

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 8th September 2021
Virtual Meeting via Teams**

Present: Chair Cllr Laura Crane

Cllr Paul Donovan, Cllr Steve Parish Tracey Walsh, Catherine Barber-Brown, Yvette Hastings, Rob McKay, Phil McCabe

Also In Attendance:

- Philip Cox - Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- Ian Brooks – Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- Sharon Parker – Warrington Borough Council (secretariat)

70. Apologies

Apologies were received from Helen Nellist.

71. Declarations of Interest

Nil.

72. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on the 2nd of June 2021 were received as a correct record.

73. Centre for Public Scrutiny Review – Recommendations for Actions

The Committee were updated on the findings of the Centre for Public Scrutiny Review on the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The seven recommendations were discussed in turn with the following actions

Agenda Item 3

Rec1	To develop a deeper training & induction plan for committee members	<p>Training in general – picked up via the presentations that were given at each meeting.</p> <p>Additional skills such as questioning skills could be provided via the CfPS but also look at case studies of good scrutiny and how they did else where? SP to look at.</p> <p>Task & Finish Group to look at training including induction – interest from Chair and CBB – discuss at Dec meeting.</p>
Rec2	To increase the importance and prominence of work programming and member involvement in its development	Review work programmes of each individual body so not missing potential areas and try and have forward visibility of what is coming up. Go back through to see if there is anything missing and also review the current work programme of the Committee to see if anything can come off.
Rec3	To build relationships between the main board and scrutiny committee	Members of the Board are attending the Scrutiny Committee (Two attended the September meeting). The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is also attending the Board meeting
Rec4	To trial task and finish groups	Potentially going to set up a Training and Induction Task & Finish Group.
Rec5	To consider membership of the committee, increasing the challenge it provides	Have already reviewed and increased the small business sector but what about the larger business sector, third sector and pressure groups such as health watch?
Rec6	To consider formalising the feedback loop	Committee very keen to be note where the committee have identified an area of concern and see what the impact of this has been.
Rec7	To assess recommendations and actions in a year	Review in 12 months.

74. Business Growth Board

Alice Choi and officers provided an overview of the Business Growth Committee:

- **Relevant support officers and structure**
- **Progress over the last year including** – new chair/members, more strategic approach, peer network responsibility, Covid business recovery strategy, commissioned work on improving export and leading work on investment and expansion.
- **Responsibilities and decisions** – oversight of Growth Hub, Business Growth Strategic Leadership, mechanism to support strategic vision and leadership, matching business demand to the supply of business support and ensuring strong private sector leadership/representation and public sector support.
- **Selected 2021/22 KPIs**
- **Key themes of healthy, sustainable, inclusive and growing which were split into goals under each theme.**

Further work requested by the Committee

Ref 21/09 1

How do you know what the impact has been? Can a KPI tell you this? What is the quality of support provided to businesses?(CBB)

75. Employers Skills and Education Board

The following points were noted;

- **Governance Structure**
- **Key activities of the Employers' Skills and Education Board included** – leading the education strategy and delivery programme, developing a digital skills action plan, inspiring young people about new technologies and career opportunities, engaging with partners to influence national policies, commissioning data and labour market analysis and encourage and facilitate collaboration between local colleges and other partners.
- **Key priorities** – young people, employers and economically inactive and unemployed
- **Key decisions** – skills report, data and labour market intelligence workplan, pledge, accelerate, local growth fund skills investments and jobs portal and support for online job fairs.

- **Influencing and informing others** – data and labour market information has been used by – pledge partners, local colleges and other training providers, jobs portal and local partners.
- **Work programme for the next 12 months set out in the Skills Report and Action Plan.**
- **Key challenges** – changing nature of the labour market, 1000 hard to fill vacancies, deficit of 7000 level 3 skills, gap between the achievements of the young people in receipt of free school meals and those not is too big, where young people live links to their level of attainment and gender disparities.
- **Key performance indicators** – more young people studying subjects in demand, address the gap in attainment, 7k more with level 3 qualifications, address gender disparities, 2500 kickstart placements by December 2021.
- **Skills to deliver Cheshire and Warrington’s vision for growth, inclusion, sustainability and health.**

Further work requested by the Committee

Ref 21/09 2

Care workers – it is hard to fill these vacancies and hard to recruit to but are there representatives of this important area on the LEP structure? (CBB)

Ref 21/09 3

**HS2 – to what extent are you relying on it to bring in skills to the area or take them away?
CBB**

Ref 21/09 4

HS2 – more detailed discussion on the impact on all LEP topics? CBB

Ref 21/09 5

Warrington West Station – Cllr S Parish - –“as the LEP put a few million pounds into Warrington West station, it might be right for the LEP to query whether under present proposals it had got best value?

Warrington is badly affected by the Manchester Rail Recovery Proposals (and other bits of Cheshire to a lesser extent) and the Task Force seems to be controlling what happens to services well beyond the troublesome Castlefield corridor. Attached is my summary for the TfN Scrutiny Committee on Thursday. Stockport and Chester / Helsby / Frodsham also lose direct services to Manchester Airport but that may be from other factors. “

The example of Warrington West new station (WAW)

Built with “third party” funding – i.e. public money rather than railway money

£20.5m (from initial estimate of £12m) – DfT, LEP, Warrington BC

Business case of 2 trains per hour; Northern franchise bid offered 3 tph

Opened December 2019 with 2 tph because of timetabling (and modelling that said 2 tph would not impact on the Castlefield corridor congestion but 3 tph would)

Service reduced to 1 tph during lockdown (withdrawal of Liverpool-Warrington-M/c Airport express)

2 tph reinstated this week (6 September 2021)

Proposal that Northern relinquish their Airport service (one of the 2tph at Warrington West) for Trans Pennine Express to take the slot

Spring 2021: Manchester Rail Recovery Task Force propose options that severely affect Warrington including splitting the local Manchester-Liverpool services at Warrington Central (WAC), which would leave WAW with only 1tph to without a change at WAC. WAC-Manchester would have only 1tph stopping service (plus 1 fast and 1 semi-fast)

Summer 2021: TPE publish West Coast Mainline draft timetables for May 2022 (now postponed) and include a draft timetable for their Southern (Hope Valley) route.

That proposes that TPE's Cleethorpes to Manchester Airport service (under the Covid timetable already terminating at Manchester Piccadilly) would run to Liverpool with extra stops at Urmston and Irlam to replace the second local train between Manchester and Warrington – but it excludes the stop at WAW of Northern's existing Airport service

This would mean the new £20m station would have no direct train to Manchester (the main destination) outside peak hours

TPE seem to be saying the Manchester Task Force can dictate where they stop their trains

Who gave the Task Force these powers to control TOCs' operational and commercial interests, or have they just assumed the powers?

Stopping at WAW has no impact on other trains, just a 3 min later arrival and 3 min later departure from Liverpool. That does cut down the turn round time, and it's been suggested that extra time may be needed to recover from delays on westbound services (i.e. before getting to Manchester) – but if it's not a punctual service before getting to Manchester, it doesn't sound wise to put it through the Castlefield corridor, where the problems are mostly caused by trains arriving late at Manchester

Local publicity in Warrington: [Chapelford could lose regular direct service to Manchester | Warrington Guardian](#)

The LEP reported that there were no contractual relationships regarding the services. This could be a matter that the Scrutiny Committee wished to review.

64. Public Participation

To receive questions from members of the public 15 minutes will be allocated for members of the public to speak at Overview and Scrutiny meetings. Each member of the public shall be limited to a period of up to 5 minutes speaking.

65. Work Programme

Details of the work programme were agreed, with the following items added

66. Future Meeting Dates

Decision – The following dates were noted, due to commence at 2.00pm, via Teams.

1 December 2021

68. Part II – Matters to be discussed in private

Nil