



**LEP Strategy Committee
MINUTES**

Meeting Held: Friday 6th October 2017,
Wyvern House, Winsford

Present:

Robert Mee (Chair)
Stephen Kinsey
Graeme Bristow
Julian Cobley

Philip Cox
Charlie Seward
Robert Davis
Andy Hulme

Pete Waterman
Andy Farrall
Gary Steen

Apologies:

Frank Jordan

Clare Hayward

Attending:

Pat Jackson

Agenda Item 1: Apologies

Robert Mee welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were recorded from Clare Heyward and Frank Jordan (represented by Julian Cobley).

Agenda Item 2: Declarations of Interest

None

Agenda Item 3: Presentation: Warrington New City

As part of the ongoing programme to highlight the LEP's spatial priorities, Andy Farrall, Executive Director for Economy Regeneration, Growth and Environment provided an update on the Warrington New City.

Warrington has set out an ambitious vision for growth, in effect completing the New Town project started some 50 years ago. This vision is underpinned by an extensive programme of investment in infrastructure aimed at supporting growth for the next 25 years, and achieving financial self-sustainability in that time.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2017 were approved.

Further to the minutes, a discussion was held regarding the Energy Strategy item and the need to consider establishing a Board or some other forum to bring the LEP, energy networks, providers and key users together to discuss future growth aspirations and how insufficient energy may constrain this.

It was noted that some of these discussions will be covered as the LEP Energy Strategy is developed. Building on the discussion with United Utilities at the main LEP Board, it was suggested that a broader view on infrastructure, including energy, water, telecommunications and broadband might be beneficial.

Action: Economic Growth Directors to consider options for an Infrastructure Forum.

Agenda Item 5: Strategy Work Programme Update

The contents of the report were noted.

Pat Jackson, the LEP lead on Skills and Education, presented the draft Skills and Education Plan. In doing so, a number of key issues were highlighted: -

- The skills landscape is complex with the risk that too many projects and programmes are running and masking key messages
- Colleges are responding to the demands of students rather than the needs of industry
- Effective change involves not just targeting students themselves, but their parents and teachers
- There is a need for more coherent message on career and training opportunities, including messages to government
- We need to ensure that our college provision is up to standard.

A series of employer led working groups, aligned to our key sectors, is in the process of being established to work with the LEP in developing a greater understanding of industry needs.

Philip Cox confirmed that this was the first of the supporting strategies to the SEP to near completion and would be considered at the LEP Board in October.

The Strategy Committee was very supportive of the plan and congratulated Pat Jackson on the quality and effort that has gone in to producing the plan.

Andy Hulme updated on progress of development the other supporting strategies to the SEP. In addition to Skills and Education, the Energy, Transport and Quality of Place strategies were now well underway, and a commission for support in developing the Housing Strategy should be issued for Tender before the end of October.

Committee members noted the initial results of a survey issued in connection with the Quality of Place Strategy which highlighted transport – in particular public transport – as a key area of concern.

A proposed schedule for the Committee to review and challenge all of the sub-strategies prior to consideration by the full LEP Board, was approved. It was noted that this would require an additional meeting in November.

Action: Andy Hulme to circulate dates for an additional Strategy Committee meeting for November 2017.

It was noted that the LEP has appointed consultants to develop a menu of options for the future shape and form of the Business Growth Hub. The outcome of this work was included in the review schedule mentioned earlier.

Agenda Item 6: Industrial Strategy

The report updating on progress of LEP activity linked to the potential development of a local Industrial Strategy, was noted. Philip Cox highlighted the ongoing engagement with the automotive sector and advised that work was to be commissioned shortly to support an exercise to demonstrate local levels of aggregated demand for key components currently sourced outside of the UK.

It was confirmed that more specific activity was also being progressed in support of the Vauxhall Motors plant at Ellesmere Port, now that the sale of the company to PSA Groupe had been concluded.

Agenda Item 7: Growing Places Fund

A short verbal update was provided, confirming that the Cheshire Green development has now drawn down its first tranche of funding and is on site. There are a number of other potential project leads, but Committee members were reminded that the level of available GPF is likely to be limited in the short term due to the potential need to cashflow the Local Growth Fund programme due to the irregular funding profile offered by BEIS.

Agenda Item 8: National Policy Announcements

The Committee noted a number of national policy announcements, including: -

- BEIS review of the role of National Laboratories (including National Nuclear Laboratory) in supporting economic growth, led by Dame Julia Goodfellow
- £100,000 allocated by Innovate UK to support closer working amongst Northern LEPs on Innovation

- Review of the role of Social Housing, announced by the Communities Secretary
- £300m funding announced to support Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

The recent announcement by the Office for Budget responsibility that it has been incorrectly calculating UK productivity was noted. The implications for the sub-region were, as yet, unclear.

It was noted that the work to develop the framework for the LEP Energy Innovation Fund would be developed as part of the Energy Strategy work.

Agenda Item 10: Date and time of next meeting

TBC (November, Winsford)

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