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**THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY**

**REPORT OF MEETINGS**

**SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP**

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SUMMARY**

*Working together to put our sector first*  
Dumfries and Galloway's Third Sector Interface

## KEY POINTS

1.0 This report is a personal report which sets out key points of interest to the third sector from the REP meeting on 12 February.

### **2. Presentation on progress with the Regional Economic Strategy**

Declan Mackin of RMS presented an interim update on their findings from their desk research, The consultants asked for confirmation that the findings are consistent with the REP's experience and if anything is missing. A monitoring framework will be developed as part of the consultants' brief.

#### **2.1 Key Issues**

The presentation summarised the key issues facing the economy in the South of Scotland:

- Unemployment rates have consistently been lower than Scottish averages
- High levels of self-employment with lower levels of full-time employment
- Significant amount of employment in traditionally lower paid sectors
- Perceived skill gaps & need for wider training opportunities
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- Perceived skill gaps & need for wider training opportunities
- Digital connectivity – improving but variations within the region
- Higher levels of fuel poverty than Scotland as a whole
- Low satisfaction with public transport
- The region attracts a small proportion of international tourists (1.4% of total Scottish visits)
- Higher proportion of housing not meeting quality criteria, when compared to national figures

#### **2.2 Discussion**

Several REP members pointed out the absence of data on protected characteristics, rural deprivation, inclusivity/diversity and land ownership. Others asked for data on child poverty, free school meals, health indicators, number of visitors, homelessness and number of empty properties in high streets. Community capacity and well-being should be part of the research base too.

This strategy will cover the national climate change strategy so this research should cover carbon capture and renewables. What are the anchor organisations for community wealth building and what contributions can they make? Declan Mackin from RMS agreed to look into all of these points. SDS also invited consultants to use the Regional Skills Investment Strategy for information about employment and training.

The brand 'Scotland starts here' promoted by South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) should be acknowledged and used consistently by all sectors in the area. There was discussion about the importance of housing as a driver of skills, employment and community wealth building. And the need to have a focus on infrastructure of all types including digital infrastructure.

Job creation has to be a priority in the developing strategy, especially in the post-Covid recovery. There should be attention on the similarities and the differences between D&G and Scottish Borders, the strategic solutions may not be the same for both areas. The lack of granular data for both areas was recognised by the REP and the consultants.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

The consultant confirmed that all points are taken on board, this presentation should be regarded as a starter for ten. An update will be given at the next REP meeting on 9 March 2021.

