Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Digital Connectivity Board Meeting
held 27th October 2021 at 4.30pm by video conference call

Present:

Nicola Dunbar (chair)	Rupert Collis (vice-chair)	Calum Lewis	Helen Gopsill
Richard Bailey	Becky Stuttard		

In attendance:

Roy Newton	Ian Brooks	Eleanor Blackburn	

Apologies

Connor Diskin	Bill Carr		

Members of the Public (for Part A)

N/A			

Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 Nicola Dunbar welcomed members. Apologies were noted as above.

Agenda Item 2: Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No conflicts of interests were declared.

Agenda Item 3: Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on September 27th,2021 were accepted as an accurate record.

3.2 ND reminded members of the standing item to consider the content of a PQ for Esther McVey.

3.3 RN/IB had yet to approach colleagues in Stoke regarding their full fibre project. (Done since the meeting).

Agenda Item 4: Public Presentation

4.1 There were no public presentations.

Agenda Item 5: Purpose Pyramid and Priorities

5.1 RN refreshed the committee on the draft material shared at the last meeting before a full discussion took place.

5.2 The discussion focussed on "strategy" and "our deliverables". The sub-board is keen to identify and understand the role of other organisations acting on the local digital agenda, e.g., Connecting Cheshire and Digital Skills partners. This would help to identify pinch points, the degree of fragmentation of the various activities, and where the members could best use their knowledge and networks to influence delivery. It was agreed, the priorities for the sub board should add value, not duplicate existing initiatives.   EB suggested a joint meeting with the board of Connecting Cheshire.

<div align="right">ACTION IB/EB</div>

5.3 IB suggested the sub-board had a unique role to represent the "voice of business" and to raise the profile of business needs and requirements of digital. This would include the growing demand for digital provision of public services (e.g., healthcare, education). Connecting Cheshire appeared to be focussed on residential connectivity, although it is recognised that knock-on effect of the business requirements would include improved residential connectivity and improved digital skills and capability.

5.4 Further discussion with BDUK and DCMS was proposed to understand the current timelines for various funding rounds, which may translate into different tactical choices.

5.5 There was also recognition of the need to keep abreast of major projects in the sub-region, e.g., HyNet, HS2, upgrades of the Energy Network for the roll out of EV charging, which might offer opportunities to "piggy-back" improvements in digital connectivity.

5.6 RN offered to re-draft the pyramid and priorities to reflect the discussion focussing on
- "pinch points" and "gaps" in existing organisational set ups
- Better understanding of digital / mobile coverage (including levels of resilience)
- Profile raising
- Tactics and Timelines

<div align="right">ACTION: RN</div>

5.7 The timetable to feedback the sub-board's pyramid to the full LEP board is not yet clear; IB will discuss with Clare when setting board agendas. However, it was felt that the revised draft would substantively represent the Digital Connectivity Board contribution towards the overarching LEP ambition and strategy.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

6.1 None.

Date and Time of Next Meetings

25th November 2021, 4.30-6.30pm
22nd December 2021, 4.30-6.30pm