



BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting
held on 18th November 2020, at 4.30pm by video conference call**

Present

Attending

Clare Hayward	Trevor Brocklebank	Chris Hindley	Cllr Russ Bowden
Cllr Louise Gittins	Robert Mee	Peter Broxton	Chris Hindley
Stephen Kinsey	Nicola Dunbar	Eunice Simmons	Nichola Newton
John Downes			

In attendance:

Philip Cox	Ian Brooks	Joe Manning	Charlie Seward
Frank Jordan	Steve Park	Alex Thompson (CEC) May be a little late joining	Joe Toward (Engagement Board)
Gemma Davies (CWaC)	Maggie Chen (Engagement Board)		

Presenters (part):

Lucy Gardner	Warrington & Halton Hospital
James Sumner	Leighton Hospital
Nigel Dove	Jacobs
Julia Pyke	EDF
Roddy Miller	Doosan

Apologies

Cllr Craig Browne			
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Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 Clare Hayward welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received as above.

Agenda Item 2: Conflicts of Interest

2.1 TB declared interests in respect of Item 7 Leighton Hospital and Item 10 Board Appointments.

2.2 RB declared interests in respect of Item 7 Warrington Hospital and Item 8 as he works in the Nuclear sector.

2.3 Nichola Newton declared an interest in Item 7 due to links with Warrington Hospital for the provision of a Health and Social Care Academy.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 There were no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th October 2020

4.1 The minutes of 14th October 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising - Board discussion

4.2 Clare Hayward led a discussion regarding the general business environment. Steve Park highlighted increasing pressures in supply chains for manufacturing as the end of the Brexit transition period approaches. Some larger firms had brought forward supplies but, with the lack of certainty over arrangements, some shipping is delayed. However, many smaller firms were, he felt, badly underprepared.

4.3 The Covid lockdown is creating a polarised retail sector attributed to a “one size” fits all approach to support. Essential stores have done well yet received similar levels of support to non-essential retailers.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive’s Update

5.1 Philip Cox discussed his report and raised a number of issues that had arisen since it was written.

5.2 Since preparing the report, the Government had announced its 10-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, with the headline being that fossil fuelled cars would no longer be sold after 2030. This will impact Vauxhall and Bentley. There are also commitments to Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Nuclear with an additional £200M allocated to developing two locations for CCS. This brings the total to £1Bn with C&W as one of several possible locations for early deployment. A competition will also be launched for an All Hydrogen heated town, something Hynet might wish to pursue. The plan remains thin on detail which is likely to follow next year.

5.3 The Freeports Bidding Document has also been issued, with deadlines for clarification and submission of 21/12/2020 and 5/2/2021 respectively. The incentives package is generous, containing all the incentives currently enjoyed by Enterprise Zones, relief from tariffs, 0% National Insurance contributions, 100% Business Rates relief and Enhanced Capital Allowances. Freeports will be made up of a number of sites, all of which must be no more than 45km from a port. If, in C&W’s case this were the Port of Liverpool, this boundary would extend to include most of Warrington. It was also clear that any bid is will require a substantial amount of work to prepare, require significant collaboration within the wider region and incur significant consultant expense.

5.4 SCG meetings in relation to Brexit impacts have commenced under the chair of Cheshire Police. It was recognised that many businesses have had their preparations overshadowed by Covid. Clare Hayward proposed a Board working group to discuss the impact of Brexit.

ACTION: PC

5.5 Philip Cox presented the recovery plan. The board supported the elements for restarting the economy post Covid. Chris Hindley cited the crucial role the LEP has to play to ensure the success of Kickstart and was very supportive of the activities of the Pledge. This served as an example where the LEP was helping to bridge the gap between government policy and initiatives and local delivery. Clare Hayward tasked all sub-boards to consider how they could perform a similar role in their field. Each sub-board should prepare a “one-pager” by 31st January 2021 showing how the sub-board supports delivery of the vision.

ACTION: Sub-board Chairs

Agenda Item 6: Sub-Boards Chair’s Updates

6.1 Robert Mee reported that the Strategy Programme Board had discussed the Recovery Plan for Growth and have reviewed the Digital Infrastructure Plan which is soon to be rolled out. The board was considering how to engage with the Liverpool City Region “Dig Once” programme for improvements in Ellesmere Port and With North Wales for 5G infrastructure. Work is also progressing on the Natural Capital Audit which will provide a platform for the sub-region to promote its green credentials.

6.2 RM also reported that the Enterprise Zone Board had noted that the loan facilities were now in place and thanked the Local Authorities for their support. Drawdown of loans was now underway. The EZ board has broached the subject of the Growth Corridor and is supportive of including it within the board’s remit.

6.3 Clare Hayward and Nicola Dunbar confirmed that, at the last Employers Skills Board, several projects were under review, including Accelerate and Kickstart. Work progresses on the Skills agenda, the board noting that some technically based vacancies receive few applicants and the local area needs to do more to support young people and women into the workplace. Progress is being made on spending the LGF funds allocated to Skills projects and Nichola Newton confirmed that, despite a delay to the shipment of lathes for the AMET project, the project will complete by 31st March 2021.

6.4 Clare Hayward also reported on the inaugural meeting of the Sustainability and Inclusive Growth Commission and the feedback was very positive. Focus groups are being established for topics such as Net Zero, Climate Change, Inclusion, Funding and Finance and Sustainable/Active Travel. Charlie Seward outlined the unique offer the sub-region can make to the Government to support delivery of the 10-point plan for the Green Industrial Revolution and that structures such as the Commission can be used to demonstrate how we are already prepared. It was agreed that the sub-region should promote itself through the appropriate channels to get this message to government and senior officials.

6.5 Stephen Kinsey reported that the Business Growth Board had discussed additional funding being provided by BEIS to support the Brexit transition.

6.6 Joe Manning summarised that Marketing and Communications activity tends, at the moment, to be quite tactical. The “We can turn it around” campaign focusses on what people can do, rather than what they cannot do under Covid restrictions. There are several initiatives co-ordinated by Marketing Cheshire to support local businesses including sign posting customers to local businesses with an online sales offer, small business Saturday and holding a virtual Christmas Market.

6.7 P&I and the Finance and Audit Committees had not met since the last Board meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Hospital Development Schemes

7.1 CH welcomed James Sumner, CEO Mid Cheshire NHS Trust and Lucy Gardner, Director of Strategy, Warrington and Halton NHS Trust to the meeting.

Leighton Hospital

7.2 JS presented the detailed plans for redevelopment of the Leighton Hospital site explaining that the cost of a brand new, scalable, hospital facility would be only marginally more expensive than the identified essential refurbishment of the fabric of the existing building. A modern rebuild, which could be achieved in a much shorter timescale than repair, would increase capacity to meet growing local demand, offer a plethora of the operational benefits, and would seek to be carbon neutral by design. Continuing with a long term programme of repairs was also diverting limited capital funds away from other areas ripe for improvement such as the management of patient records and digitally enabled services.

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals

7.3 LG presented the proposals for a new hospital in Warrington and delivery of a hospital and wellbeing campus in Halton all designed to improve health outcomes and connect education and employment. Depending on the sites chosen, the plans also release land for ca. 450 homes. Much of the existing facilities are ageing and capacity is limited by existing configuration. This is set against growing demand driven by population growth and an ageing demographic. The scheme would seek to address health outcomes impacted by local areas of local deprivation and, among other concerns, higher than average alcohol related conditions. The Strategic Outline Business case is underway which will assess options in Warrington from “do nothing”, rebuild on existing site and new rebuild on a new site and extensions to the Halton Treatment Centre, to house existing and additional services.

7.4 Both schemes will be bidding into the Hospitals Infrastructure Fund. 40 schemes have been approved nationally with funding for another 8 schemes now on offer. It is possible that some of the 40 schemes may run into challenges, e.g. site location, and be substituted by schemes able to progress more quickly.

7.5 There is already a growing level of local stakeholder support for both developments and the importance of the voice of local MPs to the debate in government is well recognised.

7.6 Proponents of the schemes were now seeking the LEPs support.

7.7 Peter Broxton wondered how much staff accommodation was incorporated into the Leighton scheme, given it has limited transport connections. JS said much of the accommodation is now centred on the former Manchester Metropolitan University sites, with shuttle services transporting staff. Only emergency on call staff would be accommodated on the Leighton site.

7.8 Eunice Simmons argued that the LEP’s should support and could add value by demonstrating how the schemes delivered more of the Government’s priorities than health outcomes alone. Stephen Kinsey cited, as examples, strengthening the links to Life Sciences at Alderley Park, SciTech Daresbury and linking in career paths and opportunities.

7.9 The Board agreed the LEP should support the opportunities afforded by both schemes and use its influence to seek successful applications for funding.

Agenda Item 8: Nuclear Opportunities

8.1 Clare Hayward welcomed Nigel Dove, Julia Pyke and Roddy Miller to the meeting.

8.2 Julia Pyke presented an overview of the partnership of businesses engaged in the Sizewell C Consortium and background to the project itself.

8.3 Factors driving the project include the requirement for low carbon energy and meeting the government’s carbon and climate change targets, the need to replace existing nuclear infrastructure for electricity generation, the support of jobs and local supply chains. Beyond electricity generation, Sizewell C is also exploring the use of surplus heat to generate hydrogen, removing carbon dioxide by direct air capture and the use of small / advanced modular reactors to create clean energy hubs.

8.4 The nuclear sector currently supports over 26,000 jobs across the north of England, with over 6,000 in Warrington. Sizewell C offers a continuity of employment as work transitions away from work on Hinckley.

8.5 A MoU has been agreed with some northern MP's which embeds commitments for contracts and supporting job opportunities. The consortium sought the LEP support to the MoU.

8.6 The Board agreed that the MoU should be shared and reviewed to determine the type of support that is needed. Clarity is needed whether there needs to be a separate agreement for Cheshire and Warrington from that agreed with Cumbria.

ACTION: PC to obtain and share M.o.U.

Agenda Item 9: Sustainability and Inclusive Growth Commission

9.1 See update at 6.4

Agenda Item 10: Board Recruitment

10.1 Philip Cox and the Board recorded their appreciation of Angie Robinson's long service as board member and chair of Marketing Cheshire. On recommendation from the Marketing Cheshire Board, the LEP Board approved the appointment of Trevor Brocklebank as her successor as chair of Marketing Cheshire. Also approved was the appointment of Gemma Davies as the CWaC representative on the Marketing Cheshire board.

10.2 The board commented on the board and committee recruitment materials noting that diversity and inclusion are vital to achieving cross sectional representation. The importance of expertise and networks with the Clean Energy, Life Sciences and Environment was also highlighted. Board directors were asked to submit suggestions to Ian Brooks.

ACTION: Board Directors

10.3 The executive will finalise the advertisement and campaign materials and launch the recruitment drive shortly. The advert is expected to signpost potential candidates to detailed information on the LEP/MC websites. Board members and stakeholders were asked to raise awareness through their networks and to committee members, who might also be encouraged to apply.

ACTION: Board Directors / Attendees

Agenda Item 11: Any Other Business

11.1 IB reminded Board Directors of the need to return Registers of Interests'.

Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Discussion Forum: 16th December 2020, 4:30pm– 6:30pm (Virtual – MS Teams)

Board Meeting: 20th January 2021, 4:30pm– 6:30pm (Virtual – MS Teams)