**LEP Strategy Programme Board**

**MINUTES (DRAFT)**

Meeting Held: Tuesday 29th June 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

**Present:**

Robert Mee (Chair) Nicola Dunbar Robert Davis

Philip Cox Rupert Collis Peter Skates

Stephen Kinsey Melissa Crellin John Downes

Steven Gleave Nicola Dunbar Eunice Simmons

Charlie Seward Matthew Waterhouse Stephen Millett

**Apologies:**

Frank Jordan Steve Park Rupert Collis

Gemma Davies

**Attending:**

Roy Newton (AI 5)

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

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and welcomed two members of the public, Matthew Waterhouse and Stephen Millett, who have attended to speak on agenda item 5.

Apologies were received from Frank Jordan, Steve Park, Gemma Davies and Connor Diskin.

**Agenda Item 2: Declarations of Interest**

Peter Skates and Charlie Seward declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6.

**Agenda Item 3: Minutes of Strategy Committee held 14th May and Matters Arising**

It was agreed the minutes will be tabled at the next substantive meeting of the Strategy Programme Board.

**Agenda Item 4: Public Speaking Time / Open Session**

Matthew Waterhouse and Stephen Millett, members of the ‘Action for the A51’ Group (made up of parish councils along the A51), attended to speak about the A51 Corridor Study scheme, and shared a presentation.

Matthew explained that the A51 scheme was recommended for support at the Local Transport Board last week but had not made the LEP’s business case funding shortlist.

The issues and concerns with the route include the fact that the total volume of traffic is very high for a rural A road, HGV use is substantially higher than national and regional averages and accidents are higher than rural averages.

The scheme had been allocated business case funding in the previous year but the match funding had not been available, and therefore the scheme was not taken forward. The match funding is now available and the group requests that the LEP accept the Local Transport Board’s recommendation and find the funds to undertake the study.

**Agenda Item 5: Business Case Development Fund**

The contents of the report were noted, alongside the views of the public expressed in Item 4.

Roy Newton, Director of Transport and Infrastructure at the LEP, provided an overview of the process that has been followed in assessing the projects, for the remaining £300k business case funding. This includes assessment against strategic fit, impact, timescales, match funding, and identified scheme funding opportunities. All schemes have been endorsed by the other relevant LEP subcommittees. The Local Transport Board provided a scheme prioritisation list up to the full budget, however the full budget has had to also cover housing and wider place projects.

The current request for funding is for a programme of schemes defined as (a) to (h) in the paper. There is potential further funding of £50k available and it is recommended to support the next scheme on the prioritised list with this, which is the Northwich Wider Town Centre Masterplan. This would be made up from a £26k underspend which was allocated last year to the A51/A500 scheme (unable to go forward due to lack of match funding), £5k remaining after the programme of schemes are accounted for, and a £19k top up from the LEP. The Board has the option to consider two or three smaller schemes instead of the Northwich scheme, for example the A51/A500 Corridor Study (£16,666 contribution sought), and/or the Bollin Valley Way Feasibility Study (£10k contribution sought).

The Board discussed the proposal, and were reminded of the principles of good governance, which act as a guide to the Board’s decision making. Board members asked about the details of whether match funding was secured for the Housing schemes and were assured that there are active and ongoing discussions with Homes England who are keen to support, although their budget is not yet confirmed. It was stated that there may be a possibility of further business case funding next year but this is not confirmed due to factors such as the LEP Review. Board members were assured that all funded projects will be subject to the usual terms and conditions.

**Action - It was agreed that the LEP will provide the Board with a report later in the year on progress towards delivery of the approved business cases.**

After discussion, the following programme of schemes was supported and approved for business case funding as outlined in the paper: -

1. £20,000 towards the Ellesmere Port Industrial Area Masterplan work
2. £25,000 towards the Warrington Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
3. £40,000 towards the Chester City Centre Package
4. £50,000 towards the Warrington Last Mile – Town Centre Masterplan
5. £50,000 towards the Crewe Town Centre
6. £50,000 towards the Crewe Transport Delivery Plan - Feasibility Assessment
7. £30,000 towards the Mid Cheshire Line Study
8. £30,000 towards the Ellesmere Port Town Centre

For the additional £50k of funding, the Board is minded to support both the Northwich Wider Town Centre Masterplan and the A51/A500 Corridor Study. The Board invited the LEP to work with local authorities and other partners to find the money. It was noted that all the schemes have very round numbers that will not be adhered to in practice and that there should be some movement within that to find some additional funding. There was also a recommendation to review match funding commitments.

**Action - Cheshire West and Chester Council to review whether it can provide further match funding towards to the Northwich Wider Town Centre Masterplan scheme.**

**Action - LEP officers to review schemes with local authorities and other partners as described above with the intention of accommodating funding for both the Northwich Wider Town Centre Masterplan and the A51/A500 Corridor Study within the approved portfolio.**

**Agenda Item 6: Part B - Non-public items**

There were no items for discussion under this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 7: AOB**

There were no items for discussion under this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 8: Date and Time of Next Meeting**

There will be an additional meeting in July – Friday 30th July 9am.

Meeting schedule:

* Friday 13th August 2021 (if required)
* Friday 8th October 2021
* Friday 10th December 2021