

BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting
held 15th June 2022 at 4.30pm at Cheshire College, South and West, Ellesmere Port and by video
conference call**

Present:

Clare Hayward (CH)	Trevor Brocklebank	Nichola Newton	Kath Mackay
Nicola Dunbar	Chris Hindley (CHi)	Loren Jones	Eunice Simmons

In attendance:

Philip Cox	Ian Brooks	Joe Manning	Charlie Seward
Jane Traverse	Maggie Chen		

Apologies

Annette McDonald	Alice Choi	John Downes	Rupert Collis
Cllr Craig Browne	Lorraine O'Donnell	Steve Park	Peter Broxton
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cllr Russ Bowden	Alex Thompson (CEC, s151)	

Members of the Public (for Part A)

Lucy Gardiner (Warrington and Halton HNS Trust)	Kelly Jones (Warrington and Halton HNS Trust)		
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Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

1.1 CH welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received as above.

2. Conflicts of Interest

2.1 At PB's request in his absence, IB informed the Board that PB, in his capacity working for other companies, had approached Praetura for investment from the Life Sciences Fund. PB has taken the precaution to inform the LEP even though Praetura makes investment decision independently.

2.2 KM's interest in discussions by Growth Corridors Board of possible investments at Alderley Park.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 None.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th June 2022.

4.1 The minutes were agreed and actions completed.

Agenda Item 5: Warrington and Halton NHS Trust – Hospital proposals

5.1 LG presented the latest situation regarding proposals for re-development of Warrington and Halton hospitals, with a focus on the Warrington site. Plans have been submitted for consideration within the new Hospitals Programme and short listing is expected soon. In anticipation of progressing to the next stage, the purpose of the presentation was to seek LEP views on the links to the economy and the range of evaluation criteria the hospital planned to use for site assessment and to invite LEP representation to the stakeholder scoring panel.

5.2 The proposals for Warrington seek to deliver wider benefits to areas of highest deprivation, create opportunities for up to 450 new homes and deliver on the plans for carbon neutrality. Warrington has completed recently a second phase of evaluation which reduced a short list down to two options, Warrington town centre or a site a Cockhedge and the next phase will be a more detailed assessment of these locations.

5.3 Board members made the following comments:

- Should funding not ultimately be secured, whether a “Plan B” is being developed. LG suggested that a detailed, but sub-optimal, alternative risked diluting the investment case for new facilities, but that strategic plans for service delivery were kept under review including the scope and scale of community-based delivery e.g. in Warrington, Runcorn and Halton and by working with the Mental Health trust and local charities.
- How the development of digital services and, by association, digital access was changing the delivery of health services. LG said the largest change was occurring in out-patient provision where, as a result of recent growth in digital service delivery, the planned space for outpatients had been reduced by 40% compared to earlier estimates.
- Whether the criteria fully considered public access and active travel routes to the site.
- Whether the criteria could be amended to include proximity to educational and training facilities, e.g. University or College sites, to ease the logistics of staff training.
- Whether the criteria gave sufficient weight to considering employee recruitment and retention.

5.4 Board LG thanked the board for their suggestions and asked that if anyone was interested in joining the evaluation panel to contact Kelly Jones (Kelly.jones66@nhs.net). Please also let Alison Harkness know.

ACTION: Board Members

5.5 LG explained that Warrington application to the new hospitals programme was not competing with Leighton, which is seeking funds from another specified route to address the end-of-life issues arising from the construction material, RAAC (Reinforced Aerated Concrete). TB provided additional context.

Agenda Item 6: Board Sub-Committee Updates

6.1 Strategy Programme Board. PC provided a verbal update of the latest meeting at which the MetroDynamics report to refresh the evidence base for Cheshire and Warrington was discussed. This work has been commissioned because the previous “deep-dive” had taken place prior to Covid and an evaluation of how the economy has changed is crucial to refresh local economic plans and the ongoing work on devolution.

6.2 The work is ongoing but has identified:

- C&W economy is 1% larger than pre-Covid, compared to a UK average of 0.7%. Thought to be due to the large manufacturing sector.
- Productivity per head is, nevertheless, not growing.

- An exceptionally tight local labour market with 440,000 employed but only 425,000 (down 30,000 compared to pre-Covid) local people actively engaged in the economy, so it is reliant on people coming into the sub-region.
- 47 neighbourhoods fall in the 10% most deprived in the country.
- Longevity in wards varies by 16 years life expectancy between the longest and shortest.

6.3 CH recommended PC share the report with board members as a resource for the board away day in September which will also provide an opportunity to air any concerns.

ACTION: PC

6.4 CH also suggested a “tour” for board members to better understand some of the key assets which drive economic policy in C&W. LJ mentioned that the Growth Corridors Board was trying to hold meetings at Enterprise Zone locations and he would discuss with John Adlen the possibility of including a larger group / tour.

ACTION: LJ

6.5 Further suggestions included Jodrell Bank and some updated video content. ND had obtained a copy of a speech used by David Briggs which showcased Cheshire which she offered to circulate.

ACTION: ND

6.6 JM said that a possible theme for this year’s AGM would be “Made in Cheshire”.

6.7 Growth Corridors Board LJ outlined a pipeline of activity and projects including work on the High Speed Corridor, the Animal Life Science cluster around Chester Zoo and EZ investment including two projects at Alderley Park and one a Birchwood.

Agenda Item 7: Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

7.1. IB summarised the papers provided to the board, which included the annual report and accounts supported by several reports to provide assurance on governance and propriety. The group accounts are made somewhat complex in so far as they cover the LEP operational and investing activities and include Marketing Cheshire.

7.2 The reported deficit for the year can be broken down as follows:

	LEP	MC	Total
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	(£111k)	£58k	(53k)
Investing Surplus / (Deficit)	(£703k)	-	(£703k)
Total	(£814k)	£58k	(£756k)

IB explained that the investment performance, which relates to Life Sciences Fund and EZ Loans, are only assessed on an annual basis and there is no reliable way of predicting the movement in the value of the Life Sciences Fund. Movements can be significant including a gain of £1.1M in 2020-21, or deficit as in 2021-22. Investment performance is, however, backed by, assets of £16M. Consequently, budget conversations and financial monitoring refer only to operating performance and the out turn for the LEP of a deficit of £111k compared to a budget deficit of £173k. The surplus in MC of £58k compared to a budget surplus of £1k.

7.3 CHi summarised the scrutiny and activities of the F&A Committee over the past 12 months to provide assurance to the board of good financial governance and management of risk.

7.4 Since issuing the papers, TB had suggested an amendment to the Letter of Representation to include “to the best of our knowledge” in relation to the warranties being provided to the auditors. This has been agreed with the auditor.

7.5 The board approved the report and accounts and delegated signature and of the Letter of Representation to CH and TB as required. IB will arrange with the auditors for this to be done electronically once Marketing Cheshire’s finance committee has approved its’ accounts.

ACTION: IB

7.6 The board extended its thanks to the team and the F&A Committee and in particular to Stephen Kinsey for his chairmanship prior to leaving.

Agenda Item 8: Chief Executive’s Report

8.1 We can expect that the political circumstances in Westminster will bring about policy and priority changes for key initiatives such as HS2, Levelling Up, and Net Zero largely depending on which candidate eventually succeeds to become Prime Minister. In the meantime, with the heavy focus on HS2, John Adlen will be made available CEC for most of his time.

Agenda Item 9: SIGC Report

9.1 PC presented the report and recommendations prepared by SIGC which would be provided to sub-regional leaders and to which they will be asked to respond in due course. Formatted to provide insight to sustainability and inclusivity, much of the discussion centred on the on average attainment “gap” by students receiving free schools and that the situation in Cheshire and Warrington is worse than the NW and UK average and that the “gap” is widening (possible Covid effect?). It was suggested that a Task and Finish group explore the issue more fully and NN offered to collate information from college records to provide another layer of data. NN offered to join the T&F group.

ACTION: NN/PJ

Agenda Item 10: Any Other Business

10.1 None

Agenda Item 11: Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Meeting: 14th September, 4:30pm– 6:30pm (Virtual MS Teams)

Strategy Away Day: 30th September pm / 1st October am

Discussion Forum: 19th October 2022, 4:30pm– 6:30pm (Virtual MS Teams)

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action arising	Action	Who	Complete?
16/3/22	Take forward recommendations to improve interaction with engagement board members:	Board members	Ongoing
16/3/22	Circulate a list of events (being attended by LEP Board members)	Joe Manning	Ongoing
18/5/22	ESB would welcome views from board members and their networks as to what skills the next round of skills bootcamps should target	Board members	Ongoing
15/6/22	Revise and republished May minutes	Ian Brooks	Complete
15/6/22	Finalise and publish Delivery Plan 2022-23	Philip Cox	Complete

15/6/22	Convene discussion group re possible interventions for SPF. (done by inviting a wider selection of board members to Strategy Board)	Andy Devaney	Complete
13/7/22	Expressions of interest to join Warrington Hospital Site Evaluation Panel	Board members	
13/7/22	Share Metrodynamics Report	Philip Cox	
13/7/22	Possible Board / EZ site tour	Loren Jones	
13/7/22	Share David Briggs Cheshire speech	Nicola Dunbar	
13/7/22	Arrange signature of Accounts and Letter of Representation	Ian Brooks	
13/7/22	Collate/correlate attainment data and FSM for WVR	Nichola Newton	
13/7/22	Organise T&F group to explore attainment gap	Pat Jackson	