**CHESHIRE SCIENCE CORRIDOR ENTERPRISE ZONE BOARD**

**Minutes**

**Thursday 26th January 2017, Birchwood Park, Warrington**

1. **Attendees and Apologies**

**Present:**

Robert Mee (Chair)

Howard Hopwood (Vice Chair)

Cllr Peter Groves

Cllr Russ Bowden

**In attendance:**

Jonathon Walsh

Paul Vernon

Louise Wood

Andy Allen

Myles Kitcher

Chris Farrow

Steve Park

Tony Clark

John Willis

Katrina Michel

John Adlen

Heather Standidge

Joel Tagg

Steve Richmond

**Apologies:**

Philip Cox

Cllr Brian Clarke

Andrew Round

David Slater

Chris Doherty

Alison Knight

Andy Evans

Caroline Baker

1. **Previous EZ Board Minutes**

All matters arising from the previous EZ Board held on 23rd November have been actioned or will be covered in this Board.

All agreed minutes for sign off.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

No member of the Board member declared any pecuniary interests.

1. **Introduction to the New Growth Director**

John Adlen was welcomed to the Board as the new Growth Director for the Cheshire Science Corridor. John will be in post from 1st February 2017 replacing Cushman & Wakefield’s interim role, and will be responsible for pro-actively driving investment and accelerating economic growth across Cheshire and Warrington together with the daily management, promotion and administration of the EZ. John has a background in land and property and has spent the last five years heading up Research and Enterprise at Staffordshire University.

JA to hold 1-2-1 meetings with most stakeholders throughout February/March.

1. **Governance**

**5a) Cities and Local Growth Unit**

Joel Tagg, Ministerial and Policy Manager at the Cities and Local Growth Unit (a partnership between BEIS and DCLG) provided a verbal overview of their role supporting EZs. Working closely with Martin Wood, the unit is responsible for raising local growth and productivity, and acts as a ‘critical friend’ to EZs including monitoring performance, reporting to Ministers and arranging Ministerial Visits.

The Industrial Strategy is under consultation (12 weeks) and incorporates Ministerial Meetings and LEP level meetings with key stakeholders[[1]](#footnote-1). The Industrial Strategy and a strengthened Department for International Trade forms part of the Government response to some of the bigger economic opportunities and shocks (e.g. Brexit).

JT considered the CSC EZ to have had a strong start since its inception on 1st April 2016 with promising early outputs but was unable to comment on performance relative to other EZs at this stage.

JT to be added to EZ Board invite list and provided with copy of Minutes.

**5b) EZ Board Schedule 2017**

The finalised EZ Board schedule and confirmed locations are as follows:

* Thursday 23rd March 2017 2pm Thornton Science Park
* Thursday 18th May 2017 2pm Helix 1, Alderley Park
* Thursday 20th July 2017 2pm Birchwood Park
* Thursday 21st September 2017 2pm Thornton Science Park
* Thursday 23rd November 2017 2pm Alderley Park

Land owners to be responsible for ensuring a suitable room is available for each Board.

1. **Cheshire Science Corridor EZ Update**

**6a) BRD Application Update**

11 BRD applications have been submitted since April 2016, including 5 new applications since the last EZ Board with potential to generate c.£230,000 p.a. in additional rate retention, or £5.5m over the lifetime of the EZ:

* eCorrugated (Cloister Way, Ellesmere Port) – 18,000 sq ft / 16 new jobs (5 years). Recommended for approval.
* Bathgate Flooring (711 Cavendish Avenue, Birchwood) – 13,900 sq ft / 9 new jobs (2019). Recommended for approval.
* Bishopsgate Specialist Installations (Plot 722, Birchwood) – 40,000 sq ft D&B / 20 new jobs (5 years). Recommended for approval.
* Bio-script Group (Block 23, Alderley Park) – 1,222 sq ft / 8 new jobs. Recommended for approval
* Places for People Leisure Centre (Alderley Park) – Declined as does not directly support science based industry (granted indirectly via staff), Rates Relief as a social enterprise has also been sought directly from Cheshire East and as a large organisation is subject to State Aid concerns. AA indicated that the replacement of a sports facility was an enabling requirement of the Park’s planning permission. CF raised the issue that if it was a condition of planning then awarding BRD would raise a State Aid issue.

All businesses have been informed of the recommendation and the applications are now progressing through the relevant Ratings Teams within the Local Authorities. Clarification is sought on formalising the process of approval at this stage.

Square footage and jobs to be added to future BRD Application Updates

**6b) Birchwood Development Update**

Jonathan Walsh, UK Head of Business Park Portfolio Asset Management at Patrizia, provided an update on the EZ areas of Birchwood Park. Key messages were as follows:

* Birchwood Park currently home to 165 businesses and 6,500 employees.
* Successful second half of 2016 characterised by higher value occupiers (Hillsborough Inquest, Arriva) and record rents (£20 per sq ft).
* 106 Dalton Avenue (40,000 sq ft office) has undergone a £2.5m refurbishment and close to agreeing terms with a commercially confidential occupier from within the nuclear industry.
* An existing occupier with 1,950 staff within Birchwood (but outside of the EZ) has a requirement for 100,000 sq ft within 3 years and is considering the EZ.
* Bishopsgate are a prospective occupier of 40,000 sq ft D&B.

**6c) Site Specific Update**

The following points were made in respect of the site specific update:

* **Thornton Science Park –** Paul Vernon reported a strong pipeline with 2 occupiers interested in freed-up lab space within Building 49; a Chinese company seeking factory space; and an announcement regarding the previously discussed 100,000 sq ft $100m occupier anticipated in March/April. The new Energy Centre will be launched at the MDA Energy Conference on 7th April. Ministerial presence requested.
* **Alderley Park** – Andy Allen reported that the 60,000 sq ft letting within the Parklands building is now on hold but Cyprotex has taken up 25,000 sq ft to accommodate its 106 strong UK workforce, releasing 5,000 sq ft within the Biohub. Astra Zeneca is continuing to off-shore functions, allowing greater control of the site infrastructure. Site enablers are progressing well with the second phase of residential now in planning. Now increasing focus on ‘Prospecting Strategy’ with marketing team working closely with Skills and Growth Company.
* **Astra Zeneca** – Steve Richmond, Senior Manufacturing Director at AZ’s Hurdsfield site indicated a total of 3,000 staff on site. Not just a manufacturing facility (1,000 staff) but also product development and supply chain headquarters which help to bring products closer to the market and retain manufacturing within the North West. Two potential investments within the pipeline which could create jobs and strengthen the cluster by supporting suppliers beyond the EZ.
* **Protos** – Official Protos Launch with Andrew Percy, MP for the Northern Powerhouse will take place on 31st January at TSP, which together with being identified as one of the Northern Powerhouse international trade projects has raised the profile of the scheme. Currently £170m of infrastructure coming out of the ground and will be investing £350m over the next 3-4 years on motorway, berth and rail connections. There are a number of active enquiries, and Heads of Terms have been issued to 6 parties with interests within the EZ including energy, technology and big-box occupiers. Privatisation of gas and electricity from the biomass and energy from waste facility will provide low cost energy to occupiers.
* **Ellesmere Port** – Chris Farrow stated lots of positive interest in the Ellesmere Port sites, in particular at South Road. Essar is keen to establish a link to the EZ and its opportunities and whilst there has been limited competitive interest in the Hooton Park site, EZ status is helping to improve its attractiveness to the market.

**Alderley Park agreed to provide the detailed development update at next Board Meeting – Thursday 23rd March**

1. **Operational Overview**

**7a) Monitoring and Evaluation**

Heather Standidge provided a summary of third quarter Monitoring and Evaluation as submitted to Government on 17th January 2017.

Discussion was held on how best to record investment and projects spanning more than one quarter. Suggestion was made to capture longer term schemes at year end. For discussion and agreement at the Steering Group.

**7b) EZ Commercial Support Funding**

JA reported that the EZ has been successful in its application to DCLG for £50,000 of match funded commercial grant support to prepare a Development and Investment Strategy for the CSC EZ, together with integrated Development Plans for each of the EZ sites/areas in line with the Draft Implementation Plan.

A Project Brief has been issued with a return deadline of 2nd February. Interim reports anticipated by 1st April when the first £50,000 must be spent.

1. **Marketing Update**

**8a) MIPIM 2017**

Katrina Michel provided an update on MIPIM 2017 and confirmed 20 partners now on board including the EZ local authorities and landowners. Partnership telecom scheduled.

Programme must be confirmed by 6th February and the strategy is to make all key Cheshire & Warrington announcements by the Wednesday lunchtime for maximum impact:

* Tuesday – Stand/brochure launch (am) and CSC Breakfast (am) for 45-60 people hosted by Addleshaw Goddard actively looking for speakers. Relaunch of Northern Development Zone (pm).
* Wednesday – Crewe Masterplan launch (am) and Warrington (pm)
* Seeking ideas for small half hour leadership events
* Need short 300 word ‘science’ stories to support
* DIT will be helping to drive traffic through their ‘GREAT’ stand, part of which will be dedicated to the Northern Powerhouse.

**8b) Schedule of Events**

Schedule of forthcoming events include:

* Protos Launch with Andrew Percy MP at TSP on 27th Jan – RM providing an address and HS attending
* Mersey Dee Alliance at Sci-tech Daresbury on 3rd Feb – Free stand plus John Adlen providing elevator pitch.
* Northern Powerhouse Conference at Manchester Central on 20th/21st Feb – Free exhibition space, John Adlen in attendance Volunteers to staff the stand requested

Event to mark the first anniversary of the EZ and promote its successes to be added to Steering Group Agenda.

**8c) Press Releases**

RM has provided a number of quotes to support positive PR for the EZ including for the Protos Launch and regarding the letting of Bathgate Flooring at Birchwood.

Press releases to be added to CSC EZ website.

1. **Finance**

Nothing to report.

1. **Any Other Business**

JW reported how the resolution of traffic at Birchwood is now having a positive impact on deals. SP added that LGF will support more traffic works in the area.

**Next EZ Board – 2pm Thursday 23rd March 2017 at Thornton Science Park**

1. Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-our-industrial-strategy> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)