

BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting
held 25th October 2023 at 4.30pm by Teams**

Board Members:

| | Present | Apology | | Present | Apology |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| Clare Hayward (CH) | x | | John Downes | | x |
| Trevor Brocklebank | x | | Chris Hindley (CHi) | x | |
| Russ Bowden | | x | Kath Mackay | | x |
| Craig Browne | x | | Annette McDonald | x | |
| Louise Gittins | | x | Nichola Newton | x | |
| Peter Broxton | x | | Eunice Simmons | | x |
| Rupert Collis | x | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Attendees:

| | Present | Apology | | Present | Apology |
|---------------------|---------|---------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Philip Cox | x | | Steve Park (WBC) | x | |
| Ian Brooks | x | | Charlie Seward | x | |
| Maggie Chen | x | | Peter Skates | x | |
| Yulanda Duff | | x | John Adlen | x | |
| Alex Thompson | | x | Melissa Crellin | x | |
| Steve Reading (CEC) | x | | | | |

Members of the Public (for Part A)

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| N/A |
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Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 CH welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received as above.

Agenda Item 2. Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No conflicts were noted.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 There were no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th September 2023 and Matters Arising

4.1 The minutes were agreed and the table of actions attached to these minutes has been updated. Completed actions from previous meetings have been removed.

4.2 The board congratulated the organisers of the Annual Economic Conference held on 18th October at Jodrell Bank. It had been well attended, with excellent panel sessions and lively networking lunch.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's Report

5.1 Following the Government's announcement to cancel the HS2 project north of Birmingham, Cheshire East BC have written to ministers and officials describing the economic impacts to the Crewe and the wider area. They set out several projects that they would want to see taken forward as part of the wider Network North improvements. These include regeneration initiatives for Crewe and Macclesfield. Ministers and officials have also been urged not to begin a fire sale of land holdings which would impede the delivery of future transport ideas. SP confirmed that Minister Merriman was shortly expected to visit the Warrington Bank Quay and the council would also be making its representations to him for transport and wider infrastructure. The board agreed that the Northern Network funding would need full consideration to ensure maximum effect and value for money.

5.2 AM informed the board that planning permission for a Motorway Services Station had passed a major milestone earlier in the day. A s106 agreement will be finalised on route to final approvals.

5.3 PC reminded the board of the significant progress being made by the private sector on industrial decarbonisation projects. The programme amounts to £30Bn of investment over the next 17 years which will provide a strong impetus for economic growth in the sub region. CH said she had met Lord Callanan at a recent round table meeting on HyNet and that Cheshire's potential contribution to decarbonisation is recognised. The first mover advantage for Cheshire and Warrington are apparent in terms of funding, development of the supply chain and inward investment.

Agenda Item 6: LEP Transition and Update on Business Advisory Board

6.1 SP updated the board that LaCE had held a good discussion of options for the LEP transition agreeing to take forward a company model. This option will be further developed to set out the governance arrangements necessary for funding which flows from Government to Local Authorities and to the functions provided by "NewCo", via a joint committee. Papers are being prepared to fully inform members, with a target that each council has receives the proposals for approval by the end of February. Progress on the development of LEP Transition papers will be shared with the LEP board in December.

Action: SP

6.2 Government is prioritising the continuation of sub-regional working and wants to remain informed of future plans for LEP functions. A template has been provided by the Department which is due for submission on 30th November. Proposals for a Business Advisory Board need to be further developed as part of that. For sub-regions with complex overlapping geographies there is an option to retain their LEP, potentially with bespoke funding arrangements. However, that does not apply for Cheshire and Warrington.

6.3 CS said that no firm plans had been made for the development of the business advisory board, and proposed that the LEP board are invited to join a sub-group with the Local Authorities to co-design the future arrangements including the scope, constitution etc. The board agreed the "task and finish" approach and proposed that invitations to join the Business Advisory Board working group were also

extended to board members from Marketing Cheshire and the wider cohort of LEP business advisory panellists (former sub-committee members). PC agreed to take forward.

Action: PC

Agenda Item 7: Presentation on the Sustainable, Inclusive, Economic Plan (SIEP)

7.1 MC introduced a summarised version of the current SIEP with background to the intelligence gathering and consultations carried out to date. The plan has the overriding objective to make a reality of the Leaders' vision for Cheshire and Warrington to be a sustainable, inclusive, healthy and growing economy. It must strike a difficult balance between an ambitious vision with a bold plan which is deliverable. Board members were asked to comment on the materials shared in advance of the meeting.

7.2 The comments included:

- Making stronger and more overt references to skills, skills development and the role skills play in underpinning many of the desired outcomes, including the importance of vocational routes/training.
- Highlighting C&W's strong and unique "anchor" set of science assets which set the sub-region apart from the rest of the UK, and to tell this story well, with references to the Cheshire Science Corridor.
- Not to forget the global companies that call Cheshire their home and help set the scene for investment.
- Share the draft plan with invitees to the Science Symposium.
- Take care to avoid the "corridor" becoming a limiting factor e.g. for geography or business sectors.
- To draw out the needs for jobs, health and infrastructure, including digital, and to make it relevant for e.g. SMEs, start-ups and growing companies; that the plan works at a variety of scales.
- Recruit science companies and others to be ambassadors for the plan.
- Ensure that the plan contains 'liveability' initiatives that will resonate with young people who are concerned about the cost of housing, transport links/connectivity, and good town centres which is a factor in talent retention/attraction.
- Need to flag the crucial importance of sustainable connectivity within Cheshire as well as the need for good quality affordable housing
- Recognise that young people seek places that can work in both the short term (up to 2 years in a role) and meet long term career aspirations, without needing to move. Young people are also aware of inequality and diversity, and global uncertainty (climate change/war) issues and the plan needs to appeal to them on this level (to reverse the trend of young people leaving for other areas)
- Whether the plan should include policy asks. For example, changing the ways in which apprenticeship levy can be deployed to include pre-employment support.
- Not to underestimate the potential impact of digitisation/AI. Warrington and Co are proposing to hold a conference on Artificial Intelligence in the new year and how businesses can exploit the technology.
- The importance of social mobility and foundational economy
- To also be outward facing and exploit the complementarity with the neighbouring areas e.g. City Regions, Wales (Airbus opportunity)
- More emphasis on economic benefits of the natural environment

- Cautioning against trying to meet every requirement.

The board summarised the areas it felt the plan should cover, with individual members expressing different priorities.

Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

8.1 CH asked for events to highlight to the Board – these were the Green Expo Awards: [Awards - GreenExpo](#) and the North West Route to Net Zero Event: [Scaling Up to reach Net Zero Tickets, Wed 29 Nov 2023 at 09:00 | Eventbrite](#).

Agenda Item 9: Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Meeting: 15th November, 2023, 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Board Meeting: 13th December, 2023, 4.30pm – 6.30pm

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

| Action arising | Action | Who | Complete? |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 25/10/23 | Progress on the development of LEP Transition papers will be shared with the LEP board in December. | Steve Park | |
| 25/10/23 | Invitations to join the Business Advisory Board working group are also extended to board members from Marketing Cheshire and the wider cohort of LEP business advisory panellists (former sub-committee members). | Philip Cox | |
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