**LEP Strategy Committee**

**MINUTES**

Wednesday 9th September 2015, 2pm, LEP Office, Richmond House

**Present:**

Robert Davis (Chair) Pete Waterman Philip Cox Robert Mee

Louise Morrissey Andy Hulme Alison Knight Caroline Simpson

Andy Farrall Aidan Manley\* Martin Forbes\*

**Apologies:**

Charlie Seward Nigel Schofield

**Presenting:**

N/A

\*Agenda Item 6 only

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Robert Davis welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Nigel Schofield and Charlie Seward (Cheshire West and Chester Council – represented by Alison Knight).

**Agenda Item 2: Presentation – Crewe – Northern Gateway Development Zone**

As part of the Strategy Committee’s ongoing programme of engagement with the Place Teams, Caroline Simpson provided a briefing on the latest proposals for Crewe. Caroline acknowledged the support of the LEP in backing infrastructure delivery linked to the Northern Gateway Development Zone which is a key priority for Cheshire East.

Philip Cox stressed the importance of the role of LEP Board members in articulating key messages around the benefits of growth arising from this kind of investment.

**Agenda Item 3: Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising.**

Minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2015 were approved. All actions were either completed or covered by the Agenda.

**Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

**Agenda Item 4: Devolution Proposal Update**

Philip Cox updated on the work to develop a devolution proposal for submission to Government, and confirmed that proposals had been submitted on 4th September. The summary document outlining the key elements of the proposals has been uploaded to the LEP website.

It was confirmed that Government continues to reinforce the message that LEPs must be an integral part in the development of any such devolution deals.

In considering next steps the Committee was clear that LEP Board members should continue to undertake a practical role in the development of more detailed proposals, ensuring the business voice is heard. In terms of representation, it was confirmed that Louise Morrissey would work with the ‘Building More Homes’ workstream and Robert Mee on the ‘Integrated Public Services’ workstream.

Alison Knight (Cheshire West & Chester Council) informed that Committee that linked to the Integrated Public Services workstream, the sub-region has been awarded £50,000 by Government to develop a joint asset plan under the One Public Estate Phase III programme.

It was noted that a Communications Plan is now in place linked to the devolution activity.

**Agenda Item 5: Strategy Work Programme**

Andy Hulme presented an update on the Strategy Work Programme. Written updates had been provided for the **Atlantic Gateway Science and Innovation Study** being undertaken by SQW and the **Energy Sector Study**, being undertaken by Mickledore.

It was agreed that Mickledore should be invited to the November meeting of the Committee to present their final report and findings.

**Action: Andy Hulme to arrange for Mickledore to present to the meeting on 11th November.**

**Agenda Item 6: Growing Places Fund**

Aidan Manley and Martin Forbes joined the meeting to update on the work being undertaken on behalf of the LEP into options for future deployment of the Growing Places Fund. A proposal submitted by Local Partnerships for options development was supported by the Committee.

Aidan Manley outlined two projects being considered for Growing Places Fund support. *(As the projects were considered commercially confidential, details of the discussion have been set out in a separate note which will not be made publically available)*.

Both projects were supported in principle, subject to due diligence and final approval by the LEP Performance and Investment Committee.

**Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business**

Philip Cox updated the Committee on the work undertaken by the LEP and partners to develop an application for an Enterprise Zone. Further discussions were scheduled with the Local Authorities prior to a final recommendation being considered by the LEP Board on 17th September.

Louise Morrissey and Robert Davis declared an interest at this point.

**Agenda Item 8: Date, Time and Venue of next meeting.**

Thursday 8th October, 2pm at the LEP Offices, Richmond House, Gadbrook Business Park.

**CONFIDENTIAL – STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEMBERS EYES ONLY**

**Cheshire Green Employment Park**

Proposal is for the provision of a call option to the value of £3.2 million to provide upfront infrastructure works to unlock an 8 acre site. The option would be contingent on the developer securing sufficient land sales to fund 50% of the works, and be secured by a charge over the site.

There was a discussion specifically around the nature and scale of the proposed charge on land needed to protect the LEP’s investment in the case of default. The current proposal indicates this would be limited to enough of the site to cover the cost of the loan, however the Committee felt this would be better to encompass the whole site.

The Committee supported the proposal in principle, subject to the completion of a detailed due diligence report, a satisfactory legal agreement including land charge and final approval by the LEP Performance and Investment Committee.

**Warrington Collegiate**

Proposal is for a loan of up to £700k from Growing Places Fund to support acquisition of the site for the College’s planned Manufacturing and Distribution Engineering (MADE) in Cheshire Centre.

The Committee supported the proposal in principle, subject to the completion of a detailed due diligence report, a satisfactory loan agreement including agreeing the interest rate, term, repayment and longstop provisions and final approval by the LEP Performance and Investment Committee.