

FIFE ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP

EXECUTIVE GROUP MEETING

TUESDAY 3RD MARCH 2020

NOTE OF MEETING

Present: Michael Longstaffe (Chair); Colin Brown (Investment Group Chair); Stephen Hall (FLEXcon); Lynne Cooper (Scottish Enterprise); John Penman (Fife Fabrications); Ian Wilkie (Leviton); Andrew Reilly (Investment Group); Esther Curnock (NHS Fife); Cllr Altany Craik, Gordon Mole, Sandra Montador-Stewart, Peter Corbett, Pamela Stevenson (Fife Council); Richard Whitcombe, Context Economics.

Apologies: Ian Palmer (John Fergus & Co Ltd); Sue Reekie (Fife College); Stephen White (Scottish Government); Phill Thompson (Innovation Group Chair); Alan Mitchell (Fife Chamber of Commerce); Derek Watson (University of St Andrews); Elaine Morrison (Scottish Enterprise).

1. MATTERS ARISING

Ministerial Business Breakfast Meeting – it was agreed that the meeting had been of value to members and that the format had worked well. It was also agreed that any future meeting with the Minister should also include a representative from the UK Government if possible.

2. MID-FIFE ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN WORKSHOP

Sandra Montador-Stewart (SMS) advised that the Plan for Fife (the Local Outcome Improvement Plan) had identified the Mid-Fife economy as a priority for interventions as had Fife's Economic Strategy 2017. In 2018 the Council allocated a sum of £1m for economic interventions in the area and from that sum an allocation was made towards the development of a Mid-Fife Economic Action Plan.

The development of the Mid-Fife Economic Action Plan was commissioned by Fife Council and Scottish Enterprise. The consultant (Context Economics) has undertaken economic and business research and survey work to provide the baseline analysis for the work and consultation on the draft action plan is now underway at workshops with Fife Council's Area Committees.

Richard Whitcombe outlined the key issues facing the area and set out the proposed strategic priorities and actions for discussion. The key points of discussion included:

- Transport connectivity and education and skills need to be given greater emphasis in the plan.
- Consideration to be given to the creation of more spin-off and new companies; centres of excellence in existing core employment areas.
- There needs to be a compelling story through the document that sets out the problems and a vision as to how these can be addressed and the steps to achieve that.

It was noted that next steps will be in finalising the actions and producing a Mid Fife Economic Investment Prospectus to seek funding from Scottish Government and other sources. Members

were invited to feed in any further comments on the document to SMS within the next two weeks and indicate if they wished to be involved in further discussion as the action plan is finalised.

3. FIFE ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

SMS advised that since the establishment of the Fife Economy Partnership (FEP) it had undergone reviews on a regular basis to ensure that it was fit for purpose. The FEP was reviewed following the publication of Fife's Economic Strategy in 2017 and the delivery groups were then set up in line with the strategy themes at that time. With the recent publication of overarching economic strategies which impact on Fife's economy such as the Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy and the emerging Edinburgh and South East Scotland Regional Growth Framework; the development of a Climate Strategy for Fife; and the development of the Mid-Fife Economic Action Plan the time is now right to undertake a further review of the FEP to ensure it can play a full role in the delivery of these strategies and plans.

Parallel to this FEP members have already had a discussion about the way the FEP functions at present and were looking for change to ensure that private sector members in particular could see their time and experience being used to best effect.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Partnership would now move to a business panel model. Rather than a quarterly meeting cycle there will be no formal meeting dates set over the year but the group would be brought together as and when required. For example, if there was a requirement to input into the development of a strategic plan or initiative the group would be mobilised to feed into that process. There would be also be occasions when a virtual discussion or survey work could be undertaken with the panel via electronic means. Where required the non-private sector elements of the FEP would also be brought together with the Business Panel and in particular, events such as the annual Ministerial Business Breakfast Meeting would also see the wider group being brought together. This will allow for a business panel that is more agile to respond to requirements for input and expertise from its members. It was agreed that should there be no substantive reason for the group to be brought together over the course of a year then there would be a networking meeting organised.

It was also agreed that since the FEP's delivery groups had been set up for a particular purpose which was to develop delivery plans for the Fife Economic Strategy's implementation that this would then be a good point at which to also pause these groups.

It was agreed that the Chair would circulate information to all members of the FEP and the Delivery Groups to advise of the new way forward for the FEP.