

GLASGOW CITY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP.

Item 2 (b)

5th November 2024

Minutes of meeting held on 25th July 2024 by video conference.

- Present:** Susanne Millar, Glasgow City Council (Chair); Heather Holland, East Dunbartonshire Council (substitute for Ann Davie); Steven Quinn, East Renfrewshire Council; Louise Long, Inverclyde Council; Barbara Walker, Renfrewshire Council (substitute for Alan Russell); David Booth, South Lanarkshire Council (substitute for Paul Manning); Derek Smeall, Colleges Partnership West; Des McNulty, Commission on Economic Growth; Stuart Patrick, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce; Ian Bruce, GCVS; Pamela Smith, Public Health Scotland; Jane Martin, Scottish Enterprise; Valerie Davidson, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport; Paul Zealey, Skills Development Scotland (substitute for Damien Yeates); and Laura Barker, Graham Bissell, Andrew Docherty and Jamie Thompson, UK Government.
- Apologies:** Ann Davie, East Dunbartonshire Council; Alan Russell, Renfrewshire Council; Paul Manning, South Lanarkshire Council; Peter Hessest, West Dunbartonshire Council; Kevin Kane, GEL (Glasgow Economic Leadership); Damien Yeates, Skills Development Scotland; and Bob Grant, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce.
- Attending:** M Hughes (Clerk); K Rush, C Keaveny, P Kilby, M McNally, V McNeice, R Nimmo, A Robertson, G Smith and J Thompson, Glasgow City Region.

Welcome and introduction.

- 1 Susanne Millar (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

- 2 There was submitted and approved the minutes of 1st February 2024.

Glasgow City Region Intelligence Hub – Economic briefing – Presentation noted etc.

- 3 The Partnership heard an economic briefing presentation by Andrew Robertson, Manager, Glasgow City Region (GCR) Intelligence Hub, highlighting that
 - (1) the UK Economy had returned to growth, with the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics demonstrating double the expected growth for Gross Domestic Product;

- (2) the latest data had shown an increasingly weak labour market across the UK and had summarised the latest headline estimates and quarterly changes, seasonally adjusted from March to May 2024, as detailed in the slides;
- (3) worklessness remained an issue for Regional productivity and significant challenges faced the UK and Regional labour market;
- (4) low pay in the foundational economy remained an issue and despite the successes of the national minimum wage, critically important sectors like social care remained amongst the lowest paid in the country;
- (5) the fiscal challenges for the new Government, and that according to the Institute for Government, most public services were performing worse than before the 2019 election, and far worse than in 2010, while public spend had also increased;
- (6) crucial to the new Government's fiscal plans would be productivity growth, which had stagnated since the financial crisis;
- (7) devolution of skill planning to a regional level would allow GCR to align policy to Regional business needs; and
- (8) the new Government would need to address centralisation of policy development, noting that Labour had committed to deepening devolution for combined authorities but clarity was required on what this might mean for GCR.

After consideration, the Partnership

- (a) noted
 - (i) the presentation;
 - (ii) the productivity challenges facing the GCR; and
 - (iii) that the findings of a Health at Work Review recently carried out by Public Health Scotland which had focused on a number of issues, including economic inactivity, would be circulated to the Partnership; and
- (b) agreed that aspects of the presentation data be broken down into individual local authority areas.

Post General Election Update – Presentation noted etc.

4 The Partnership heard a post General Election update presentation by Graham Bissell, Laura Barker, Andrew Docherty and Jamie Thompson, Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government,

- (1) highlighting the funded activity to date and progress on the current status and potential new approaches of a number of UK Government (UKG) funded schemes, including the Levelling Up Fund, the Glasgow City Region (GCR) Shared Prosperity Fund, the GCR Investment Zone and Innovation Accelerators, and Long Term Plans for Towns; and
- (2) providing a summary of
 - (a) those elements of the UKG manifesto that related to devolving power and funding to the regions and local authorities;
 - (b) a proposal to establish a Council of the Nations and Regions and how this might work for Scottish City Regions that didn't have directly elected mayors;
 - (c) the establishment of GB Energy, which would have its headquarters in Scotland and the opportunities that this offered for Glasgow City Region;
 - (d) the development of Local Growth Plans in England, with the Government having promised a new approach to growth and that providing clarity on the future of local growth funding was a Government priority;
 - (e) the devolution of adult skills funding in England following the establishment of Skills England and that UKG colleagues were keen to engage with devolved Governments and Territorial Offices as early as possible;
 - (f) the Warm Homes Plan, and how the UKG would partner with local and devolved Governments to roll out this plan; and
 - (g) of proposals in England in relation to the planning process, providing additional resources for local authority planning to accelerate development, especially for brownfield/grey belt sites.

After consideration, the Partnership noted

- (i) the presentation;
- (ii) that as Skills England developed, it was important to understand how its development might be mirrored within the GCR;
- (iii) that both Governments were keen to reach agreement as soon as possible on the proposed approaches in terms of the existing UKG schemes, such as the Investment Zone, Shared Prosperity Fund etc, however at this time, no guarantees could be given; and
- (v) a willingness to engage in discussions with both Governments whilst also recognising the specific progress that GCR had made over the last 10 years.

Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan – Update for 2024/25 – Position noted etc.

5 There was submitted a report by the Regional Partnership Manager regarding a draft update of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Action Plan for 2024/25, advising

- (1) of the background to the RES which had been approved by the Glasgow City Region (GCR) Cabinet on 7th December 2021, with the Action Plan being subsequently approved by Cabinet on 30th August 2023;
- (2) that the update set out within the report had been undertaken prior to moving into the third year of delivery and reflected progress made to date in delivering the initial actions, and changes to the broader policy context, with the proposed changes being made to the Action Plan and the RES. where the grand challenges and missions had remained unchanged;
- (3) that since approval of the first Action Plan there had been significant developments to the policy context, both nationally and within GCR, including:
 - (a) securing over £350m of additional investment to the GCR through the Shared Prosperity Fund, Innovation Accelerator, Investment Zone and Clyde Mission;
 - (b) the ongoing City Deal Reprogramming exercise;
 - (c) the adoption of Community Wealth Building objectives;
 - (d) national policies in relation to Net Zero; and
 - (e) changes to the skills system, signalled through the Withers' Report;
- (4) of an updated version of the Action Plan, as detailed in an Appendix to the report, which had included a new 'Commercial Land and Property Programme'; and
- (5) that the GCR Programme Management Office and Intelligence Hub would develop a Performance Management Framework which would link the outputs and outcomes from the programmes and demonstrate their contributions to the RES missions and grand challenges.

After consideration, the Partnership

- (i) noted the content of the report; and
- (ii) agreed that the updated draft, reflecting feedback from the Economic Delivery Group, be submitted to the Cabinet on 6th August 2024 with a recommendation to approve the update for 2024/25.

Future Skills Programme: Regional Skills Devolution Group – Verbal update noted.

6 With reference to the minutes of 1st February 2024 approving a draft proposal on regional skills devolution, the Partnership noted a verbal update by Derek Smeall, Colleges Partnership West, regarding the ongoing work of the Regional Skills Devolution Group (RSDG), highlighting that

- (1) the Scottish Government (SG) response to the skills ‘ask’ which had been drafted by Professor Alan McGregor, Glasgow University on behalf of the RSDG and Glasgow City Region (GCR), and which had focused on 4 initial areas, had been received in May 2024 and had been considered by the RSDG on 26th June 2024, who had felt that the response was broadly positive and supported the overall aspirations of the Region, however, there was no commitment to re-align existing budgets as requested, particularly around apprenticeships;
- (2) a follow-up meeting between the RSDG Chair and SG Lead was being scheduled to decide on how best to move forward; and
- (3) in the meantime, GCR representatives would continue to progress activity on specific sectors and employer engagement activity.

Glasgow City Region Investment Zone – Verbal update noted.

7 The Partnership noted a verbal update by Mike McNally, Head of the Shared Prosperity Fund regarding the Glasgow City Region Investment Zone (GCRIZ), highlighting that

- (1) GCR had submitted the Gateway 2 (Sector & Geography) template to the UK & Scottish Governments (UKG and SG), following GCR Cabinet approval on 13th February 2024 and the sectoral focus of the GCR IZ was Advanced Manufacturing & Precision Engineering and the geography being the Glasgow City Region;
- (2) Mike McNally and Andrew Robertson, GCR Intelligence Hub Manager, had met with the UKG and SG this morning who had confirmed that it would be mid-August before there was any feedback, following input from individual Government departments;
- (3) at this point there was no clarification from civil servants on the impact of the outcome of the UK General Election and proposed next steps for the development of the GCRIZ, and it was expected that there would be no further detail in advance of the UK Parliament summer recess;
- (4) following this morning’s meeting, the GCR Programme Management Office (PMO) would provide the UKG and SG with the additional detail on the

outcome of the GCRIZ Strategic Assessment Plan, together with clarifications that had been requested, and that the PMO had requested feedback from the UKG and SG; and

- (5) given the governance role of the GCR Cabinet in relation to GCRIZ there might be a requirement for an additional Cabinet meeting in Autumn 2024, to agree the final project selection.

Glasgow City Region – Regional Partnership performance report noted etc.

8 There was submitted a report by the Director of Regional Economic Growth providing a Regional Partnership performance report for the period to 30th June 2024, highlighting

- (1) the economic performance of the Glasgow City Region and the work of the Intelligence Hub;
- (2) the delivery of Regional Economic Strategy programmes and actions; and
- (3) the key activities that had been completed, as well as planned, by the regional partners, all as detailed in the report.

After consideration, the Partnership

- (a) noted the report; and
- (b) agreed proposed new timescales for actions within the Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Date of Next Meeting.

9 It was noted that the next meeting of the Partnership would take place on Thursday, 24th October 2024 at 1400 hours.