



BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting held on 6th September 2017, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford CW7 IAH

Present:

Christine Gaskell (Chair)
Clare Hayward
Pete Waterman
Gary Steen

Cllr Samantha Dixon
Meredydd David
Graeme Bristow
Robert Mee

Cllr Rachel Bailey
Stephen Kinsey
Ged Barlow

Apologies:

Prof. Tim Wheeler
John Downes

Cllr Terry O'Neill

Chris Hindley

Attending / Observing:

Philip Cox (LEP Chief Executive)
Katrina Michael

Mark Livesey

Charlie Seward

Member of the Public

Andrew Needham

Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 Christine Gaskell welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received from Cllr Terry O'Neil, Prof Tim Wheeler, Chris Hindley and John Downes.

Agenda Item 2: Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to Agenda Items on the open section of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 Andrew Needham attended the meeting. Having been invited to make opening remarks, Andrew drew attention to the Westminster Hall debate that had been secured by Antoinette Sandbach MP on HS2 Phase 2b route and pointed out that the debate would be taking place at the same time as the Board meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th April 2017

4.1 The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. The Farmer Review presentation would be made at the 11th October Board meeting and there were no other outstanding action points

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's report

5.1 The Board noted the report and additional comments from the Chief Executive and:

- Welcomed the recent visit of Jake Berry MP, Northern Powerhouse Minister. The visit had gone extremely well and the Minister was impressed with not only the achievements to date, but also with the ambitious programme ahead. Since his visit, the Minister has written to say he would like to make a further visit and is keen to help us deliver our priorities.
- Welcomed the fact that the Chair had been invited to join the advisory panel to the review of role of LEPs. The Board noted the review is designed to strengthen the role of LEPs, ensuring systems and processes are robust and transparent.
- Noted the invitation for bids to the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund and welcomed the nomination of Graham Lister (CWaC) to co-ordinate the process and ensure any bid was submitted by the 30th November deadline.
- Welcomed the tabling of the Bill that will bring HS2 to Crewe and the issuing of the consultation document on the Crewe Hub station. Following discussion, it was agreed that a co-ordinated response was essential, in order to secure the best outcome for Crewe and the critical role that would play in wider interregional connectivity. It was noted that the options under discussion now, were significantly better than those that had been mooted at the outset several years ago. This was testament to the partnership working to date and reaffirmed the importance of continued joint working.
- Welcomed confirmation that the Department for International Trade would fund a fixed-term post within the LEP to improve the co-ordination of inward investment.

Agenda Item 6: United Utilities: Investment Plan 2020-2025

6.1 Chris Matthew, Head of Sustainability at United Utilities, gave a short presentation to the Board. In discussion, it was agreed that:

- Given the importance of the growth priorities set out in the recent SEP, it was critical that United Utilities, along with other infrastructure providers, worked closely with sub-regional partners to ensure that its business plan reflected those priorities.
- The current business plan to 2020 is worth £12bn to the regional economy, supporting 17,500 jobs.
- Challenges included asset resilience, improving customer service, while resolving debt/affordability issues, alongside the constant challenge of climate change.
- United Utilities had access to significant areas of open space which might complement the quality of place agenda the LEP was taking forward.
- The North West currently enjoyed a resilient supply, which was in stark contrast to other areas that may be under growth pressure. This could form part of the sub-region's growth narrative.
- Given the importance of Growth, it would be good to bring utility providers to meet Economic Directors. It was noted that the Farmer Review would be presenting at the next Discussion Forum **Action: LEP Executive**
- As United Utilities had an extensive outreach programme and had recently launched an Innovation Lab which was aimed at SMEs, offering partnership opportunities, the LEP's Growth Hub should ensure that local SMEs were aware: **Action LEP Executive.**

Agenda Item 7: Annual Report and Statutory Accounts

7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive took the Board through the Statutory Accounts for 2016/17. These had previously been put to the Finance and Audit Committee, who had approved them and recommended them to the Board for sign off. In discussion, the following points were made:

- The LEP had ended the financial year with an operating surplus of £145,000. When added to the reserves held, this meant the LEP now had total reserves of £390,000.
- Recruitment costs had been a feature of the year, but these had been offset by an increase in interest payments on the funds held by the LEP.

- Given the change in structure of the LEP, the minimum level of reserves held should be increased from £150,000 to £250,000.

7.2 The Board confirmed it was content for the Statutory Accounts to be signed off and lodged with Companies House.

7.3 The Deputy Chief Executive took the Board through the latest draft of the Annual Report, explaining that the revised National Assurance Framework, required each LEP to produce one. This Report would highlight the achievements of the last year and highlight the priorities for the coming 12 months. The Board agreed that work on the draft should continue, that the good progress made on governance and transparency should feature and that the Report should be launched at the Place North West event on 21st September. A final draft would be circulated to the Board for approval.

Agenda Item 8: Attendance at MIPIM

8.1 The Chief Executive introduced this agenda item and explained that the LEP was keen to build on last year's attendance at MIPIM and to raise Cheshire and Warrington's profile on the national and international stage as a fantastic inward investment proposition. This was the premier international property expo, attended by around 25,000 developers, investors and intermediaries.

8.2 The Board agreed that it was important to build on last year's attendance and approved attendance.

Agenda Item 9: Mersey Dee Economic Alliance

9.1 Charlie Seward took the Board through a presentation on the Mersey Dee Economic Alliance. In discussion, the following points were made:

- The Mersey Dee Economic area was a unique cross-border economic area, falling within the administrative boundaries of Flintshire, Wrexham, Cheshire West and Chester and the Wirral. It has a GVA of £22bn, contains 3 Enterprise Zones and with a population of 940,000.
- The ambition was to double the economy by 2040, create a minimum of 50,000 jobs and deliver up to 25,000 homes.
- A number of key strategic sites had been identified for growth, each providing the potential for jobs, homes, leisure and business space.
- Connectivity was a critical factor in realising the areas potential. It was stressed that a good outcome to the Crewe Hub consultation was as important to the Mersey Dee Alliance, as it was to Crewe.
- Securing successful growth deals on either side of the border would be key to delivering the ambitions.

Agenda Item 10: Assurance Framework Implementation

10.1 The Deputy Chief Executive explained that following the publication of the revised National Assurance Framework in 2016, there had been a clear call on LEPs to ensure processes were robust and transparent, particularly where public funds were being deployed.

10.2 Following our most recent internal audit, an area had been identified where further transparency could be achieved. This related to sub-committee meetings and ensuring they were accessible to the public.

10.4 The Board agreed that good governance and transparency was key to ensuring public confidence and the Executive was tasked with making the necessary arrangements to ensure that where possible the sub-committees were open to the public, with papers being published in advance. Clearly any papers being published would need to respect both personal and commercial confidentiality.

10.5 The Deputy Chief Executive went on to update the Board on the establishment of an arms-length Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Progress continued to be made and following an approach to several candidates who had expressed an interest in working with the LEP, the intention was to have the Committee in place later in the Autumn.

Item 11: Any other business

11.1 Gary Steen stressed that the Board should consider how the digital infrastructure played into the growth agenda and how, as a sub-region, we might take advantage of the Government's Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund.

11.2 Christine Gaskell reminded Board members that the Awayday would be taking place on 27th and 28th October and to ensure dates were in diaries.

Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 11th October 5.00pm.

Action points:

Action: LEP Executive to organise meetings with utility/infrastructure providers with Economic Directors.

Action: LEP Executive to ask the Growth Hub to promote United Utilities Innovation Hub to local SMEs.

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