



**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
Performance and Investment Committee Meeting
held on 27th January 2021 at 1.30 via Teams**

In attendance: Chris Hindley (Chairman), Catherine Walker, Paul Goodwin, Peter Skates, Nichola Newton, Joe Toward, Alex Thompson Ian Brooks, Rachel Laver.

Apologies: Stewart Brown.

Presentations on Chester Drainage Tunnel – Graham Pink and Steve Tranter
Accelerate Update – Andy Devaney and Joe Manning

Item No.	Item	To be Actioned by	By When
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies from SB. AT to leave at 3.00 and CW to join late. Due to the Corona Virus meeting held via Teams</p> <p>Warrington Bus Depot and Infrastructure presentations pushed back to next meeting.</p>	RL	Feb 21
2	<p>Conflicts of Interest CH asked for any conflicts to be declared.</p> <p>Declarations of interest: NN declared an interest in the skills projects CW conflict in Chester Drainage Tunnel</p>		
3	<p>Minutes and actions from the last meeting:</p> <p>RL confirmed that all the computers for schools' claims had now been received.</p> <p>Local Assurance Framework changes made.</p> <p>Offer letter issued to MDC but not yet signed as need to wait for the board to approve.</p> <p>Changes made to previous minutes as requested.</p> <p>Draft offer letter issued to IOTA for revised allocation.</p> <p>Tim Smith circulated ESIF call details: European-Social-Fund-update-December-2020.pdf (871candwep.co.uk) which are on the LEP website</p> <p>Offer letter for Ellesmere Port and Sustainable travels schemes to be issued in next week.</p>	RL	Feb

	<p>A review of spend to date on LGF shows 94% spent with remaining funding to be spent spread across a number of projects. RL to provide more detailed update later in the meeting.</p> <p>Board recruitment – 39 applications. IB arranging interviews. Expect positions to be confirmed by the LEP Board in April.</p> <p>Minutes approved.</p>		
4	<p>Chester Northgate Drainage Tunnel</p> <p>Steve Tranter and Graham Pink from CWAC gave a presentation on the Northgate drainage tunnel scheme. Key points:</p> <p>The tunnel is a planning requirement of the Northgate Development. It will stop sewerage being released into the River Dee.</p> <p>Complex scheme to deliver due to historical architecture. Innovative building technique which involves driving the pipe through from a number of large shafts has prevented the need to dig up the full length of the pipe, helping to minimise disruption.</p> <p>A report to CWAC cabinet is going on the 10th February to ask for a further £1.5m to develop the masterplan for Northgate to reflect the changed economy.</p> <p>Welsh Water isn't contributing to the scheme as they're not required to, but they will adopt the completed tunnel.</p> <p>RL confirmed that all the funding has to be spent by end of March 21.</p> <p>ST confirmed that the tunnel would go under the archaeological plane to reduce risk of archaeological find and GP confirmed that they were boring through rock which would reduce the risk of settlement.</p> <p>Query whether the water could flow up the tunnel when there was lots of rain – Technical experts at Welsh Water have assessed the scheme, along with the contractor to ensure it is technically robust. There is also a significant fall down to the River Dee and a 20% risk contingency in the budget.</p> <p>RL shared the Northgate paper.</p> <p>The Benefits Cost Realisation (BCR) was discussed. It was accepted that the direct benefits of the scheme were low, but it was an essential element of the Northgate scheme and therefore despite the BCR based on the direct benefits being only 1.6, it was agreed to support the scheme with the recommendations in the paper.</p> <p>RL to issue offer letter</p>	RL	Feb 21

5	<p>Accelerate Update</p> <p>Andy Devaney (AD) and Joe Manning (JM) gave an update on the Accelerate programme.</p> <p>600 people in the process of starting the training. 57 have completed training against a target of 5000. Recently started to see an increase in demand.</p> <p>Report commissioned by University of Chester (UOC) is looking at various delivery options which were discussed in the meeting, but not minuted due to confidentiality.</p> <p>NN felt that there was a lack of engagement with colleges, but she and other principals were happy to help. NN also commented on the way the bidding was carried out. To set up a course to be run the first time was more expensive than running it successive times, but the high costs of establishing the courses, meant that WVR's bids appeared uncompetitive,</p> <p>UOC finalising the business case. They're conscious of the reputational risk of poor delivery to themselves and the LEP. As part of the review, they're looking at how to make the processes more efficient.</p> <p>UOC working with MHCLG and DWP to come up with a solution that they are supportive of. CH asked whether courses could be 100% funded. AD and IB felt this might not be allowed under the funding conditions but would be looked at. DWP are open to revisions and being quite practical.</p> <p>CH whether LEP grant still committed and can Value for Money (VFM) be demonstrated. AD confirmed that every learner to date had received some of the LEP grant funding and that to date the project is able to demonstrate good VFM.</p> <p>CW queried for potential reputational damage, on the ability to bid for future funding. JM Stated that's why it was so important to get the revisions right .</p> <p>AD confirmed but the project was always designed to focus on stem and digital skills and agreed that the processes needed to be improved.</p> <p>There is recognition that not enough time and money being spent on marketing. UOC now looking at this.</p> <p>CH raced the need to give consideration to state aid under this couldn't be seen to be undermining the commercial market.</p> <p>JM said they would do a lessons learnt paper in due course.</p> <p>JM to send a copy of the review a circulation.</p>		
		JM	Feb 21

6	<p>Programme Manager Update RL ran through the projects by exception.</p> <p>BEEP project potentially has an underspend. Reaseheath could spend the funding on solar panels on the vertical farm project. Committee agreed to the proposal.</p> <p>RL to liaise with Reaseheath and Blue Orchid to contract the funding accordingly.</p> <p>Warrington Smart Grid looks like it will spend the LGF on time but RL concerned about progress with delivering the project and suggested from April the focus will have to turn to output delivery on all the projects.</p> <p>NN asked whether contracted outputs could be on a best endeavours basis over the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>RL will write to all projects in April to reforecast for the following year accepting that especially on the skills projects output achievement will have slipped.</p> <p>Canalside charging scheme has now yet claimed any grant funding, but CWAC have confirmed that the project will spend the full grant by end of March. CW to follow up.</p> <p>Concern about progress with the sustainable travel schemes, especially given flooding in places but by moving funding around, all funding should be spent.</p> <p>Reaseheath two projects are responsible for spending 48% of the remaining skills funding. Good progress being made with each and cows due to move in to the dairy first week of February.</p> <p>Final payment of £444k to be claimed next week for the Improving Winsford project being there is £6.8m to be spend in the next two months, while this is a large figure RL said she was confident that the funding would be spent but couldn't be guaranteed.</p> <p>Annual Performance Review (APR) meeting due to be held on the 4/2. Nice to be able to go into the meeting 94% spend of the LGF programme. RL reported that indicatively the LEP has passed on all three criteria: Governance, strategy and Delivery.</p>	RL	Feb 21
7	<p>AOB Next meeting 24th February 2021</p>		