

BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting
held 14th June 2023 at 4.30pm at Capesthorne Hall, Siddington SK11**

Board Members:

	Present	Apology		Present	Apology
Clare Hayward	x		John Downes		x
Trevor Brocklebank		x	Chris Hindley	x	
Russ Bowden		x	Kath Mackay		x
Craig Browne	x		Annette McDonald	x	
Louise Gittins		x	Nichola Newton		x
Peter Broxton		x	Eunice Simmons		x
Rupert Collis		x			

Attendees:

	Present	Apology		Present	Apology
Philip Cox	x		Steve Park		x
Ian Brooks	x		Charlie Seward		x
Maggie Chen	x		Peter Skates		x
Andy Devaney	x		Pat Jackson	x	

Members of the Public (for Part A)

N/A

Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 CH welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received as above.

1.2 CH invited a brief “round up” of on-going activities in which attendees were engaged which included:

- 1.2.1 YouthFed’s progress developing a centre in Macclesfield,
- 1.2.2 Ongoing work with the Bollin cycleway and with the National Trust on a national cycleway project,
- 1.2.3 Work with Natural Landscapes of compiling natural capital assets, working with Nature North as a pilot,
- 1.2.4 Induction of new council members following recent elections and addressing the concerns of budget deficits,
- 1.2.5 Engaging DESNES to promote Cheshire and Warrington as a global leader for industrial decarbonisation,

- 1.2.6 Establishing local transport priorities for the next Comprehensive Spending Review,
- 1.2.7 MC had participated in Northern Business Leaders and was speaking to BEIS,
- 1.2.8 CH had been appointed interim chair of NP11 and was engaging stakeholders regarding a future pan regional partnership for the north, one which could balance the voices of the metro mayors and ensure fairer representation of the economic assets of the sub region,
- 1.2.9 Ongoing collaboration between the education and training providers on developing the skills offer to help bridge the deficits experienced by employers.

Agenda Item 2. Conflicts of Interest

2.1 CHi noted a conflict in respect of the item 5 of the Chief Executive's report, "Pledge / Enterprise Coordinators".

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 There were no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th May 2023 and Matters Arising

4.1 The minutes were agreed and the table of actions attached to these minutes has been updated.

Completed actions from previous meeting have been removed.

4.2 IB advised that the directors and officers insurance policy contained continuation cover.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's Report

5.1 The report was taken as read and the following additional updates presented.

5.2 PC provided further information regarding the re-organisation of staff associated with the Pledge programme, reminding the board of its' decision as part of last years review that the LEP should focus on being a strategic body and avoid becoming responsible for lots of small delivery programmes. That said, any future operating structure for the Pledge must ensure proper controls. AD and Mervyn Harding of YouthFed are producing a paper on how a full contractual transfer might work or, failing that, how it might operate under a memorandum of understanding between the LEP and YouthFed. CHi confirmed YouthFed's intention to guarantee the future of the programme.

5.3 PC also reported that the Pledge will be holding a conference at Alderley Park on 29th June to celebrate some of the achievements. Over 250 delegates are expected including the Chief Executive of the Careers and Enterprise Company.

Agenda Item 6: LEP Transition Update

6.1 Work continues with the Local Authorities on the LEP Transition to LA control. Options for the future structure include a company owned by the 3 LA, a company hosted by a single LA on behalf but with a board made up from all three, or a joint committee. SP is leading the preparation of papers for discussion by LaCE. Leaders have consistently re-affirmed the value of the LEP functions and to ensure a structure that provides a business voice into decision-making.

6.2 CB added that from the perspective of devolution, leaders were meeting with ministers and officials from DLUHC on June 26th, to discuss the possible shape of a devolution deal, with both sides remaining open minded on whether a mayoral model will be necessary. Preparation for any devolution deal will require careful planning and lessons can be learned from areas which have gone before us, including consideration of ascertaining the level of public support.

Agenda Item 7: Skills Update

7.1 PJ presented an overview of current skills activity, with particular emphasis on the Data and Labour Market (DLMI) analysis and the Skills Bootcamp programme.

7.2 DLMI has between 60-70 participants and uses a range of information including analysis of vacancies on the Jobs Portal, to identify the skills being sought by employers. By working with partners, we are seeking to address several challenges:

- information gaps and failures
- reducing the number of unemployed or economically inactive residents
- halting the decline in the number of people with higher level technical and digital skills
- reducing the gap in attainment by young people on free school meals.

7.3 Against the Gatsby benchmarks, performance in the sub-region is ahead of national results except for benchmark 1. The Pledge has been focussing on 21 schools in the most disadvantaged areas and achieved greater improvement than anywhere else nationally. Enterprise advisers report challenges accessing senior enough staff in schools and thought is being given to overcome this.

7.4 PJ described the two waves of bootcamps with funding of £1.08M and £1.2M respectively. The bootcamps are employer led skills requirements. Feedback from training providers has identified that methods of delivery need to be tailored differently to accommodate unemployed and employed trainees. Bootcamps for the care sector, where there is a major shortage, are proving difficult to attract trainees because it is so difficult for employers to release staff from their normal duties. PJ also highlighted a policy issue that apprenticeship levy cannot be used by employers to fund their contributions to bootcamps and workforce development more generally.

7.5 The board noted the progress made by the Pledge and the Bootcamp programme and passed its thanks to the entire team involved.

Agenda Item 8: Transport Consultations

8.1 RN is presently working on two consultations, National Highways and Transport for the North, both of which will be discussed with Leaders before submission.

8.2 The National Highways consultation describes:

- Objectives which align with sub-regional aims
- Making the best use of existing assets
- Decarbonisation
- Small scale improvements.
- The increasing backlog of maintenance.

8.3 There is also a big push on digital and technology, bringing national solutions to more regional / local roads. Whilst the aims and objectives are sensible ones they are likely to impact on local transport

networks and a key challenge is whether DfT will have sufficient funds to support the planned priorities and interventions and necessary investment on the local networks.

8.4 Consultation is also underway by TfN on the Strategic Transport Plan, to provide statutory advice to Government and build a case for transformation of transport delivery. Currently the working document needs more evidence to be compelling case for change, should reference how investment helps Government achieve its wider objectives, and lacks a cohesion between the multiple local initiatives which are necessary for TfN to meet its strategic aims for decarbonisation and social inclusion. Furthermore, rail fare season ticket income has changed from pre-covid levels, dropping from 33% of sales to 15% with more people travelling just one or two days per week rather than five. The STP will need to take this into account. Integrated ticketing was a TfN project but has been taken over by DfT. Integrated ticketing primarily operates only in PTE areas and requires support from Network Rail. The C&W response will raise and comment on these issues.

8.5 From a C&W perspective, the document also lacks reference to the major economic assets in Cheshire and Warrington (e.g. Life Sciences. Manufacturing locations). These key assets drive transport needs which are often poorly served, e.g. routes into Alderley Park.

The board proposed establishing a Task and Finish Group to assist compiling a response. Anyone interested in joining the Task and Finish Group should contact Roy Newton.

ACTION: RN

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

9.1 Council officers to provide dates of full council meeting to Alison Harkness to avoid date clashes with LEP board meetings.

ACTION: PS, SP, CS

9.2 Two events to be added to the list: Convention for the North (1/3/24) and LEP AGM (18/10/23)

Agenda Item 10: Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Meeting: 19th July 2023. 4.30pm by Teams

Board Meeting: 13th September, 2023, 4.30pm

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action arising	Action	Who	Complete?
16/3/22	Take forward recommendations to improve interaction with engagement board members:	Board members	Ongoing
16/3/22 & 16/11/22	Circulate a list of events (being attended by LEP Board members) including invitations for LEP speakers	Philip Cox / Sharon Pond	Ongoing
14/6/23	Task and Finish Group for National Highways Consultation	Roy Newton	
14/6/23	Dates of council meetings to be provided to Alison Harkness	Peter Skates, Steve Park, Charlie Seward	