

**BOARD MEETING**

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting**

**held on 21st March 2018, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford CW7 IAH**

**Present:**

Prof Tim Wheeler (Chair) Cllr Rachel Bailey Cllr Brian Clarke

Chris Hindley Meredydd David Stephen Kinsey

Pete Waterman Graeme Bristow Ged Barlow

Robert Mee Gary Steen

**Apologies:**

Christine Gaskell Cllr Terry O’Neill Cllr Samantha Dixon

John Downes Clare Hayward Gary Steen

**Attending / Observing:**

Philip Cox (LEP Chief Executive) Mark Livesey Jan Willis (S151 Officer)

Andy Farrall Lisa Harris John Adlen

Kathryn Carr

**Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions**

1.1 Tim Wheeler welcomed Board Members and introduced Jan Willis who was attending her first Board meeting as the LEP’s Section 151 Officer. Apologies were received from Christine Gaskell, Cllr Terry O’Neil, Cllr Samantha Dixon, John Downes, Clare Hayward and Gary Steen.

**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 No members of the public were in attendance.

**Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th September 2017**

4.1 The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record, with all action points having been actioned.

**Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's report**

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

* Welcomed the success of the Commonwealth Event organised by the LEP and held on Monday 12th March in Chester. Over 300 delegates had attended and the presence of HRH The Earl of Wessex, had significantly raised the profile of the event. A strong mix of speakers, businesses and cultural offerings had ensured a vibrant and energetic event. The feedback from participants following the event had been very positive.
* The LEP had also appeared on the international stage, attending MIPIM for the second year running. More detailed feedback would come to the next Board meeting, but the early signs were positive. Sponsor support had been strong and the evolving narrative around the success of the region’s economy continued to make an impact.
* The Government had made a welcome and timely response to the Crewe Hub consultation. This had gone down well at MIPIM, with Government accepting the arguments about the growth benefits of 5 – 7 trains per hour at Crewe on HS2, and 3 - 4 trains per hour on the network lines radiating out of Crewe. The Board recognised that a good deal of partnership working and joined up thinking, had ensured the Government had listened to the case that had been made. While this was a good first step, constraints elsewhere on the system and the case for a HS2 junction north of Crewe still needed to be addressed.
* Work continued to progress on the design of the new Growth Hub and the model being evolved sat well with the Government’s increased expectations. The new Growth Hub would sit within the LEP and would look to be strategic in approach, connecting and communicating with businesses across the region.
* The LEP team continued to evolve. Liam Fisher had joined the LEP on 19th February as account manager to the sub-region’s foreign owned companies. A list of 90 companies had already been compiled for him to engage with. This post is being fully funded by the Department for International Trade.
* Sadly, Sarah Harvey would be leaving the LEP on 13th April. Sarah would be greatly missed and had been a key member of the LEP team for a number of years. Given the Board’s desire to significantly ramp up engagement activities going forward, the LEP Executive would use Sarah’s departure to take stock of the LEP’s needs, before making a successor appointment.
* Noted that the outcome of the Northern Cultural Regeneration bids was expected to be announced very shortly.

**Agenda Item 6: Local Assurance Framework**

6.1 The Deputy Chief Executive introduced this agenda item and explained that following the Mary Ney Review, LEPs had been asked to revisit their Local Assurance Framework to ensure it met all the expectations of Government. Furthermore, our Section 151 Officer had had to write to the Permanent Secretary MHCLG confirming all requirements were being met and that the Local Assurance Framework would be put to the Board for formal approval. That approval was now being sought. In discussion is was noted that:

* The Cheshire and Warrington Local Assurance Framework was already in good shape. Only minor revisions had been needed and these related to stating explicitly what the LEP already had in place eg setting out all sub-committees, the members of each and the governing terms of reference.
* A new section had been added to cover the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which explained how this would operate.
* A new Conflict of Interests form had been circulated by officials, though this was based on the form we already used and Government had credited us with the design of it.
* The most significant inclusion, was that of a comprehensive Whistleblowing policy. Again, officials had circulated suggested text on this, which had been employed in full. In fact, The LEP had gone further and rather than police the whistleblowing policy itself, the support of Warrington BC had been secured to ensure any complaints were dealt with at arms-length from the LEP.
* A new National Assurance Framework was likely to be published later in the year, following the conclusion of the LEP Review and any additional requirements would be taken on board.

6.2 The Board approved the revised Local Assurance Framework and welcomed the fact that Government had recognised the strong governance and transparency systems that were already in place.

**Agenda Item 7: MHCLG Assessment of Cheshire and Warrington LEP**

7.1 The Chief Executive introduced this agenda item, explaining that for the first time all LEPs had received an assessment rating. This rating had arrived following the Annual Conversation process and rated LEPs against three criteria.

Cheshire and Warrington LEP had been rated:

* **Governance – Exceptional**
* **Strategic Influence – Exceptional**
* **Delivery – Good**

7.2 The Board welcomed the recognition of the strong systems and processes that the LEP had put in place, as well as the strategic impact the LEP was having across the region. While the full list of assessments had not been released, it was understood that Cheshire and Warrington had faired well in the process.

7.3 The Board recognised it was important to ensure that strong governance remained a priority for the LEP and also that work on the Local Industrial Strategy was likely to inform next year’s strategic rating and so it was important to ensure the LEP was well placed to deliver an ambitious strategy. While delivery had been slower than expected across a couple of projects, the Board asked that an action plan be put in place to address those delivery issues.

7.4 The Board agreed that the proposed action plan should be brought to the next board meeting. **Action LEP Executive**

**Agenda Item 8: MIPIM/Commonwealth Event Feedback**

8.1 This agenda item had been taken earlier under the Chief Executives Report.

**Agenda Item 9: Enterprise Zone Presentation**

9.1 John Adlen, LEP Growth Director, took the Board through the Enterprise Zone (EZ) presentation at Annex A, making the following key points:

* The EZ was performing well and exceeding initial expectations.
* In it its first 2 years of operation it had already created 623 jobs, attracted 40 new businesses and developed/refurbished 247,000 sq ft of new commercial floorspace.
* In addition to creating jobs and attracting new business, the EZ had already leveraged over £21m of private sector investment.
* The EZ was currently focussed on generating as much new commercial floorspace as possible in order to maximise the retention of business rates over the next 23 years. In doing so, this will enable the LEP to reinvest money back into the EZ and also the wider Cheshire Science Corridor.
* The LEP is developing a potential investment pipeline of £60m of development projects in the EZ and is at various stages of negotiation with landowners/developers regarding potential investment.
* The EZ had already generated a little over £1m of income for the financial year 2016/17 and the figure for the 2017/18 financial year will be known shortly. Once the levels of income is better understood, consideration can be given to how best to deploy that income.

 **Agenda Item 10: Board Sub-Committee Reports**

10.1 The Board noted the minutes as tabled.

10.2 The Board noted that P&I Committee had met earlier in the day and had expressed concern about the speed of progress of two projects, namely Thornton Energy Park and the complexities around the Ellesmere Port’s ‘one public estate’ project. P&I Committee would intervene as necessary and would continue to ensure the Board received regular progress updates.

**Item 11: Any other business**

11.1 The Board noted the disappointing decision that had been taken to close the Warrington and Vale Royal College campus in Hartford.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

Wednesday May 23rd 5.00pm.

**Action points:**

**Action**: LEP Executive to bring a delivery action plan to the next Board meeting.