**Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting**

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| **Agenda Item:** | **5** |
| **Subject:** | **Chief Executive’s Report 2019** |
| **Author:** | **Philip Cox** |
| **Date:** | **11 December 2019 2019** |

Summary

1. Obviously the outcome of the General Election will be key to determining the LEP’s short and longer term policy priorities. In the meantime we have continued to progress with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Deputy CEO appointments, alongside longer term thinking about priorities for the LEP and NP11.

Senior Appointments

1. Long-listing for Chair and (following last month’s discussions) Deputy Chair of the Board took place on Wednesday 4 December with an extremely healthy field of candidates. Shortlisting will be on 18 December and interviews will take place on 7 January, with the new Chair being involved in the selection of the Deputy a couple of weeks later.
2. On the Executive Team side, Mark Livesey officially left us on 29 November, with Andy Farrall taking up post as Interim Deputy Chief Exec on 2 December. Short-listing for Mark’s replacement, also from an impressive field, will take place on 5 December, with final interviews on 15 January.
3. Outside of the LEP, subject to formal approval from the full Council, Kath O’Dwyer has been appointed permanent Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council. Kath has been acting CEO since Mike Suarez was suspended in early 2017.

Board Awayday

1. We have received lots of positive feedback about the Board Awayday, in particular from the new external members of the Board sub-committees who were delighted to have the opportunity to meet members of other Committees and the main Board. The strategy discussions on Saturday morning have given the Executive Team a very useful steer on objectives for the LEP for the next few years, and these are already being reflected in discussions within the Executive team about targets and budgets for next year.
2. A consolidated assessment of the Awayday, suggesting broad priorities for around the next five years and a draft delivery plan and budget for 2020/21, will be tabled at the Discussion Forum in January. This will allow the new Chair to offer their input before the papers are circulated and for the papers to reflect the result of the General Election.

General Election

1. The General Election is due to take place the day after the Board meeting, and an assessment of what we know about the main parties’ plans is (for Purdah reasons) on Part 2 of the agenda for the Board meeting. The one thing we can say with near certainty, however, is that there will be a lot more money to spend on infrastructure etc once the new Government (of whichever colour) is in office.
2. Of course, a General Election doesn’t just elect a new Prime Minister, it also elects 650 MPs. We will have letters ready to send out to congratulate those who get elected in C&W, and to any who lose their seats (and therefore their job!), thanking them for the support they have given us while they have been in office.

LEP Organisational Development

1. Part 2 of the agenda includes the minutes of a recent meeting of the Appointments and Remuneration Committee. The significant increase in the number of staff in the LEP and the merger with Marketing Cheshire has meant that we have had to put in place a formal salary structure, not least to ensure that all staff are being paid on a fair and equitable basis. An extensive process of internal and external comparisons was undertaken and, with the Committee’s agreement, the new structure will be implemented from the beginning of December.

NP11

1. The NP11 Board (comprising the Chairs of all the Northern LEPs) had an awayday in November to ensure that it is fully prepared to engage with new Ministers. The work that NP11 has done over the past eighteen months has begun to identify some policy areas which will have a much bigger economic impact if LEPs across the North work together. These include international trade & investment, clean energy, and delivery of the Manifesto for the North, published jointly with the Convention for the North just before the Election was called. These are being brought together by David Levene into a prospectus which will be offered to new Ministers along with an offer that NP11 and the LEPs can play a key role in the delivery of the North’s revitalised economic development to which both main parties are committed.

International Hydrogen Conference

1. The LEP and Marketing Cheshire have highlighted business tourism as one of the ways in which we can build the reputation of C&W as a centre of expertise in our key business priority areas. I was therefore delighted to be asked to give a formal welcome to delegates at an international conference on Hydrogen in the gas network held in Chester Town Hall at the end of November. The conference, which included delegates from as far afield as Australia, was brought to Chester by Fiona Bebbington, MC’s new business tourism officer. Fiona also organised for MC to pay for a coach tour of the area on the evening before the conference so that delegates could see both our impressive industrial base, and the fantastic surroundings in which people live and work in the sub-region.

LEP Charity of the Year 2020

1. The LEP is presently advertising for expressions of interest for its’ charity of the year 2020 with a deadline of 23rd January 2020. We have already received several nominations, and a paper will be brought to the Board in February.
2. In order to qualify, organisations must be:
   1. A constituted Charity with an established board and registered with the UK Charities Commission.
   2. Delivering a benefit directly to the communities of Cheshire and Warrington
   3. Deliver services that benefit the whole of Cheshire and Warrington
   4. Deliver a benefit that contributes to [**Cheshire & Warrington LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan**](http://www.871candwep.co.uk/strategic-economic-plan/), particularly in relation to ‘creating great places to live and an excellent quality of life’, or helping develop an inclusive society.
   5. Be in a position to engage with the Cheshire & Warrington LEP throughout the year to maximise the partnership

Terry O’Neill

1. Finally, as Board members are aware, Terry O’Neill, former Leader of Warrington and a member of the LEP Board for seven years, died at the end of October. His funeral took place in Burtonwood on 22 November, and it is a testament to the huge amount he did for Warrington and the whole of C&W that the service had to be relayed to people standing outside via loudspeakers. He will be greatly missed.