

DATE: 15th February 2023	ITEM: 5
SEC Joint Committee	
Report Title: ‘The Next Chapter’- The appointment of consultants to develop and deliver the South Essex Economic Growth Action Plan	
Report of: Tom Walker	
Programme Implementation Director: Ruth Gilbert	
Accountable Programme SRO: Tom Walker	
This report is public	

1.0 Recommendations

The SEC Joint Committee is asked to approve the appointment of Metro Dynamics and Inner Circle Consulting to jointly develop and support the delivery of the South Essex Economic Growth Action Plan

2.0 Executive Summary: The Next Chapter- March 2025+

We share a common ambition to unleash the full potential of South Essex, to add dynamism to our economies, cohesiveness to communities and improvement to the environment, **making South Essex Councils a sustainable, high-impact action-based partnership.**

2.1 Collectively unlocking greater growth and improve productivity across the region

- On the 28th September 2023, the Joint Committee approved prudent expenditure of up to £100,000 to commission expert practical support to develop and implement a South Essex Economic Growth Action Plan. This was to ensure that we maximise opportunities for economic growth and set up for ongoing success throughout the medium and long term.
- On the 6th December 2023, the SEC Joint Committee approved the specification of requirements, including:
 - Understanding our context **& gap analysis** of our current evidence base, projects, and strategies.
 - Identifying a **pipeline of projects** and method for selecting them
 - Developing a **detailed implementation plan** with timelines, responsible parties, and performance indicators- to include **project management and expert support to take the action** therein.
 - Providing **support for monitoring, evaluation,** and communication

2.2 Following an open market invitation to tender, procurement evaluation, and interview process, the interview panel unanimously recommend the joint appointment of Metro Dynamics and Inner Circle Consulting. The panel concluded that they presented a balanced ‘think/do’ partnership (in their words), with a wide breadth of specialist expertise, and experience and knowledge of working within Essex. They provided pertinent reflections on the lessons they learned from working in our region.

3.0 Summary of the procurement process

At the time of writing this report, procurement has been undertaken, with a selection process having taken place which involved South Essex officers and observation of the process and selection by Cllr Baggott.

SEC officers prepared and launched tender:	SEC officer review, December 2023
Brief on tender process for SEC Joint Committee:	Cllr Baggott briefed December 2023 (As Joint Committee representative observer)
Open market invitation to tender:	December 2023 to January 2024
Pre-interview panel scoring:	4 officers (ECC, Southend)
7 respondents to tender:	All 7 respondents interviewed 5 th February 2024
Interview panel:	Scott Logan, Tom Walker, Kevin Waters, Ruth Gilbert Observer- Cllr Baggott Procurement representative- Michael Veasey

3.1 The interview and selection process concluded with the decision to recommend that Metro Dynamics and Inner Circle Consulting be jointly appointed to develop the Action Plan. The two organisations have formed a strategic partnership under the strapline of a ‘think/do’ partnership, to provide these capabilities to SEC across the duration of the assignment from March 2024 to March 2025.

4.0 Conclusions & Next Steps

4.1 Subject to ratification by the SEC Joint Committee, and all due diligence completed, Metro Dynamics and Inner Circle Consulting (the Consulting Team) will be informed and are expected to commence work by the 7th March, with a request to meet all South Essex Leaders and Chief Executives at the earliest possible convenient date.

4.2 The key milestones for delivery of the South Essex Economic Growth Action Plan (‘Plan for Action’) are:

Award Notification:	Subject to Joint Committee ratification 22/2/24
Contract start:	01/03/24
Plan for Action produced:	30/09/24
Ongoing implementation support:	01/10/24-31/03/25
Contract term End:	31/03/25

4.3 SEC officers will then support the induction and briefing of the Consulting Team in early/mid-March 2024, with ongoing engagement to input, and support for implementation of the Plan for Action, ensuring this is aligned with government guidance (published 19th December 2023) for Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) transfer of powers (from 1st April 2024, referenced further under report for Agenda items 6 & 7).

4.4 SEC officers will provide the SEC Joint Committee with an update from the 'South Essex Economic Growth Plan for Action' consultants' appointment at the next meeting on the 26 March 2024.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 Rationale for this commission was approved on the 28 September by the Joint Committee.

6.0 Consultation (if applicable) - N/A

7.0 Impact on policies, priorities, performance, and community impact (if applicable) - N/A

8.0 Implications

8.1 Financial – The Joint Committee approved expenditure up to £100,000 to commission this expert practical support, to ensure that we maximise opportunities for economic growth and set up for ongoing success throughout the medium and long term.

9.0 Appendices to the report – N/A