

LCR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Authority Chamber - No.1 Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP on Wednesday, 7th September, 2022 the following Members were

P r e s e n t:

Councillor Steve Radford
Chair of the LCR Committee
(in the Chair)

Councillors John Abbott, David Burgess-Joyce, George Davies, Eddie Dourley, Edna Finneran, Sam Gorst, James Hansen, Trisha Long, Julie McManus, Pat Moloney, Tricia O'Brien, Brian Spencer, Mancyia Uddin and Carran Waterfield.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christine Howard and Angela Teeling.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2022

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 July 2022 were received as a correct record.

18 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE - BUSINESS SUPPORT

Mark Basnett, Managing Director, LCR Local Enterprise Partnership, advised that unfortunately the Chair of the LEP was unable to attend the meeting due to business demands but he confirmed that the presentation slides had been shared and discussed with him and it was hoped that he would be available to attend the next meeting.

The primary rationale for the Committee requesting attendance at the meeting today was to talk about the Business and Innovation Portfolio Board and its role in overseeing that Portfolio for the Combined Authority. He also proposed to provide an update on what had happened since the pandemic.

The Business and Innovation Portfolio Board covered a very broad range of issues all relating to business and innovation across the City Region. It covered the business evidence base and was particularly focused on what was in the business ecosystem, whether it was working effectively, what the gaps were. It was interested in inward investment and how new businesses could be attracted into the region and how existing businesses could be supported through business growth services. The portfolio also covered the Freeport, which had its own Board, and had an interest in commercial property as it related to business and innovation more broadly.

It was noted that the Business Support Portfolio Board had met three times, the last meeting having taken place on 28 June 2022 and the next meeting was scheduled for the end of September. The Board comprised of local Councillors and was chaired by Asif Hamid

MBE with Councillor Marion Atkinson as Deputy Chair and was supported by an Executive team from the Combined Authority.

In terms of the evidence base he stated that one of the main challenges for the City Region was that its business base was too small - it was the third lowest of all LEP areas in the UK. A lot of businesses started up in Liverpool but there was an issue around business survival with the result that most of the businesses that started up failed within five years. That presented a challenge in terms of the economy and meant that growth and jobs had to rely on a smaller business base than most other locations. There was also an issue in respect of business growth in that there were not that many high growth businesses in the economy. High growth businesses made up about 3% of the UK economy but they generated around 50% of its growth. There was also a lack of business growth infrastructure that went with them e.g. seed funds. Lastly, it would be necessary to drive productivity. There was a small number of high productive businesses and some medium sized companies in the region but there were also a lot of medium to low productivity businesses with not enough absorption of innovation to drive that growth. The evidence base highlighted that these were the fundamental issues which needed to be tackled as a City Region and therefore they would be the focus of the Business Portfolio going forward.

An extensive mapping of the business support ecosystem had taken place which had looked at what the gaps were compared to other successful locations and the Combined Authority together with the Board and with colleagues across the City Region would be looking at filling those gaps through various programmes and funding streams. In respect of innovation again this was a hugely important area and he referred to the launch of the Innovation Prospectus in Westminster earlier this year by Steve Rotheram and alongside that was the refreshed Science and Innovation Audit. They had identified where the strengths were and provided a platform for where future innovation investment needed to take place, some of which was already happening. Projects such as the Future Innovation Fund, High Growth Innovation Fund, UKRI Innovation Launchpad were emerging in the innovation space. There was also an Inward Investment Service which was funded until June 2023 and which it was hoped would be renewed. The service promoted the City Region's high value sector and was about attracting some of those high value, high quality jobs into the City Region and despite the fact that the last couple of years had been difficult for everyone throughout the pandemic it had managed to attract 75 inward investments over the last two and a half years and had a strong pipeline. Out of those 75 projects the most common areas of investment had been in advanced manufacturing, digital and creative and health and life sciences and they were exactly the kind of innovative, high value productive sectors that it was aimed to attract growth into in order to provide the higher value jobs and productivity that the City Region needed. It was noted that in the financial year 2021/22 those investment projects had attracted over 400 jobs into the City Region.

The Business Growth Service worked with local authorities and Chambers of Commerce to provide a joined up approach to simplify and co-ordinate that business support network. A High Growth Programme had recently been launched with Combined Authority support to try and find businesses which had some high growth ambition to help them become high growth businesses. The service was doing a lot of work around resilience to help businesses to survive but also to identify those businesses with great potential. A watching brief was being kept over the Freeport, although that had its own Board comprising the Metro Mayor, several Council Leaders, and businesses etc., but the ambition was that the Freeport would be used as a force for good to complement and add value to the City Region rather than competing with it. In order to attract investment and support businesses it was necessary to have the right commercial property offer and therefore an active interest would be required to understand what was happening in that space. Whilst a lot had been done in respect of funds to try and stimulate and develop plans to bring forward sites for development there was still a lot more to be done. He referred to the changing nature of the

landscape and the fact that what business were looking for was changing. If the aim was to attract the best businesses it would be necessary to have the right sites and premises available and businesses were increasingly looking for a campus style environment. There were a few of those campus sites in the City Region already such as Paddington and the Knowledge Quarter. What had been seen in terms of inward investment was that businesses from outside of the area were attracted to those campus environments and therefore this was something that needed to be focused on and would be a big challenge going forward.

The pandemic meant that the focus of the board had had to shift overnight. A number of issues had been identified and the priority became about business survival and supporting businesses through the pandemic. The board had worked with over 10,000 businesses during the pandemic across the City Region and provided business support to help with their survival through the LEP/Growth Platform business support network. He stated that this had been a hugely challenging and demanding period, but it had been a great piece of collaborative work. In this period over 4,400 local businesses had been directly provided with grants totalling £45m which had mainly been funded by Central Government to support their survival and backed by the Combined Authority and administered through local authorities and the Growth Platform. Surprisingly, over the same period, despite the pandemic, the City Region had attracted 75 new inward investments predominantly in advanced manufacturing, health & life sciences, digital, creative and technology projects. This was encouraging as the basic premise of the City Region and its attractiveness was something to build upon. One of the programmes had focused on providing business resilience, survival and growth support in collaboration with Combined Authority colleagues and supported by the LEP/Growth Platform network which included Mettle, Sustain, Business Resilience and Kindred. As an organisation the focus had shifted to getting the City Region business community through this so that as the pandemic ended it would come out on the other side with a really ambitious and progressive plan for growth. However, it had now been hit with a second global crisis.

As a result of all the interventions and support over the last two years the rate of business failures had reduced and the rate of net additional business had increased, expanding the City Region business population in the last 12 months by over 2,000 to 74,849 businesses. However, a lot of the businesses were not in a great financial position, particularly in the hospitality sector, and that was something it would need to be very mindful of over the next 12 months.

Mark Basnett stated there was a whole range of future business challenges ahead. The country had emerged from the pandemic to a second global crisis which meant there would be a complete change from how things had been done previously. The era of globalisation, where everything had been farmed out to lower cost locations such as China and the Far East in terms of production and the reliance on cheap energy from Russia, that age of globalisation had effectively ended with the challenges in Russia and some of the associated concerns around China. Many businesses had been weakened by the pandemic and were highly vulnerable to unprecedented spikes in energy costs. This would be completely unsustainable for many businesses and would be a significant risk. This changing environment would likely see a repatriation of supply chains into western economies which could provide a real opportunity for the City Region in that space. There were also issues around accelerated digitisation and remote working which would have an effect on changing the office workplace and practice if the model of hybrid working continued. Most businesses were reporting skill shortages and rising wage costs. Despite all the growth which had happened over the last ten years there was still a considerable difference between the wealthy and non-wealthy and high levels of deprivation were still being seen within communities. The economic models had not addressed that so there needed to be a rebalancing in that space and the Board needed to recognise that. So it would be necessary to support sustainable, inclusive, productive and competitive growth in businesses to help

respond to those challenges and these were issues that would be taken forward as a LEP and the Growth Platform but also through the Business and Innovation Board.

When the Board had last met with the Committee it had been given some great advice and interrogation which had been really valued. A lot had been learnt from each other in those interactions. It had been a cathartic process and therefore the Board was very happy to come back to this group to get that challenge and insight and to understand the issues from its perspective. Following the pandemic in early 2021 the Government had questioned the future of LEPs and by February 2022 they had decided that where there was a Combined Authority they wanted Local Enterprise Partnerships to integrate with that Combined Authority. So that process had started in April 2022 and work had been ongoing with colleagues to look at how that could be achieved in the most effective way. A plan had been submitted to Government as to how that was expected to work which essentially looked to strengthen and refresh the LEP Boards in order to be more helpful to Combined Authority policy and delivery and to retain and develop the City Region Growth Company (Growth Platform) for business support and investment. The functions would very much continue but the LEP brand and essence being a separate entity would gradually dissolve over the coming months. A LEP would still remain in existence in other parts of the country where there was not a Combined Authority. Work was being undertaken to look at how the boards could be strengthened and the conversation had been expanded to include local authorities, Combined Authorities and Chambers as to how the whole business ecosystem was going to work. For example, who would interact with businesses and how to ensure that the right support was being given to the right businesses in a balanced way across the City Region. That review was being undertaken at the moment and would be reported at the end of the calendar year.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had welcomed and approved the role and work of the LEP and had made a suite of practical recommendations to further enhance the Boards and ensure ongoing feedback with the Committee and these included:

- Sharing of LEP Annual Performance Review process and decisions – this had happened in March 2021 but when the pandemic hit that process took a back seat. There had been two Performance Reviews in 2021 and 2022 and both of those had achieved an excellent result and had been described as a good model. All of the committed objectives and targets had been delivered jointly with the Combined Authority in the period that the LEP had operated.
- Sharing of Performance Dash Board and involvement in Annual Conference – some of the dashboards had been shared but some of the governance arrangements around dashboards etc had not happened and it had been necessary to cancel the Annual Conference as it could not be attended in person due to the pandemic.
- Support Business Resilience and increase SME on Boards – a huge amount of work had been undertaken around business resilience and increased SME participation had been seen on our boards. A lot more had also been done around diversity and inclusion to ensure that ethnic diversity was achieved on our boards and the Chair of the Race Equality Working Group was also now on the main LEP Board.
- Carbon Audit and Carbon Reduction measures – there had been less progress in this area as there was very little resource available to businesses to undertake this sort of audit work. He was hoping that through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund there would be some resource that could be tapped into. However, this was an area that needed to be focused on. There were lots of commercial services out there for businesses around audit work and businesses had been encouraged to take that up but for some businesses it would be necessary to do a bit more encouragement and support.

- Support Apprenticeships – a lot of work had been undertaken on supporting apprenticeships. The board had helped in getting hundreds of new apprenticeships out there within the business community.
- Communicate Achievements/Success/Impacts – the Committee was keen that more work should be done in this area but it had not been possible as the focus had been on supporting the business community.
- Measure Social Value/Impact – this was a longer term priority/challenge. How would the social value and impact be measured in respect of the interventions that were being made in terms of making a difference to our poorer communities. This was an area which needed more work and it had not been taken forward as fully as had been intended.

It was noted that these recommendations had been partially achieved but the pandemic and the LEP Review had impacted on fuller implementation.

Councillor Steve Radford said that if Merseyside was suffering a greater level of failures than other LEPs was there anything that other LEP areas were doing to combat that problem which could be learned from.

Mark Basnett responded that some of this was down to the economic structure and the nature of businesses in the region. Many of the businesses that had started up were in the more vulnerable sectors such as hospitality, retail and personal services. There had been far fewer business starts in the higher growth or tradable services. What could be seen in some of the other areas was a focus of resources around those businesses which were likely to generate income from outside of the region or country. Some areas, such as the North East, provided very little general business support and focused on those businesses which made the biggest contribution. It was a balancing act as Merseyside had tried to provide a support of some kind universally for all businesses particularly through the pandemic but increasingly it would be necessary to focus on building and supporting those business that had the greatest economic impact potential.

Councillor Edna Finneran asked whether Brexit had had an impact on the UK trading with Europe and whether there had been any benefits of leaving the European Union?

Mark Basnett felt that he would struggle to find any business which had benefited from Brexit. It had created many of challenges and bureaucracy in trading with Europe for businesses. For the first 12 months of the EU transition period a lot of work had been undertaken with businesses to help them navigate the new arrangements of selling goods overseas and importing goods. In some areas there were tariffs which had not been helpful. If there was a significant value in it a lot of businesses would continue to trade but some businesses had stopped trading with Europe because it had become too difficult. His experience was that businesses had only ever found it a problem and there was some analysis that it had reduced our exports and had therefore had a negative impact across the UK.

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce queried whether local authorities or large organisations in the Merseyside region were being encouraged to use those Merseyside businesses or start-ups that were being supported in the procurement process as a first port of call. It was not necessary to be driven by the EU procurement process as had been the case in the past and therefore our own process could be used.

Mark Basnett replied that there was a great opportunity in both using local businesses and improving the take up of local businesses but also in driving some of the key criteria around social priorities and sustainability and it was very legitimate to start using that sort of criteria now that the UK had been freed from some of the previous requirements. There had

been quite a bit of talk about that issue but he did not think it had translated into comprehensive action as yet but there was certainly interest in it. There was a recognition that that was a power those big organisations had and certainly it would apply to local authorities. The Combined Authority had done a lot of work in looking at which sort of businesses it would support and it only provided funding to those businesses who were good employers. If a business wanted to get some help from the public sector it should expect to fulfil the criteria of a good employer. Work had commenced to look at how more local businesses could be helped to bid so there was a supply and demand side which needed to be worked on.

Councillor Burgess-Joyce asked why the skills gap had not been looked at in order to support them to support us. There seemed to be a bit of a gap in the middle to help these start-ups to maintain their business.

Mark Basnett confirmed that a few examples of that sort of work had been seen where organisations were almost entering into partnerships with smaller businesses to pull them through. There were certain rules around what could be done in that space but there was a recognition that there was a need to upskill and people who were experts in procurement were the perfect people to provide the skills for those businesses to understand what it took to pass those criteria. This was something that was in the pipeline, but it had not been translated as far as it should have been as yet. He stated that it was good to have these sorts of challenges raised as they could be taken away in order to initiate further work in this area.

Councillor Tricia O'Brien was very aware that the pandemic had adversely affected things and Brexit had not helped either. She was interested to know what had happened about Education as there had been a lot of discussions about career and talent development in school and she knew how much children had suffered as a result of being taught from home during the pandemic. She asked what had happened in respect of career development for those children and sought reassurance that it would be taken up again in the future.

Mark Basnett stated that all the planned work in classrooms in schools had obviously had to stop during the pandemic for all of the right reasons. The team had worked with Heads and Career Heads to move to online resources. He admitted that it had not been the same for young people but the team had worked with local employers to put together video materials and accessible interactive materials for an online presence so at least there was a library of resources available to them. That was now in place but all of the in-school and face to face work had now recommenced. The team worked and engaged with 134 schools including all the SEND schools across the City Region. He stated that the amount of funding available from Government was nowhere near enough as the transition from education to employment was so important to get right. He stressed that the team had worked incredibly hard to make this a priority and good progress was still being made.

Councillor Julie McManus referred to the sustainable supply chains and following on from what Councillor Burgess-Joyce had said she thought the OJEU Regulations were a bit of an excuse not to procure locally. She had worked for the local Regional Development Agency some years ago who had talked about local supply chains then with quite some success, so it had always been a key issue. She was aware of a training organisation based on the Wirral that had lost their contract with the City Region to a national organisation and being a Wirral Councillor she was upset about that because of the local work they had done and the social impact that had had. She would like some answers on that and she confirmed that she would send the details through.

Mark Basnett responded that he was aware of several businesses locally that lost out in that employment support and procurement exercise. A number had been in contact

directly and discussions had taken place with the Combined Authority but it might be a different case and therefore he encouraged her to share the information because locally delivered provision was important provided that it was of sufficient quality.

Councillor Eddie Dourley noted that there was a lot of detail available about successful businesses and he asked whether there was any kind of detail on those that had failed e.g. the size and nature of the businesses sector by sector. Also in regard to The Chest he stated that he had worked with a lot of small and medium enterprises who had bid for tenders on Chest and they had not been successful because bigger businesses were able to employ professional tender writers and the smaller companies could not compete with that.

Mark Basnett felt that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund could possibly be used to help businesses to employ professional tender writers and that would be a great use of resource as it was not just about winning business locally but would also help to bring businesses in from outside the region. There had already been some support in that space and discussions had taken place in regard to supply chains in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and he thought that there was an opportunity to help resource SMEs in that space. In terms of the first point he confirmed that he would ask the team to produce an analysis as he thought it would be helpful for everyone to see that. Most of the fall off tended to be in very small micro businesses due to the fact that often people who started did not have the necessary networks, experience or money and it was known as 'necessity entrepreneurship' due to the fact that people did not have an alternative.

Councillor Steve Radford noted that the Ministry of Defence was looking at relocating 140+ business service support staff from Liverpool to Blackpool and he queried whether the local authority had been consulted about that relocation and was there any way of counter bidding.

Mark Basnett confirmed that he would take that away and report back on that.

Councillor Trisha Long felt that the sustainable supply chain and local procurement was an important issue and she asked for reassurance that this was something that would be looked at as a matter of urgency.

Mark Basnett gave a commitment that the Portfolio Board would look at it. However, in order to look at this properly additional resources would be required to provide the professional support that had been suggested. It also needed absorption within the larger organisations to have a willingness to do that. He confirmed that a discussion would take place with colleagues within the Combined Authority to try and accelerate that. The message had come across loud and clear from a number of Members of the Committee and he would take that away and report back.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

19 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE IMPROVING DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor John Abbott presented a report which set out the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Improving Disability Employment Opportunities across the Liverpool City Region. He said that this was an area he had been involved in for over 20 years and it was very important to him. He thanked all the LCR staff for organising and facilitating the meetings and he also thanked the Members of the Committee as it had been quite challenging doing hybrid meetings. He stated that he had learnt a lot especially from the people who had brought their lived experiences to the meeting and shared them with the

experts. Some of the issues had stopped people from being able to fully access employment. He felt that from a City Region and its constituent local authorities perspective civic leadership could be shown together with an indication as to what was felt to be right and proper.

The key three recommendations focused on the following areas:

- ethical procurement by encouraging companies to share our values around inclusion and disabilities;
- looking at LCR best practice across the board in all of our boroughs; and
- engaging with employers to move this forward.

There was still prejudice and stereotyping of people with disabilities and assumptions were often made which had come through in people's life experiences. But rather than just focusing on the nuance of language and the current working practices the Task Group had looked at practical steps to make a difference to people's real lives.

He felt that the report did reflect the wide ranging discussions that had taken place in the Task Group and a fourth recommendation was being put forward. It was proposed that LCR should encourage the constituent local authorities to publicise and promote Access to Work in their localities. The Access to Work scheme was a scheme through which people could access transport and equipment free of charge which would enable them to physically get to the workplace or office. However, it was hundreds of millions of pounds under claimed across the country and millions of pounds in this City Region. There were people in the region who could do the job if they could just get to the workplace. He felt that this work could be led by the local councils, through its newsletters and promotions, to publicise this fantastic scheme which he was sure would make a difference.

Councillor Trisha Long fully agreed with the comments made by Councillor Abbott and she shared his passion in reducing and eliminating inequalities in this area. It was good to see such a strong set of recommendations which were just the start of making a real difference to people with disabilities. She was mindful of the fact that there was a wide diversity under the generic term of disability, and she felt that an effort should be made in terms of developing the recommendations to ensure that the term 'disability' did not lose or hide all the different variations of disabilities in that term e.g. people who were neuro diverse, visually impaired or British Sign Language users.

Councillor Long asked if it would be possible for an Officer to look at working that point into the recommendations if agreed by Members. Councillor Abbott felt that it was important. In Halton 22% of people had a disability and he could see no harm in having a definition of disability and what was meant by that in the introduction to the report.

Trudy Bedford advised that in terms of Councillor Abbott's request around expanding the Access to Work Scheme in the second recommendation it talked about the Combined Authority being a champion and promoting the DWP Disability Confident Scheme and Access to Work scheme and she asked if Members would be happy to broaden that out to include the Combined Authority and constituent local authorities. In terms of Councillor Long's point in respect of disability Officers would go through the report to look at the language that had been used and to encompass some sort of definition in there. In terms of next steps if approved by this Committee the report would go to the Combined Authority and if agreed the recommendations would be implemented and come back to this Committee with an action plan which would include a timeframe for the implementation of those recommendations so that Members could track the recommendations to ensure that they were implemented.

RESOLVED - That the recommendations set out in the report be approved and that recommendation two would be expanded to accommodate the further recommendation proposed by Councillor Abbott that LCR should encourage the constituent local authorities to publicise and promote Access to Work in their localities.

20 RACE EQUALITY PROGRAMME

Lorna Rogers, Assistant Director – Mayoral Programme Delivery, provided an overview of recent progress in relation to the Combined Authority Race Equality Programme which had been established in 2020, and an update on progress against targets which had been set in the Race Equality Declaration of Intent.

Following the murder of George Floyd the Combined Authority response to this had been to establish a programme to support Black Asian and Minority Ethnic employees and residents and to tackle systemic injustice and drive some positive change. It had been agreed to focus on the economic disparities and employment and exclusion from employment and how important that was to people's life chances. It was felt that this was an area where the most impact would be. In March 2021, a Declaration of Intent had been agreed which set out a series of targets and was a public facing commitment of what it was wanted to achieve in this space. Funding had also been secured from the Combined Authority to deliver a number of projects to help achieve those targets. There was a lot of evidence, research and data that showed the kinds of lower life satisfaction and outcomes for a number of different groups within the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. But there was also a lot of evidence and research around to demonstrate that economic benefit could be brought to the region if that employment gap could be closed and the fact that diverse teams were more profitable.

The slides noted the achievements set out in the Declaration of Intent which it was hoped would be achieved by 2025 in terms of the Combined Authority as an employer, a commissioner and as a civic leader/facilitator. Procurement featured in this work as well and also the wider SMEs as it was known that the local supply chain did need to pause in accessing contracts so some of this work would complement the wider work that was needed and which had been alluded to in the earlier presentation. There were some real tangible targets that had been set that the authority wanted to be held accountable to achieve and there was a timetable to do that.

Lorna Rogers highlighted a range of indicators that had been looked at that demonstrated across all different stages of a person's life and was the rationale as to why this kind of work was required.

There were six projects that sat across three workstreams. The Generations for Change project which consisted of six creative research placements for young people was now closed as it had been completed. Updates on the other projects were set out below.

The Race Equality Hub was the largest project that sat within the programme and work was being undertaken to co-design what it was thought the hub should deliver to help address the economic disparities for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic businesses and individuals. It was believed that the hub would deliver a support service around employment and business support but also to work with organisations both large and small to help them diversify their workforce. The hub had a number of subject matter experts who had supported the establishment of a Development Board and they had undertaken a number of co-design workshops with individuals and businesses and over 500 people had been engaged in that process to help to develop the Business Plan. There were a number of options that were currently being looked at in terms of the best way to take that forward and that would be

shared with the Executive Team next month and then it would come through to the Combined Authority later on in the year.

The World Reimagined was a ground-breaking national arts education project aimed at using the story of the transatlantic slave trade to promote racial justice and the part our region had played in it. The project went live in line with the national programme on 13 August 2022 and would end on 31 October 2022. There were six other cities nationally that were taking part in this. There had been lots of engagement from schools. Over 41 schools and community organisations had been engaged in the production of smaller learning globes which had been dotted across the region. It was also hoped to have some celebration events across October. It was a positive way for the community to engage with a ringfenced subject and to get people to learn from it.

The Learning and Development Collaboration Project was something that had been initiated very early on and involved working closely with local authorities to develop an anti-racism training course, to be delivered to 21,000 local authority and Combined Authority employees over the next two years. This project should be impactful and different to the equality training that had happened in the past and therefore it would need to have lived experience and a local voice. The authority was working with a supplier to develop the content following which it would be piloted with 1,500 staff prior to rolling it out further. A local person was helping to provide the local voice so that it would be meaningful.

The Positive Action Project was the internal work that was being undertaken with HR colleagues as to how to drive our representation as an organisation. One of the things that had been introduced was that all of the job adverts and opportunities were being advertised externally which had seen a bit of an increase in terms of numbers – an increase to 3.4% of Combined Authority representation from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff. However, there was further work to be done and there was an internal project which was looking at where jobs were advertised and to encourage people to come and work here and that learning could be shared across other organisations as well. In addition, officers were in the final stages of finalising the contract with LJMU for delivery of the reverse mentoring programme, which would see 20 senior leaders from across the Combined Authority paired with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents from across the Liverpool City Region.

The Chair noted that two Members had now left the meeting and therefore it was inquorate. However, as this report was only to note it would not need to go to the next meeting for ratification.

Councillor Trisha Long thanked Lorna Rogers for the report and she was really impressed with the work that had taken place. In the report it stated that there were 41 schools that had been engaged to date across the City Region with the construction of globes and she queried whether it was open for more schools to participate or not. Lorna Rogers responded that further schools could take part and there were learning materials available free on the national website for all schools to access. It was also hoped to have some events in Black History Month in October that schools could participate and engage in.

Councillor Carran Waterfield referred to the World Reimagined project and in particular around the procurement of artists and asked what the spread was in terms of all the different boroughs involved in that. She asked if the artists had been locally drawn and in terms of the national organisation that was being worked with would some of that learning cascade into this region so that it could start to grow projects instead of importing things from elsewhere as it would be more cost effective.

Lorna Rogers replied that she would be happy to come back on that issue. The 10 large globes had been commissioned by a national organisation and they had commissioned

two local artists but there were others who were international or from other parts of the country. In terms of the learning globes a local commission had been made for that and the authority had supported them in making sure that they could access schools and community organisations. The authority was very conscious of the legacy and making sure that that stayed within the region so she would be happy to feedback on that. Legacy plans were in place for when the project finished as the aim was to continue on with the learning and all the work that had been done.

Councillor Waterfield asked how discussions with each of the boroughs and the art centres would work. Would it be grown from a local perspective or was it another example of something being led from the top down. How were these projects being grown locally within the boroughs as well as within the region.

Lorna Rogers responded that for this project a steering group had been set up and Cultural Leads from some of the local authorities had sat on that group and very much shaped how it would happen and evolve in the region but there had also been a number of cultural partnerships and organisations. The Cultural Lead from the Combined Authority had taken the lead on that in making sure that it was plugged in to all of the creative and cultural organisations and different forums.

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce referred to paragraph 3.2.3 on page 17 of the report. It talked about the course being delivered to 21,000 local authority employees and he wondered what the actual cost of that would be given that 21,000 people would be taken out of the business.

Lorna Rogers stated that the actual delivery cost had been included in the £3.2m but in terms of delivery of the content work was being undertaken with the local authorities as to how they would release staff to attend. There needed to be some flexibility to make sure that frontline staff were covered and that was currently work in progress to make sure that there were no staff shortages. She confirmed that it was a half day training session and work was ongoing as to how backfills would be covered off.

Councillor Burgess-Joyce asked if the staff costs would be covered off in any way on top of the £3.2m that was being paid for the actual design and delivery. Lorna Rogers confirmed that the £3.2m was the total programme budget which included the development work as well as the training. If Councillor Burgess-Joyce wanted a further breakdown of that project Learning and Development would be able to provide that.

Councillor Mancyia Uddin referred to the Reverse Mentoring project and noted that it stated that it would involve senior leaders across the Combined Authority. She asked if that would also include staff from across the constituent local authorities in the region.

Lorna Rogers confirmed that the Combined Authority Senior Leadership Team would be involved in the project. It was something that the Combined Authority had initiated as an organisation but if local authorities wanted to take that forward she would be happy to provide the information.

Councillor James Hansen asked if the 41 schools taking part in the World Reimagined project had been evenly spread across the region or was it more concentrated in certain areas.

Lorna Rogers confirmed that there was a spread across the region so there were schools across all the boroughs and city which had benefitted from that project. She would be happy to share the specific schools. Councillor Hansen confirmed that he had attended a school where 95% of pupils were white Catholic and there had been very little experience of

projects like this. He therefore thought it was important to reach out to those sorts of schools where there might only be a handful of BAME students in one year group and a handful of BAME teachers. Lorna Rogers agreed that it was important to reach out to those schools.

RESOLVED – That the inquorate meeting:

- (i) note the contents of the report and plans for achieving the targets set in the Declaration of Intent; and
- (ii) requested that feedback on progress to date and the next steps for the Programme be provided to a future meeting.

21 INQUORATE MEETING

The Chair, Councillor Steve Radford advised that the meeting was inquorate. He advised that he was supportive of continuing with the meeting as an informal discussion and asked the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer, Jill Coule to advise on how the meeting would proceed.

Jill Coule explained that any decisions or recommendations made by the meeting would be on an advisory basis only and would be re-considered at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the new Municipal Year.

Councillor John Abbott expressed his disappointment regarding the level of attendance by members and felt that there should be some recourse to challenge non-attendance. He praised the work of Democratic Services who did everything possible to ensure that meetings would be quorate.

The Chair, Councillor Radford, concurred with Councillor Abbott's disappointment and asked Jill Coule, Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer to respond.

Jill Coule advised that this was a problem experienced by all Mayoral Combined Authorities due to the high level of quorum. Representations had been made on this issue on several occasions, including a recent conversation with Government on the issue.

The Chair, Councillor Radford expressed his gratitude for the support he had received in his role and acknowledged that Officers had made tremendous effort to ensure that meetings were quorate. He suggested that members may wish to feedback informally to their own Authority on the issue.

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce thanked the Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram for taking the time to attend Committee meetings and he acknowledged the problem with the high level of quorum required. He referred to the selection process for membership of the Committee and felt that a formal request should be sent to Local Authorities to nominate members who are able to attend and participate in meetings of the Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Radford requested that Jill Coule write to the six Local Authority Chief Executives to reiterate the high level of quorum and ask that discussions take place with prospective nominees regarding the importance of attendance at Committee meetings to ensure that decision making can take place.

Councillor Pat Moloney asked if it would be beneficial to supply Local Authorities with details of member attendance for this past year for inclusion within the papers for their Annual Meetings where representatives are appointed to serve on this Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Radford advised that attendance information was available to view publicly on the Combined Authority website.

22 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Councillor James Hansen stated that the discussion in the briefing on the Local Transport Plan had been interesting and he felt that it would be useful to set up a Task and Finish group to look at the challenges going forward as Members had raised some concerns.

Trudy Bedford confirmed that she had already been in discussions with the Lead Officer as to how the Committee could be engaged with LTP4. It was the intention to bring the policy development of the Strategy to the Committee, but she took on board the point made and would speak to the Lead Officer about how that could be incorporated into a Task and Finish Group.

Minutes 15 to 22 received as a correct record on the 1 day of December 2022.

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Chair of the Committee

The meeting closed at 3.23 pm