

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 2nd September 2020
Virtual Meeting via Teams**

Present: Councillor Steve Parish (Chair), Tracy Walsh, Catherine Barber-Brown, Helen Nellist, Yvette Hastings, Cllr Paul Donovan and Cllr Laura Crane.

Also In Attendance:

- Phillip Cox - Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- Ian Brooks – Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- Roy Newton - Cheshire and Warrington LEP (item 6)
- Rob McKay – Cheshire Business Group
- Sharon Parker – Warrington Borough Council (secretariat)

23. Apologies

Apologies were received from Phil McCabe.

24. Declarations of Interest

Nil.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on the 2nd June 2020 were received as a correct record.

26. Membership of the Committee

Noted:

- (1) Cllr Laura Crane had been appointed as a representative from Cheshire East.
- (2) Phil McCabe and Rob Mackay had been nominated as the 2 representatives from Cheshire Business Group but were going to confirm membership.

27. Review the implementation of the strategic economic Plan and identify opportunities for improvement.

The Committee received a presentation from Philip Cox on the above. Information was provided on the LEPs vision going forward taking Covid into account:

The following points were made:

- Impact of Covid on the national economy but also in Cheshire and Warrington with 128,500 people furloughed and a 73% increase in universal credit claims.

- Increase in unemployed, figures ranged from 15,000 to 60,000 with the peak thought to be in November.
- However some companies had been taking staff on and there some industries that were unaffected by the crisis.
- Long term there were questions about digital inclusion particularly in the rural sector and the problems that some young people had not being able to learn on line when in lockdown.
- Amount of online trade had doubled but particular issues around the retail and hospitality industries. One in five shops were closing.
- The LEP had reflected on the issues and concluded that it had been achieving fast economic growth but it needed to be more inclusive, more sustainable and healthier.
- Details were provided on how the vision was to be implemented including the development of the Sustainable Growth Commission. The makeup of the commission was provided together with the key short term goals including getting people back into employment.

The Committee discussed in detail the information provided and asked:

1. How inclusive was the Commission?

A great deal of thought was being given to this and were trying to include experts but were also conscious of gender and BAME etc.

2. Inclusivity was so important given the number of people working from home. Also most of the child care arrangements did fall to the female was the commission looking at all these options?

Good point the people on the Commission were going to delve into the issues and pose questions. There were opportunities too in how people were working now.

3. Conservative Manifesto was providing for incentives for care leavers in employment was this being looked at?

The Commission would be looking at the areas it should focus on, it could be an area of scrutiny?

4. The milestones identified how would they be transferred to more manageable ones? Could a flavour of what it looks like be provided? How do you know when you have inched towards progress?

Need to think about this but a key issue would be getting jobs back and supporting the unemployed.

5. Ensuring growth aspirations were joined up. More jobs that were sustainable.

Looking at getting those that were in the lowest paid in retail and hospitality into higher paid jobs such as logistics. This had been dismissed as low skill but it was now embracing other skills such as IT.

6. What about purposeful activity for the unemployed that was helpful to the mind?

Free online training was available for the unemployed. Had not thought of volunteering.

7. Rural growth – what was planned for this?

Important part of the economy. Rural broadband had been doubled which was essential. Rural transport needed to be thought about. Interestingly more people had been accessing more local facilities during Covid rather than the bigger cities.

28. To commission and review mid-term and end of term evaluations of programmes and projects. Get Building Fund.

Roy Newton presented the committee with an update on the Get Building Fund, the following was discussed:

- Hugely challenging time table
- Criteria, funding and timetable were provided
- 3 key schemers – Chester – drainage tunnel, Warrington – electric charging points for electric bus fleet and validation centre of excellence at Alderley Park

29. Public Participation

To receive questions from members of the public in accordance with Governance Procedure Rule 6. A total period of 15 minutes will be allocated for members of the public to speak at Panel meetings. Each member of the public shall be limited to a period of up to 5 minutes speaking.

Nil

30. Work Programme

Agreed.

Session to be organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. (IB)
Short paper on work of the Committee over the past 10 months (SP)

31. Future Meeting Dates

Decision – To note the following schedule of meetings, commencing at 2.00pm, via Teams.

Dates for 2020/2021:

- 2 December 2020

32. Part II – Matters to be discussed in private

Nil