

Official minutes of meeting

Growth Corridors Board

23 September 2021 17:00-19:00

Location: Microsoft Teams

Board members:

Peter Broxton (Chair)

Loren Jones (Vice-Chair)

Chris Farrow

Nicola Heron

Linda Hilton

Cllr Amanda Stott

In attendance:

John Adlen

Gemma Davies

John Egan

Stephen Fitzsimons

Jane Gaston

Jayne Hennessy

Philip Kerr

Charles Jarvis

Apologies:

Cllr Richard Beacham

Tony Bochenski

Cllr Russ Bowden

Philip Cox

Katie McConnell

Martin Wood

1. Low carbon presentations

- a. HyNet - The Board received a presentation on the HyNet project from John Egan from Progressive Energy.
- b. Protos - The Board received a presentation from Jane Gaston and Jayne Hennessy about progress at the Protos site.

2. Declarations of interest

- a. Cllr Amanda Stott, Philip Kerr and Charles Jarvis declared an interest on behalf of Cheshire East Council in Alderley Park
- b. Stephen Fitzsimons declared an interest on behalf of Warrington Borough Council in Birchwood Park
- c. Chris Farrow declared an interest in sites in Ellesmere Port as Chair of the Ellesmere Port Development Board

3. Minutes and matters arising**a. Minutes of meeting held on 22 July 2021**

Minutes agreed as a correct record

4. Public speaking time

No requests were received from members of the public to attend or speak at the meeting.

5. Governance**a. Terms of Reference**

The Growth Director presented revised Terms of Reference incorporating comments and suggestions from Board members.

Action/Decision: The Board agreed and signed off the revised Terms of Reference for the Growth Corridors Board.

b. Purpose pyramid and strategic plan

A draft purpose pyramid and strategic plan for the Growth Corridors Board was presented and discussed.

Action/Decision: The Board agreed to provide feedback on the Purpose pyramid and strategic plan to the Growth Director by Friday 01 October.

All

6. Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone

a. Investment programme

John Adlen presented an update on the EZ investment programme, which has reduced from £16.2m committed investment from the LEP to just over £12m, due to a number of investments coming in lower than anticipated in their business cases and the withdrawal of the Aviator Phase 2 scheme. It was noted that the Aviator Phase 2 scheme will proceed without the requirement for LEP investment. This leaves c. 18m remaining in the EZ borrowing facility. A claim for £210,514 was received for Blocks 22-24 at Alderley Park in the last period, leaving £2.6m to be drawn down for the scheme and the investment programme overall.

b. Investment pipeline

John Adlen updated the Board on the EZ investment pipeline. There are a number of schemes now coming forward for investment after an 18 month hiatus of new development in the EZ due to covid. Three investment cases (Enviroo at Protos, Quadrant Phase 3 at Birchwood Park and Vortex at Newport Business Park, Ellesmere Port, are likely to come to the November Board for consideration.

c. Investment cases

No items.

d. Finance update

No items.

7. High Speed Growth Corridor

John Adlen gave a verbal update on the High Speed Growth Corridor, noting that work was concluding on the revised Strategic Outline Business Case, which should be finalised in October.

8. Marketing and promotion

No items. Joe Manning had been invited to discuss marketing and promotion of the Growth Corridors in the context of the wider place branding and marketing of the sub-region but was on leave.

Action/Decision: *The Board agreed to invite Joe Manning to the November Board.* JA

9. Cluster/sector development

a. Life Sciences

Peter Broxton updated the Board on the life sciences cluster work. The LEP has appointed 7i Group, a life sciences market research company based at Alderley Park, to undertake a mapping and gapping exercise of the Cheshire and Warrington life sciences ecosystem. 7i are reporting back to the life sciences forum next week on the first stage of work.

Action/Decision: 7i to be invited to the November Board meeting to present the results of their mapping and gapping exercise.

JA

b. Energy/Low Carbon

Item covered by the presentations under Agenda Item 1.

10. Town centres

a. Crewe

Charles Jarvis updated the Board on activities in Crewe, the main focus is to get the town HS2 ready including the housing offer and improving the attractiveness of the town centre. Immediate focus is on the development of the business cases for the £22m Towns Fund allocation.

b. Macclesfield

Charles Jarvis updated the Board on Macclesfield town centre, where the focus is on ensuring that the town is an attractive location that can support the life sciences sector as part of the Cheshire Science Corridor.

c. Chester

Gemma Davies updated the Board on developments in Chester including: the Council submitted a Levelling Up Fund bid for Chester and retail is recovering after covid with more businesses opening than have closed, particularly driven by independents retailers.

d. Ellesmere Port

Gemma Davies updated the Board on Ellesmere Port town centre, including: a refreshed masterplan will be developed for the town centre, the new Public Services Hub is due to complete before the end of the year and a feasibility and viability study on 5 housing sites in the town centre will be undertaken.

e. Northwich

Gemma Davies updated the Board on Northwich, where the Council is about to start the development of a new masterplan for the town.

f. Winsford

Gemma Davies updated the Board on the progress of Winsford £9.8m Future High Street Fund programme. The Council is finalising a new masterplan for the Winsford Cross Shopping Centre with Avison Young.

g. Warrington

Stephen Fitzsimons updated the Board on developments in Warrington town centre and reported that a number of new food and beverage outlets had opened in the Bridge Street area, which represents an important shift in that area, the Time Square development is now at least 50% occupied and University of Chester taking space in the town centre will bring additional footfall.

11. AOB

- a. After canvassing members about the most suitable days/times for future meetings, it was agreed to move the meetings to the fourth Thursday of the month 5-7pm.
- b. Loren Jones raised an opportunity to bid to be a location for small modular reactor manufacturing. Agreed that John Adlen would pick up with Loren to see how the LEP can support.