



BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting held on 16th September 2020, at 4.30pm by video conference call

Present

Trevor Brocklebank (Chair)	Graeme Bristow	Chris Hindley	Cllr Russ Bowden
Nichola Newton (Part)	Eunice Simmons (Part)	Peter Broxton	Cllr Craig Browne (Part)
John Downes	Stephen Kinsey	Robert Mee	

In attendance:

Philip Cox	Ian Brooks	Steve Park (WBC)	Gemma Davies (CWaC)
Adrian Bull (for Angie Robinson)	Frank Jordan (CEC)	Alex Thompson (CEC)	Joe Toward (Engagement Board)
Roy Newton			

Apologies

Angie Robinson	Clare Hayward	Joe Manning	Charlie Seward
Nicola Dunbar	Cllr Louise Gittins		

Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 Trevor Brocklebank welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received as above.

Agenda Item 2: Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No conflicts of interest were raised.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 There was no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th July 2020

4.1 The minutes of 15th July 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4.2 TB reviewed the outstanding actions. It was agreed that the corporate risk register would be included as an item on the January board agenda concurrent with other planning matters, e.g. the draft

budget, draft delivery plan for 2021-2022. Clare Hayward is the process of speaking to Board members with respect to filling vacancies on the Sub-board and Committee structures.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's Update

5.1 PC began his update with two additional items not included in his written submission.

5.2 The Emergency Response structures for Covid-19 have been reactivated in response to the rising number of cases in the North West and in the sub-region. While rates of infection had risen in all parts of the sub-region, Warrington was of most concern and the council had issued press releases requesting people did not visit friends or other households. IB had attended the Strategic Command Group meeting earlier in the day and confirmed the high levels of concern by Health officials and Directors of Public Health over the national and local trends. Plans have been developed and approved for a variety of scenarios. The plans seek to strike a balance between health and economic impacts, recognising there are often tensions between the two.

5.3 PC also confirmed the launch of the vision and the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission. Some media exposure is expected in the next few days, organised by PR consultants Influential.

5.4 Preparations for the virtual AGM on 30th September are in their final stages. A high level of interest, possibly national, is anticipated for Andy Haldane's presentation on the economy.

5.5 The board noted the report.

Agenda Item 6: Local Assurance Framework

6.1 IB introduced the updated version of the Local Assurance Framework, explaining where and how it fits into the governance arrangements of the LEP. The LEP's compliance with it and with the National Local Assurance Framework are key strands of the MHCLG annual review of LEP Governance. This year's review has made the document more inclusive of procedures for investment programmes beyond the Local Growth Fund and addressed several recommendations proposed after an internal audit review by the Accountable Body. The document has also been streamlined, referring to materials published on the LEP website rather than re-producing them in the text of document itself. In re-drafting the document, the LEP team had consulted with CEC's internal audit, legal and GDPR specialists.

6.2 AT confirmed that, from his perspective as s151 officer, the updated document was much improved and commended it to the board. He re-iterated that board members should be aware of its contents and apply them when making investment decisions. IB and AT recognised that the Assurance Framework is a living document which reflects changes to process and procedure as activities come and go from the LEP's portfolio and, as such, is constantly under review.

6.3 The Board approved the revised version and that, subject to reflecting any comments, the executive can finalise it for publication. Board members were invited to provide additional comments in the next two weeks.

Agenda Item 7: Sub-board and committee updates

7.1 It was noted that only one set of published minutes (for P&I) had been included with the board papers on this occasion, and a reminder was given that minutes of sub-boards and committees need to be published on the website.

ACTION: Sub-Board & Committee Chairs

7.2 However, it was proposed and agreed that because minutes are now published, it would be more effective if the board received Chairs reports, highlighting key or exceptional items, at the board

meetings rather than reproducing the minutes. Officers will remind board chairs in advance of board meetings.

ACTION: IB/Alison Harkness

7.3 Verbal updates were provided as follows:

7.4 GB reported on the Local Transport Board. A new forum, the Wales and North West Transport forum, co-chaired by Lords Hunt and Jones had been formed to maximise the co-ordination between North Wales and transport schemes in the North West, e.g. Crewe HS2 Hub and Northern Powerhouse Rail. GD reported on the cross-party support for the forum. A meeting of Transport for the North (on 17/9) is due to discuss several investment corridors linking major centres in the North, amounting to £46BN of investment. Northern Powerhouse Rail is debating options for stations in Warrington. And a meeting regarding sustainable/active travel schemes in the Bollin Valley is taking place in October.

7.5 CH reported that P&I had received reports on the progress towards delivery of the LGF investment programme, and that continued vigilance is required to ensure full spending by 31 March 2020.

7.6 CH also reported that the F&A committee had approved a revised presentation of the management accounts, which now include greater visibility and transparency of the funds held outside the LEP entity boundary. The F&A committee had also noted a forecast financial loss with the Accelerate programme associated with the LEP's recruitment of sufficient learners, which would be kept under review.

7.7 RM mentioned that the most recent papers considered by the Strategy Performance Board related to the FA Centre of Excellence at Winsford and the Natural Capital Audit for CWaC and WBC. The latter will be brought forward to the full board in support of the Sustainability agenda. He also mentioned ongoing discussions between Chester Zoo and Central Government over access to emergency funding for Zoos.

7.8 SK advised the key focus of the Business Growth Board is on the response to predicted unemployment levels. Close co-operation exists between the LEP and Job Centre Plus. In addition, the Growth Hub is anticipating and preparing for more activity relating to EU exit transition. The outcome of the trade discussions with the EU is likely to determine the future for Vauxhall at Ellesmere Port, where work resumed in August.

7.9 AB advised that the September meeting of the Marketing and Communications Board received the Perceptions report, and was engaging local stakeholders.

7.10 PC also mentioned that the overview and scrutiny committee has met in early September, receiving papers on the selection of projects for the Get Building Fund and on the Vision and plans for recovery and restart. The committee expressed the view that where goals have been set some years into the future, the LEP should develop interim shorter-term milestones and KPIs to ensure progress is being achieved towards them.

7.11 TB thanked all the sub-boards and staff for their continued efforts in meeting the current challenges.

Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

8.1 Before moving to part B of the agenda, PC reminded the board that Covid-19 has shifted attention radically for Cheshire and Warrington. Where job creation and employment have not, in recent years, been a primary concern replacing the jobs lost in the downturn is a priority. LEP and LA officers with responsibility for Inward Investment are pooling their efforts and adopting more systematic approaches. To support these efforts, it is valuable for officers to have access to elected members and the private sector. He mentioned that John Downes and Sarah Pochin (CEC) had offered support. He also said he

would be keen to have elected members from CWaC and WBC in the group, as well as a couple of private sector business people.

ACTION: RB/LG

Agenda Item 9: Submission for the Comprehensive Spending Review

Reported in a separate annexe.

Agenda Item 10: Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Discussion Forum: 14th October 2020, 4.30pm-6.30pm (Virtual – MS Teams)

Board Meeting: 18th November 2020, 4:30pm– 6:30pm (Virtual – MS Teams)

PART B

Agenda Item 9: Submission for the Comprehensive Spending Review

9.1 PC and RN presented the current working draft submission, acknowledging that the version presented had focussed on capturing the facts, and less so on presentation. Timescales are such that this would be the only opportunity for the review and comment before submission of a revised version to the Sub Regional Management Board next week, and finalisation by 24th September.

9.2 The key advice from board members with respect to drafting was to ensure that the submission put the region on the front-foot, thus capturing the interest and enthusiasm of Government ministers. The final version will need to “stand-out” and “sell” the sub-region ahead of the numerous competing proposals being submitted. Recognising the difficulty of balancing the inclusion of a wide range of subjects within a limited wordcount, the board offered the following suggestions for consideration:

- Reference to recent successes, proving the region’s credentials to readers who lack detailed knowledge of the area; that the region can deliver what it promises.
- Fleshing out the needs and opportunities for Inward Investment in the Post EU trading environment.
- Demonstrate the integrated approaches taken by educational institutions with businesses.
- Extol the C&W strength of technology in the rural and food production economy.
- Addressing Cabinet Office’s ambition to reform administrative structures and processes with business and Government working together.
- Reflecting the step change in the use of data, digital and working arrangements.
- Showing an appreciation that C&W’s world leading Life Sciences sector covers more than medicines discovery but also e.g. medical devices, medical communications, wound care. And that the sector can help address the grand challenge of an ageing population.
- The withdrawal of Hitachi from the nuclear power station in Anglesey increases the opportunities for the Cheshire Energy Hub.
- Express the ambition of the CSR submission in terms of its capacity to deliver “transformative” change.