

Cheshire and Warrington Business Advisory Board

Meeting Note

Date: Wednesday, 9 April 2025

Time: 4:30–6:30pm (via Teams)

Attendees – Business Advisory Board (BAB) Members:

Steve Purdham (Chair)	Chris Hindley	Rupert Collis
Paul Taylor	Helen Gbormittah	Terry Hayward
Peter Broxton	Gaurav Batra	Annabel Turpin
Helen Tonks	Yannis Loucopoulis	Jamie Christon
Jan Chillery	Ian Traynor	
Andrea Stott	Jane Hough	

Apologies:

Adrian Curry, Maggie Chen, Annette McDonald, Nichola Newton, Jill Jones

Attendees – Others:

Valentin Samuel, Devolution Agreement Lead, MHCLG

Sarah Emes-Young, Project Manager - Local Skills Improvement Plan, South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise, Cheshire East Council

Pat Jackson, Director Skills and Education, ECW

Iain Paton, Business Growth Manager, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Paul Chapman, Growth Hub Manager, ECW

1. Open session - Devolution consultation update from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)

1.1. This section of the meeting was open to the public and comprised an update on the devolution consultation, including:

- What is devolution and the Devolution priority programme?
- What it means for C&W?
- How devolution would work?
- What is the consultation for?

1.2. Links to items referenced during this section:

[English devolution white paper](#)

[Devolution consultation \(closes midnight 13th April\)](#)

2. Apologies, welcome and introduction – Steve Purdham

2.1. The rest of the meeting was closed with only BAB members and invited guests participating

- 2.2. Steve welcomed the members of the BAB & thanked members for feedback and ongoing work since the last meeting.

3. Conflicts of interest – Steve Purdham

- 3.1. No conflicts of interest were declared

4. Minutes of the Board meetings held on 12th March, agreed actions and matters arising – Steve Purdham

- 4.1. Notes from the BAB meeting on 12th March were reviewed
Actions were completed or will be completed during this meeting
- 4.2. **ACTION:** Meeting notes and agendas will be published.
- 4.3. Links to items referenced during this section:
[BAB web page including board papers & relevant publications](#)

5. The Cheshire and Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

- 5.1. The Board received an update on the LSIP, including:

- South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce leads the production of the C&W LSIP, funded by the Department for Education
- Purpose of the LSIP
- Stakeholders, advisors and partnerships
- Underpinning intelligence and data
- Monitoring delivery of the LSIP
- The Employer Representative Board and Strategic/Combined Authority will have joint responsibility for the LSIP after devolution
- Business-engagement activities have included 300+ businesses and 2 conferences (third planned for October)

- 5.2. Observations from attendees included:

- Steps should be taken to co-ordinate and reduce confusion for businesses with other skills-related resources and programmes e.g. Regional Skills Pilot, Skills Bootcamps
- Potential to link in to BAB working groups
- Benefit of co-ordinating business engagement across multiple programmes and communicate in business language
- Interest in seeing case studies
- Information on levy-transfer could be better communicated so smaller businesses can benefit
- More focus needed on young people and 50+ group
- Linking LSIP to place marketing as a benefit to attract & retain young people

- 5.3. **ACTION(S):**

- Circulate presentation slides
- Introductions to businesses who have an interest in contributing to the LSIP can be made to Sarah.Emes-Young@sccci.co.uk

5.4. Links to items referenced during this section:

[Cheshire and Warrington LSIP website](#)

6. Devolution update

6.1. Further discussion of devolution took place, observations from attendees included:

- Businesses engagement with devolution is generally low but particularly among young people – is there more that could be done?
- Lack of coverage of devolution in mainstream media
- Some delay in activities due to the current pre-election period
- Challenging economic conditions mean devolution is not a priority for many businesses

7. Comms update

7.1. The Board received an update on communications activities, including:

- New website, LinkedIn group and X assets launched (see links below)
- Request that when using LinkedIn/X members please be consistent and use hashtags of #CWBAB #CheshireBusiness
- ECW and Growth Hub marketing teams have been made aware of the new assets and requested to engage on social media platforms

7.2. **ACTION(S):**

- Members to feed back to the Chair via email comments on the website
- Explore means of consolidating information between new website and existing ECW BAB web page, e.g. member profiles

7.3. Links to items referenced during this section:

BAB Website: <https://www.cwbab.com/>

BAB LinkedIn group: <https://linkedin.com/company/cwbab>

BAB X (Twitter) page: https://x.com/CW_BAB

[Cheshire and Warrington devolution website](#)

8. AOB:

8.1. There was no AOB discussion

9. Next meeting dates:

Wednesday, 14th May, 4:30–6:30pm (Teams)

Wednesday, 18th June, 4:30–6:30pm (Teams)