

**BOARD MEETING**

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

**held on 23rd January, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford CW7 IAH**

**Present:**

Christine Gaskell Cllr Rachel Bailey Cllr Russ Bowden

Prof Tim Wheeler John Downes Meredydd David

Stephen Kinsey Ged Barlow

**Apologies:**

Cllr Samantha Dixon Clare Hayward Graeme Bristow

Chris Hindley Pete Waterman Robert Mee

**Attending / Observing:**

Philip Cox (LEP Chief Executive) Mark Livesey Frank Jordan

Andy Farrall Charlie Seward John Adlen

Andy Hulme Mike Benson Stuart Scott-Goldstone

**Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions**

1.1 Christine Gaskell welcomed Board Members and extended a warm welcome to Cllr Russ Bowden who was attending his first Board meeting. Christine went on to thank everyone who had passed on their congratulations following the award of her CBE. This was not only a recognition of Christine’s efforts, but also a recognition of the work of the LEP Board and team. Apologies were received from Cllr Samantha Dixon, Clare Hayward, Graeme Bristow, Chris Hindley, Pete Waterman and Robert Mee.

**Agenda Item 2: Conflicts of Interest**

2.1 Cllr Bailey and the Deputy CEO declared a conflict of interest in relation to agenda item 9 and agreed that they would leave the meeting. Prof Tim Wheeler declared a conflict of interest in relation to agenda item 9 and the University of Chester’s role in Thornton Science Park.

**Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation**

3.1 No members of the public were present.

**Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 November 2018**

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 strengthening of the LEP following the receipt of additional central funding. This had enabled the LEP to develop plans to strengthen its analytical capacity, particularly around skills and evidence to support the production of the Local Industrial Strategy.
* The funding had also enabled the LEP to make the following key appointments
	+ Catherine Walker (Marketing and Communications Director)
	+ Paul Chapman (Business Growth Support Broker)
	+ Rachel Zaidel-Lamb (Business Growth Communications & Engagement)
	+ Andy Devaney (Business and Innovation Director)
* The LEP had also concluded interviews for the Finance and Governance Director and an offer had been made. Again, this would significantly strengthen the LEP’s governance and resilience.
* Welcomed the proposed recruitment campaign to identify new Board members and additional sub-committee members. Christine had already hosted a women’s event to highlight the opportunity to get involved in the LEP’s work.
* Noted that recommendations would come to the March Board, following publication of the revised National Assurance Framework. While the LEP was pretty much compliant with the new framework, minor amendments would be needed in a few areas.

**Agenda Item 6: Budget 2019/20**

6.1 The Deputy Chief Executive took the Board through the draft Budget for 2019/2020, pointing out that the aim was to deliver the identified priorities of the Board, namely external engagement and place marketing, while also delivering a balanced Budget.

 The key features highlighted, included:

* A fall in income of just over £500,000 due to falling interest receipts and management fees, as capital pots diminished and technical assistance contributions were lost.
* Additional funding (£200,000) had been received to help strengthen governance and the evidence base for the Local Industrial Strategy.
* An additional £75,000 had been received to help inform and implement Skills Advisory Panels, as well as £75,000 to appoint a regional digital co-ordinator following confirmation that we would be the next national Digital Skills Partnership.
* The decision to bring the Growth Hub in-house would mean an additional £287,000 from BEIS, though this would be a straight in/out as the money would deliver the Growth Hub services.
* In summary, with a draw-down of £460,000 from Enterprise Zone retained business rates and given the above, the LEP was able to significantly strengthen its team as well as delivering a balanced budget. This included a significantly enhanced marketing and external engagement budget of £200,000.
* This would still leave over £1m of retained business rates, as well as the continued annual receipt of retained rates going forward. The LEP would be keen to discuss with regional partners how best to deploy those funds.
	1. In discussion, it was agreed that the LEP would work with regional partners to identify how resources across the region could best be deployed. Place marketing and securing inward investment would remain a priority and it was suggested that some of the retained business rates could be used to support that activity.
	2. The Board approved the draft Budget for 2019/20.

**Agenda Item 7: Board Sub-Committee Reports**

7.2 In reporting sub-committee updates:

* Noted that work in Performance & Investment Committee around Ellesmere Port one public estate continued.
* In relation to skills, the Pledge initiative had received final approval by DWP before Christmas and we were just awaiting sign-off on the contract. The Skills for Growth initiative had passed gateway and had been invited to submit a full application.
* The Enterprise Zone Board continued to consider investment proposals, with 13 potential projects now in the pipeline.
* The Local Transport Board had considered the work programme for 2019 and had identified a series of studies that would need to secure funding if they were to proceed. Discussions would follow with Transport for the North and Highways England to ensure that they were involved in this work.

**The Board then went into private discussion.**

**Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

Wednesday February 20th 5:00pm.

**Action points:**

**Action**: None arising