

Official minutes of meeting

## **Growth Corridors Board**

**22 July 2021 17:00-19:00**

Location: Microsoft Teams

### **Board members:**

Peter Broxton (Chair)

Loren Jones (Vice-Chair)

Chris Farrow

Nicola Heron

Linda Hilton

Cllr Amanda Stott

### **In attendance:**

John Adlen

Gemma Davies

Stephen Fitzsimons

Philip Kerr

### **Apologies:**

Cllr Richard Beacham

Tony Bochenski

Cllr Russ Bowden

Philip Cox

Katie McConnell

Joel Tagg

Martin Wood

**1. Declarations of interest**

- a. Cllr Amanda Stott and Philip Kerr declared an interest on behalf of Cheshire East Council in Alderley Park
- b. Stephen Fitzsimons declared an interest on behalf of Warrington Borough Council in Birchwood Park
- c. Chris Farrow declared an interest in sites in Ellesmere Port as Chair of the Ellesmere Port Development Board

**2. Minutes and matters arising****a. Minutes of meeting held on 20 May 2021**

Minutes agreed as a correct record

**b. Business Case Fund Update**

John Adlen updated the Board on the allocation of funding made through the LEP's Business Case Fund.

**3. Public speaking time**

No requests were received from members of the public to attend or speak at the meeting.

**4. Governance****a. New Growth Corridors Board remit**

Peter Broxton introduced a paper setting out the proposed remit for the new Growth Corridors Board. The new remit incorporates the Science Corridor (including Enterprise Zone), the High Speed Growth Corridor, cluster and sector development and town centres.

**b. Terms of Reference**

Draft Terms of Reference were considered by the Board. Philip Kerr suggested adding a responsibility for identifying and leveraging funding/financing opportunities.

**Decision:** Terms of Reference accepted with additional role to be added in terms of identifying and leveraging funding opportunities.

JA

**c. Standing agenda items**

A standard agenda was proposed to the Board. It was noted that the Board did not need to cover every agenda item at every meeting but could tailor the agenda to specific items/themes.

**Decision:** The Board agreed to adopt the standing agenda as set out in the papers.

## 5. Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone

### a. Investment programme

John Adlen presented an update on the EZ investment programme. The final claim for Aviator Phase 1 had been received and paid and the total investment was £312k lower than anticipated. Blocks 22-24 at Alderley Park is progressing on schedule and a final claim for the Quadrant Phase 2 scheme has been received for £782k, lower than the estimated £852k, due to no business rates cover being required.

### b. Investment pipeline

John Adlen updated the Board on the EZ investment pipeline.

A discussion took place about Peel's proposed waste-to-hydrogen plant and it was noted that Peel had recently concluded a deal with a hydrogen refuelling station network.

**Decision:** agreed to invite Peel and HyNet to the next Board meeting to discuss proposals for the hydrogen economy.

JA

Discussions have been held with Birchwood Park about their ambitions to create a sustainable/green industrial scheme, which may create a viability gap and require EZ investment. The Board welcomed Birchwood Park's ambitions and noted that it would fit well with the LEP's vision and that creating truly sustainable commercial premises could offer a real competitive advantage for the sub-region.

John Adlen informed the Board that the University of Chester has appointed CBRE to support them to secure an investment partner for Thornton Science Park. The Board noted the pivotal role that Thornton can play in the development of the low carbon industrial cluster at Ellesmere Port and reconfirmed the LEP's support to the University to assist them in their search for an investment partner.

**Decision:** agreed to contact DIT to find out if Thornton is on their list of potential capital investment projects.

JA

### c. Investment cases

There were no investment cases to consider.

### d. Business Rate Discount applications

The Board was asked to ratify the decision of the EZ Steering Group to approve the Business Rate Discount application from Current Body Ltd at Alderley Park.

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**Decision:** Current Body Ltd Business Rate Discount application ratified.

**e. Finance update**

John Adlen presented an update on the retained business rates. A question was raised about the ending of occupier incentives and the prospect of them being extended. John Adlen informed the Board that the LEP had been working closely with the LEP Network to lobby government to extend the EZ occupier incentives, but it looked unlikely at this time.

**6. High Speed Growth Corridor**

John Adlen gave a verbal update on the High Speed Growth Corridor, noting that work was ongoing to revise the Strategic Outline Business Case that had been submitted to government last autumn, which included providing a more detailed breakdown on individual investment projects and incorporating the area around Chester station as an additional intervention area.

**7. Marketing and promotion**

Peter Broxton introduced a discussion about the role of the Board in marketing and promoting the Growth Corridors. There was a discussion about the sub-region's USPs and how best to position Cheshire and Warrington.

**Decision:** agreed to invite Joe Manning to the next Board meeting to discuss how the marketing and promotion of the Growth Corridors fits with the wider place branding/marketing for the sub-region. It was also agreed to circulate a discussion paper to the Board prior to the next meeting.

JA

**8. Cluster/sector development**

**a. Life Sciences**

Peter Broxton updated the Board on work currently being undertaken with the Life Sciences sector, including Liverpool and Manchester city regions, to support the development of the sector in the North West. He reported that the LEP has appointed consultants to undertake a mapping exercise of the cluster/sector to inform the development of a clear brand/marketing collateral.

**b. Energy/Low Carbon**

John Adlen updated the Board on work undertaken by the Cheshire Energy Hub and Net Zero North West, including the creation of a portfolio of low carbon investment opportunities in the sub-region.

It was agreed to invite Melissa Crellin to the next Board meeting to discuss the low carbon/net zero agenda.

## 9. Town centres

### a. Crewe

John Adlen updated the Board on developments in Crewe town centre including the recent announcement of a £22.9m town fund deal and a £14m Future High Streets Fund programme. The Town Board now needed to accept the government's Heads of Terms and then work up a series of detailed project business cases over the next 12 months.

### b. Warrington

Stephen Fitzsimons updated the Board on the Warrington Town Board and programme. Warrington had been awarded £22m from the Town's Fund in October 2020 and were currently in the process of working up detailed project businesses cases. Two of the seven business cases have already been submitted to government.

### c. Winsford

Gemma Davies updated the Board on the progress of Winsford £9.8m Future High Street Fund programme, which include a new market hall, new public realm and diversification of town centre uses.

### d. Ellesmere Port

Gemma Davies updated the Board on Ellesmere Port town centre. Although Ellesmere Port did not secure Future High Streets Fund, CWaC had been selected as a pilot for the High Street Taskforce and will be taking forward a number of recommendations from that work, including a new town centre masterplan.

**Decision:** It was agreed that John Adlen would meet with lead officers from the three local authorities to discuss how best to structure future town centre discussions at the Board.

JA

## 10. AOB

- a. Stephen Fitzsimons raised an issue about future elected member representation from Warrington Borough Council.

**Decision:** agreed that Stephen Fitzsimons would identify a new WBC representative for the Board.

SF

Items	Action
<p>b. Peter Broxton informed the Board that the LEP Board has tasked each sub-board to produce a 3-year plan.</p>	
<p><b>Decision:</b> agreed that Peter Broxton, Loren Jones and John Adlen meet to develop a first draft of the plan to be brought back to the next Board meeting.</p>	PB/LJ/JA
<p>c. Peter Broxton asked members if the new time of the meeting was acceptable for everyone. It was agreed that the 5-7pm time slot worked for everyone, but it was noted that some members had stated that they had potential clashes on Thursday evening.</p>	
<p><b>Decision:</b> It was agreed that John Adlen would canvas members to identify the most suitable day to hold Board meetings.</p>	JA