****

**LEP STRATEGY PROGRAMME BOARD**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Purpose**

To act as the strategic arm of the LEP Board on the development of the economic growth programme, ensuring that the Strategic Economic Plan, funding related strategies and other key strategies remain current and reflective of changes in national and local policy and local business needs. To ensure that a robust evidence base is developed and maintained to support strategic decision making.

**Role and responsibilities**

The Strategy Programme Board will:

1. Ensure the effective development of the LEP’s strategies, reviewing all aspects of these to ensure that they remain current and aligned to the LEP’s ambition of being the UK’s healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing subregion in the UK.

2. Identify emerging strategic priorities and ensure that the LEP commissions specific work to maximise the opportunity presented by these.

3. Oversee development of the work programme of the Economic Intelligence function to ensure that the LEP is evidence led and has a credible evidence base to inform investment decisions, and that this is effectively stored and maintained.

4. Develop recommendations to the LEP Board on any projects requiring LEP managed funding (e.g. Growing Places Fund) or national government funding in line with strategic priorities and eligibility requirements; ensuring that these have been subject to a satisfactory appraisal process.

5. The Strategy Programme Board will establish a programme that will deliver its objectives and monitor the successful delivery of those objectives.

6. As appropriate, evaluate the impact of strategy and its implementation in order to understand successes and learning points for future activity.

7. Input to the development of the LEP’s risk strategy and review and update this regularly, providing reports to the LEP Board as required.

8. To approve outline investment proposals, business cases and feasibility studies on behalf of the board up to a maximum value of £2.5M which are consistent with the LEPs vison and strategy. To refer any investment proposal to the full board for approval which exceeds £2.5M in value or, irrespective of value, is novel, or possibly contentious.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Membership will consist of:

* LEP Board Member (Chair)
* LEP Board Member (Vice Chair)
* Local Authority Directors for Growth (or representative nominated by LA)
* Up to 4x additional private sector/other LEP Board Members
* Additional non-voting members may be co-opted with agreement of the LEP Board Chair and Chief Executive

The Group will invite LEP and LA lead officers to support its work programme, as and when necessary.

**VOTING**

It is central to the ethos of the Strategy Programme Board that it acts in the interests of the area as a whole and not according to the sectoral or geographical interests of individual members. In arriving at any decisions, the Board will consider the views of all interested parties. If any vote taken by the Board has no overall majority, then the decision should be deferred for further consideration. If after this deferment, the decision still has no overall majority it will be referred to the LEP Board to make a decision.

Voting rights will only apply to one vote for each member of the Strategy Programme Board.

**ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Strategy Programme Board will be accountable to the LEP Board. The Strategy Programme Board will operate within the terms of the CWLEP Growth Programme Assurance and Accountability Framework. This document establishes a framework that the CWLEP will follow in relation to decision making within its Growth Programme (comprising but not limited to: the Local Growth Fund Programme, Growing Places Fund and European Structural Investment Fund).

The Assurance and Accountability Framework is in three parts. Part one sets out the purpose, structure and operating principles of the Framework, including:

* Declaration of Interest Policy;
* Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy;
* Gifts and Hospitality;
* Equality and Diversity Policies;
* Freedom of Information Policy;
* Audit and Scrutiny;
* Complaints and Whistleblowing;
* The role of the Accountable Body

Part two sets out the project prioritisation process (including development of a project pipeline). Part three sets out the programme management and investment decision process.

The Framework also comprises a series of Appendices which set out the key documentation and information supporting the Framework.

**TRANSPARENCY AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT**

The CWLEP is a private company, limited by guarantee however, in line with the Government’s expectations of Local Enterprise Partnerships; the CWLEP will adhere as far as practicable to the Local Government Transparency Code as set out in the CWLEP Growth Programme Assurance and Accountability Framework. The Strategy Programme Board will operate within the same terms.

The LEP has an established website which will be used to publish dates of CWLEP Board meetings, agendas, meeting papers and minutes. The annual accounts of CWLEP are also published on their website. Information on how the CWLEP appraises and prioritises projects put forward for funding support and its prioritised list of projects will also be made available. Regular programme updates on delivery and spend against budget will also be published on the CWLEP website. The CWLEP website will be used to publish dates of formal Strategy Programme Board meetings, agendas, meeting papers and minutes (so long as content is not considered to be commercially sensitive or confidential in nature).

Any recommendations for investment decisions will require approval through a majority vote by the CWLEP Board. The process for how such decisions are made will be published on the CWLEP Website through the Assurance Framework.

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership is a non-statutory body and, as such, is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2005 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. CEC will hold information about funding and payment decisions relating to the CWLEP. This is unlikely to be classified by the Information Commissioners Office as CEC information and will therefore not be subject to FOI. That said, as a public body, requests for information will often be treated by the LEP under the same principles as apply for FOI requests. Any requests to CEC will be reviewed within the normal accountable body procedures.

The CWLEP will ensure that it continues to engage members of the public and other key stakeholders in the development of its key strategies and investment priorities. The nature of this engagement will be set out in the CWLEP Stakeholder Communications Plan.

The CWLEP will publish annual financial statements covering the Local Growth Fund and other funding sources received from Government.

**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This Assurance Framework is considered to be a live document. It will be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis (not less than annually) to reflect any changes to national / local circumstances and / or requirements.

**Meetings**

Meetings will take place on a bi-monthly basis. The Chair will determine whether these need to occur more or less frequently as business determines. In order to be quorate, the meeting shall require a minimum of five attendees, one of whom must be the chair or vice chair. Papers for meetings will normally be issued five working days prior to the date of the meeting.