



BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting held on 13th May 2020, at 4.30pm by video conference call

Present:

Clare Hayward(Chair)	Trevor Brocklebank	Clare Hayward	Chris Hindley
Stephen Kinsey	Graeme Bristow	Cllr Craig Browne	Nicola Dunbar
Peter Broxton	John Downes (part)	Cllr Louise Gittins	Nichola Newton

In attendance:

Philip Cox	Joe Manning	Ian Brooks	Steve Park
Adrian Bull	Andy Hulme	Andrew Lewis	Alex Thompson

Apologies

Cllr Russ Bowden	Robert Mee	Angie Robinson	Charlie Seward
Frank Jordan			

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 No conflicts of interest were expressed.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 There was no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th March 2020 and Board Discussion Forum April 2020

4.1 The minutes of 18th March 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising:

4.2 As proposed in the March board meeting, the Board has arranged several additional meetings to share intelligence and discuss the response of the LEP to Covid-19. The minutes of board discussions are not normally published but, in light of the fast pace of decision making, the discussion forum held on 18th April had given a mandate to various actions and, as such, these have been made available as public record. The Board agreed the minutes and decisions thereby ratified.

4.3 With regard to the EZ Loan facilities, Ian Brooks reported that all Local Authorities had now approved the new Articles of Association, and the new Articles had therefore been adopted. Applications for Membership had been received from the Chair and Deputy Chair and would be considered later in the Agenda. Work was progressing to complete the Facility Agreements.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's report

5.1 Philip Cox provided an oral update, given that the Government had made several announcements and issued guidance to employers in the previous few days.

5.2 There is a recognition that much of the LEP's work in the past was focussed on the long term but now we are dealing with issues with timescales of days and weeks, and that the organisation has risen to the challenge. We have located over 250 companies in support of Cheshire East Borough Council reaching businesses eligible under the grants scheme. Andy Farrall interim arrangements have been extended for 2 days per week until July, to help lead on the LEP emergency response. There has been an amazing success of Learn Live, with over 20,000 participants and the virtual Careers Fairs organised by the Pledge, with over 2/3s of schools signed up and over 50 employers participating. The Growth Hub is establishing a "one-stop" shop service for those unemployed with vacancies and support. We have identified £25k to invest in computers for schools, with a lead school in each Local Authority, to help get equipment to pupils currently unable to access the online classes. And Marketing Cheshire are continuing to work to develop plans for re-starting the visitor economy.

5.3 There was huge appreciation from the board to all staff of the LEP/MC who have responded and adapted so professionally in the last few weeks. This will be passed on to staff.

5.4 While there are the short term responses, the board is equally committed to the longer term recovery, seeking to build back better ensuring we leverage on the upsurge in digital working, the prominence of life sciences and not losing sight of sustainability and inclusivity.

5.5 Several risks were raised. Graeme Bristow reported a growing appreciation of the tension that exists between government wanting "shovel ready" investment opportunities to help kick start recovery with the fact that businesses cases prepared prior to Covid-19 probably need re-working and re-evaluation. Chris Hindley alerted the board that grant recipients and new applicants may feel significantly less confident delivering outcomes over 5 years, a usual condition of grant funding. Stephen Kinsey asked about future grant funding, which is subject to uncertainty especially now the Spending Review has been put back. Philip Cox highlighted that BEIS/CLG were carefully reviewing delivery of programmes in the current year.

5.6 Joe Manning outlined early planning for the re-start of the economy. The new guidance from the Government has been published on the Growth Hub website and we have experienced a five-fold increase in business engagement. We are promoting the Bounce Back Loan scheme. There is a clear need for authorities to work together due to interdependencies of decision making, which will be evidenced led.

Agenda Item 6: LEP Purpose, Vision and Strategy

6.1 The board also discussed feedback from three sub-groups which have been re-thinking whether we have clarity over our vision and purpose, principles and values, which will provide a framework for decision making as we move forward. Clare Hayward, Trevor Brocklebank and Philip will convene to summarise the conversation and return to the board in a couple of weeks.

ACTION CH/TB/PC

Agenda Item 7: Refunding MIPIM Partners

7.1 Philip Cox summarised the circumstances of cancellation of MIPIM and the options for the LEP to either (i) refund 100% of all payments received from partners or (ii) to refund 100% of the cost of passes

and 80% of sponsorship. The difference to the LEP is that a full refund costs approximately £10,000 more at £42,000. This is consistent with the budget provided by the LEP in 2019/20 and the loss will be charged in the 2019/20 accounting period.

7.2 The board recognised that full refunds could be vital at this time, especially to some of the smaller contributors, and approved the full refund. This will be processed later in the year once refunds have been received from ReedMidem.

Agenda Item 8: Youth Board Update

8.1 Virtual interviews for Youth Board candidates had been taking pace over the past three weeks and the panellists had met the previous day to finalise the recommendations. Ian Brooks reported the panel recommended 7 appointments, based on interview performance, although the overall standard of all candidates was really impressive. They cover Crewe, Chester, Warrington, Winsford and Tarporley. 4 Male, 3 Female. 3 BAME. Age range 20-27. Mix of graduates, an apprentice, school leaver / entrepreneurs, life-time resident and incomers to Cheshire. At least one from a deprived ward. This left several places open to recruit from east side of Cheshire (e.g. Macclesfield, Congleton) and widen, perhaps socio-economic groups.

8.2 The board supported the recommendation and a proposal that at least one should join each of our key committees, possibly rotating every 6-12 months, as well as having a forum to meet among themselves and that 2 or 3 will be invited on rotation to attend board meetings. However, final decisions on the workings will be made after discussion with the youth members. The key message was that board and committee members should expect to be challenged!

Agenda Item 9: Governance – Applications for Membership

9.1 In accordance with the newly adopted Articles, Clare Hayward and Trevor Brocklebank had submitted applications to become members of the LEP limited company. The board unanimously endorsed their membership.

Agenda Item 10: Board Sub-Committee Reports

10.1 Minutes from the various Sub-committees were noted by the Board.

Agenda Item 11: Any Other Business

11.1 There was no other business.

Agenda Item 12: Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Discussion Forum Wednesday 17th June 2020 4:30 - 6:30pm. Videoconference.

Board Meeting (public) Wednesday 15th July 2020 4:30 - 6:30pm. Location tbc.