction of a small grant of up to £1k at the discretion of the Business Advisors had been implemented in recognition of low value level support needed by certain client groups without the necessary collateral to offer match funding.

It was proposed that to ensure the scheme remained fit for purpose, that the eligibility criteria be strengthened to ensure appropriate prioritisation of key cohorts. On that basis, the previously 'informal' focus of support for those between 17 and 30 years, or those aged over 50 and who had lost their jobs during Covid and who did not have existing business/es was proposed to be included as a clear criterium for project support. This would allow the marketing and communication strategy to effectively target the relevant groups. It was also evident that greater flexibility of the grant intervention rate was needed. Currently, the intervention rate up to £4,000 was 50%, it then reduced to 25%. It was proposed that the project adopted a broader intervention rate of "up to 50%", allowing the external grant assessor more scope to ensure the intervention rate

suited the individual client needs, streamlined processes and gave greater flexibility where support was justified.

A budget of up to £50,000 over the two-year period was requested to be set aside within the current financial envelope of the retained business rates pot to support running costs and implementing specific projects to improve the service on offer.

The Committee discussed the appropriate use of the Vision Derbyshire logo and branding which was required to enable professional and consistent external communication regarding the marketing and visibility of the project.

Given the strong progress made to date, the team had started exploring a second major project which would have equal, county-wide benefit and had a focus in our shared recovery strategies. A proposal for 'smart counties' had come forward through discussion with economic development and transport leads. In summary, this would cover projects and place shaping interventions 'to support to improved digital connectivity, sustainable travel, tourism and business growth' across the whole geography. An outline of the potential scope and content of the project was presented, which included: interventions to secure full digital connectivity of the hardest to reach areas; data and intelligence systems that supported improved travel and lower carbon emissions; hyper-digital business hubs (on high streets and even in more remote communities); dial up and application services to drive sustainable travel choices.

The Chairman thanked J Battye for her presentation and noted the key achievements that had been made to date.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- (i) notes the strong progress of the Vision Derbyshire Business Start-Up Project;
- (ii) agrees the establishment of a separate budget of £50,000 taken from the current £1m funding envelope to support running costs, service improvement and project delivery;
- (iii) agrees that grant criteria and branding be refined to enable a clear focus on key groups as set out in the report; and
- (iv) agrees that economic development leads in all authorities build on the strong partnership working that was already in place and scope the proposed Phase 2 project for 'Smart Counties/Smart Communities'; and report back to the Joint Committee once firmed up, with suggestions for next steps.

15/22 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING RESOLVED**
that under Regulation 4 (2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that in view of the nature of the items of business, that if members of the public were present, exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed to them.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED AFTER THE PUBLIC HAD BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING

1. To receive declarations of interest (if any).
2. To confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2022.
3. Developing Our Devolution Deal.