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## CHESHIRE SCIENCE CORRIDOR ENTERPRISE ZONE BOARD

### Minutes

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Birchwood Park

#### 1. Attendees and Apologies

**Present:**

Robert Mee (Chair)  
Cllr Russ Bowden, Warrington Council  
Cllr Brian Clarke, Cheshire West & Chester Council  
Steve Richmond, Astra Zeneca  
David Slater, CNS

**In attendance:**

John Adlen, Cheshire & Warrington LEP  
Andy Allan, MSP  
Tony Clark, Cheshire West & Chester Council  
Julian Cobley, Skills & Growth Company  
Philip Cox, Cheshire & Warrington LEP  
Chris Doherty, MSP  
Chris Farrow, Ellesmere Port Development Board  
Katrina Michel, Marketing Cheshire  
Steve Park, Warrington & Co.  
Heather Standidge, Cushman & Wakefield  
Joel Tagg, BEIS  
Paul Vernon, Thornton Science Park  
Jonathan Walsh, Patrizia  
John Willis, Skills & Growth Company

**Apologies:**

Caroline Baker, Cushman & Wakefield  
Cllr Peter Groves, Cheshire East Council  
Alison Knight, Cheshire West & Chester Council  
Andrew Round, Cheshire East Council

## 2. Previous EZ Board Minutes

All matters arising from the previous EZ Board held on 18<sup>th</sup> May have been actioned or will be covered in this Board.

Paul Vernon clarified a point under section 5a) Landowner's Update – the minutes should read that Thornton Science Park overall is 80% occupied rather than just the commercial elements.

All agreed minutes for sign off.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

No member of the Board member declared any pecuniary interests.

## 4. Governance

Councillor Peter Groves tendered his resignation from the EZ Board, as his portfolio responsibilities at Cheshire East Council has changed. Cheshire East Council will inform the LEP of Councillor Groves replacement. The Chair expressed the thanks of the Board to Councillor Groves for his service to the Board.

The Chair also expressed his thanks to Tony Clark (Cheshire West & Cheshire Council) and Andy Allan (MSP) who are both moving onto new jobs for their support to the EZ Board, especially in the formation of the Enterprise Zone.

## 5. Operational Overview

### 5a) Growth Director's update

John Adlen provided an update on the key development activities that had taken place during the period since the last EZ Board, which included:

- Supporting the Cheshire Energy Hub in the development of their Energy Sector Deal and proposal for the creation of an Energy Innovation District stretching from Capenhurst, across Ellesmere Port to Protos, which was presented to Greg Clark on 9th June
- Meetings with a number of developers (commercially confidential) regarding Enterprise Zone sites in Ellesmere Port, including site visits and early stage discussions.
- Advanced negotiations in association with CWAC and the HCA with a developer on Hooton Park.
- Actively dealt with enquires from a German food manufacturer looking for industrial premises around Chester (unfortunately, not interested in the EZ sites) and an advanced engineering firm interested in Birchwood.

- Significant time spent negotiating with a German advanced manufacturing company on a large-scale investment in Ellesmere Port. Although this investment would not land on an EZ site, it is a significant investment in the Science Corridor and could attract a number of supply chain companies.

## **5b) EZ site updates**

### **Alderley Park**

Andy Allan and Chris Doherty reported that a number of staff have now started to move in from CRUK, the Anti-Microbial Research Centre will take lab facilities that MSP are recommissioning and the Medicine Discovery Catapult is expanding. MSP are in discussions with potential occupiers of the Parklands Building and the first phase of refurbishment of the Glass House is complete. MSP are preparing business cases for EZ retained business rate funding for the refurbishment of Blocks 19 and 22.

### **Birchwood Park**

Jonathan Walsh reported that voids are currently under 5% at Birchwood and Patrizia has completed a number of new deals during the quarter including the letting of 47,149 sq ft to Cavendish Nuclear, which will bring c.550 jobs into the Enterprise Zone. Steve Park informed the EZ Board of current negotiations between Warrington Council and Oaktree Capital Management for the purchase of Birchwood Park.

### **Ellesmere Port sites**

Tony Clark reported that Helix Business Park is under construction, completion expected in early 2018. Discussions have taken place with a number of developers interested in the Ellesmere Port sites and in particular Newport Business Park. Advanced negotiations are underway with a developer for the purchase of Hooton Park.

### **Protos**

Jane Gaston reported that Peel Environmental are in discussions with a number of potential occupiers with a view to making the first signings before the end of the year. Peel are also progressing conversations with Scottish Power about investment in the electricity grid in the area.

### **Thornton Science Park**

Paul Vernon reported that enquires from prospective tenants continue to be strong, particularly for Building 49 within the Enterprise Zone and TSP are currently in discussions with a company to take half a floor. The refurbishment of the conference centre is complete in Building 49. TSP are continuing discussions with a potential occupier looking for 100,000 sq ft of R&D and manufacturing space, which would most likely consist of a c.25,000 sq ft R&D facility in the first instance with a possible expansion of c.75,000 sq ft for a prototype manufacturing plant.

## **5c) Development and Investment Strategy**

Heather Standidge provided an update on the Investment Programme and a draft business case template and guidance for retained business rate investment projects.

Heather explained that the aim is to produce an outline Investment Programme for the September Board with individual business cases coming forward over the Autumn/Winter.

Actions:

- Members to provide any feedback on the Business Case template to Heather by 28<sup>th</sup> July

#### **5d) Q1 monitoring**

John Adlen presented the Q1 monitoring data for the EZ, which showed:

- 60 new jobs created taking the total number of new jobs in the EZ to 428
- 2 new businesses locating in the EZ, taking the total of new business to 28
- 6,215 sq m (67,059 sq ft) of new floorspace completed and occupied
- £3.37m of new private sector investment

#### **5e) BRD Application Update**

No new Business Rate Discount applications were received during this period.

#### **5e) Broadband update**

Julian Cobley gave a presentation on Broadband across the EZ which highlighted the variance of broadband speeds across the EZ sites and an outline proposal for a 'Digital Science Corridor' to develop the broadband infrastructure and an open innovation platform that would facilitate and encourage businesses across the Science Corridor to collaborate and innovate.

Actions:

- John Adlen and Julian Cobley to further develop the proposal for the Digital Science Corridor, including meeting with the Hartree Centre at Daresbury and meeting with Mark Livesey and Gary Steen from the LEP.

## **6. Marketing and Communication**

### **6a) Marketing and promotion update**

The following marketing and promotional events and activities have been undertaken during this period:

- Sponsored Mersey-Dee Alliance networking business breakfast at Thornton Science Park - 21 June (220 attendees)
- National DIT Chemicals Sector Team Presentation in Manchester - 8 May (35 attendees)
- Meeting with DIT Infrastructure Investment team - 15 May
- Attended the Industry 4.0 (Digitisation of Industry) Taskforce workshop

- Presentation to CWAC Growth Advocates - 29 June (40 attendees)
- Presentation to Hill Dickinson Developer Conference - 6 July (150 delegates)
- Interview with NW Business Insider - July edition

### **6b) Upcoming events**

We are currently in discussions with Place NW to host two key events this year:

- October 2017 – launch of the EZ Investment Programme, showcasing new investment taking place in the EZ, reflection/celebration of first 18 months of operation and reiterating the development and investment opportunities.
- February 2018 – early stage concept discussions to hold a regional conference together with Liverpool Knowledge Quarter and Corridor Manchester on the concept of science and technology clusters and the prospect of creating a new ‘golden triangle’ in the north west.

### **6c) Sector propositions**

John Adlen reported that he has prepared a brief for external to develop a series of sector propositions to support the development of marketing collateral for the Science Corridor and EZ.

### **6d) Other marketing activity/information**

Katrina Michel reported that Marketing Cheshire has secured £250k on behalf of a consortium of sub-regions to promote science tourism, which fits well with the Science Corridor.

Katrina confirmed that plans were being developed for Cheshire & Warrington’s presence at MIPIM 2018.

Julian Cobley raised the Business of Science conference as an opportunity to promote the Science Corridor.

Actions:

- Julian Cobley to send John Adlen contact details for the Business of Science conference

## **7. Finance**

### **7a) Finance working group**

John Adlen reported that he has established a finance working group consisting of Mark Livesey (LEP Deputy Chief Executive) and the three local authority finance teams to establish appropriate systems and processes for the processing of Business Rate Discount applications and the collection and holding of retained Business Rates and to establish the final outturn for retained Business Rates from the EZ for 2016/17.



#### **7b) DIT account management bid**

John Willis enquired about the status of the DIT account management bid. John Adlen informed the Board that the funding process had been put on hold during the general election and that post-election DIT had made a suggestion about the four NW LEP's working together collaboratively and that this was now being explored further.

#### **8. Any Other Business**

None to report.

**Next EZ Board – 2pm Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 at Thornton Science Park**