

BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting
held 17th January 2024 at 4.30pm by Teams**

Board Members:

	Present	Apology		Present	Apology
Clare Hayward (CH)		x	John Downes		x
Trevor Brocklebank		x	Chris Hindley (CHI)	x	
Russ Bowden		x	Kath Mackay		X
Craig Browne	x		Annette McDonald	x	
Louise Gittins		x	Nichola Newton	x	
Peter Broxton	x		Eunice Simmons		x
Rupert Collis	x				

Attendees:

	Present	Apology		Present	Apology
Philip Cox	x		Steve Park (WBC)	x	
Ian Brooks	x		Charlie Seward		X
Cristian Marcucci	x		Peter Skates	X	
Maggie Chen	x		Hayley Owen		x
Yulanda Duff	x		Sandra Rothwell	X	
Alex Thompson		x			

Members of the Public (for Part A)

N/A

Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

- 1.1 In the absence of CH and TB, PB agreed to chair the meeting and welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received as above.
- 1.2 PB also welcomed CM to his first meeting.

Agenda Item 2. Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 No conflicts were noted.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

- 3.1 There were no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th January 2023 and Matters Arising

- 4.1 The minutes were agreed and the table of actions attached to these minutes has been updated. Completed actions from previous meetings have been removed.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's Report

5.1 PC presented his report adding the following remarks:

5.2 PC provided more background to the NW Fund, explaining that after 2016, the then Chancellor George Osborne, shifted policy for regional investment funds placing future rounds of funding into the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund. The NW fund was, at the time fully invested and has since focussed on managing those investments. The board noted the proposals of the NW fund to support priority sectors, but PB thought the target investment range of £1-2M was large for "start-up" businesses, considering that amount more likely for established SMEs. He asked whether a clearer definition of "start-up" could be included in the fund's objectives.

5.3 Board members will be invited to the UK ReIFF launch event at Knights on 1st February.

ACTION: PC

5.4 Proposals are developing for a Chester based T-BID (Tourism Business Improvement District) which are expected to include a levy on hotel business rates to create a fund (estimated at ca. £1M per annum) that will fund investment in tourism marketing. A paper will be presented to the February board.

ACTION: CM

5.5 PC also mentioned that a Business Improvement District had been agreed for Crewe.

5.6 Invitations will be sent to Board directors to attend the Convention for the North taking place on 29th February and 1st March 2024. The sub-region also can invite up to 21 delegates from business and third sector in addition to board members and council representatives. Board members were asked for possible delegates. The event will be hosted by Clive Myrie and both the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition have been invited. Senior Ministerial representation is likely.

ACTION: Board Members / PC

Agenda Item 6: Commissioning for Industrial Decarbonisation

6.1 PC presented a paper outlining the developing specification for commissioning consultants to support the sub-region determining the most appropriate structure to deliver the programme of industrial decarbonisation.

6.2 He put the commission into context, explaining that the LEP (Andy Hulme) had begun work, in conjunction with Innovate UK, to set out how the sub-region would approach the decarbonisation agenda. The business case prepared as part of that supported investment in decarbonisation and was included in a national report by Innovate UK, published in early 2023. One of the recommendations was, with investment of £30Bn over 15 years and covering multiple projects, to consider whether a co-ordinating body would be necessary to support and help sequence the programme. The LEP commissioned Opergy to explore the question of a co-ordinating body including the level of support from the private sector, concluding it was necessary and well supported.

6.3 Opergy's report also began to consider the functions of such a body and the resources it will require, gaining broad support from DESNZ.

6.4 The current commission is to seek a consultant to establish the co-ordinating function, moving from theoretical agreement to practical operation, to mobilize the resources and to ensure it will be self-

sustaining. Once up-and-running, the LEP would step back. The ultimate ambition is to place Ellesmere Port as a world leading location in industrial decarbonisation, which will attract inward investment.

6.5 The consultant would also be expected to commission and manage a separate contract covering communications to local residents.

6.6 In response to a question from RC, PC confirmed the intention to launch the tender process within a week which would be open to individuals or specialist consultancies.

6.7 The budget for the commission is being set at £90k, funded £60k by the LEP and £30k from private sector.

6.8 The board supported the proposals.

Agenda Item 7: Progress Update – Business Advisory Board and Marketing Cheshire Advisory Board

7.1 PC presented an update following two workshop sessions, attended by some of the board, focussed on developing the functions and terms of reference for the proposed Business Advisory Board. As part of the LEP transition to LA control, government has stipulated that structures need to be in place to consult businesses in respect of policy development.

7.2 Concerns have been raised regarding the influence of the Business Advisory Board. These have been allayed by the Local Authorities stating that a strong business community is vital to their success and that business input will be written into the terms of reference for the joint committee and its' sub-committees with views sought early in policy development.

7.3 PC confirmed that the LEP's Engagement Board has made an important contribution to the work of the LEP and that there is a strong case for it to have a continuing role in the new arrangements.

7.4 Work was ongoing with regard to the board size, membership and frequency of meetings. In response to a question from AM about the balance of memberships between public and private sector bodies, PC confirmed that public sector representation is not anticipated, although Andy Burnham does participate in Manchester's BAB.

7.5 PB noted that to function well, the BAB and sub-committees rely heavily on pro-bono support.

Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

8.1 None

PART B - CLOSED SESSION

Agenda Item 9: Review of LEP Transition Papers

9.1 During the past few weeks the LEP has worked closely with LA colleagues culminating in Sandra Rothwell producing a report, several accompanying appendices and a list of recommendations to council members regarding the LEP transition. These papers are presently being consulted with LA Senior Leadership teams prior to publication for the respective council meetings. Some member briefings about the LEP have also been carried out.

9.2 Government also expected that LEP boards would be consulted and the main report regarding the transition and the accompanying high level indicative business plan, which forms one of the appendices and sets out the expected functions and funding, had been shared.

9.3 IB presented two scenarios for the transition of membership (ownership) to the Local Authorities and the proposed board changes.

9.4 The board supported the proposals. PC confirmed that, in the event the proposals were not approved by councils, the fall back option is for the LEP to continue in its current form, although there would be challenges in operating in this way as a consequence of public procurement legislation.

Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Meeting:

Dates for 2024:

Wed 14th February, 2024 4.30-6.30pm by Teams

Wed 13th March, 2024 5.00-6.00pm In person, followed by “get together” with past board members and staff. Location to be confirmed.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action arising	Action	Who	Complete?
15/11/23	Board Members and Attendees to raise awareness of and encourage participation at Skills Bootcamps in 2024	All	Ongoing
12/12/23	Circulate projects funded by C&W UDF	PC	
17/1/24	Invite Board Member to the UK ReiFF launch	PC	
17/1/24	Present paper to Board on Chester T-BID	CM	
17/1/24	Invite Board Members to Convention for the North	PC	
17/1/24	Provide names of possible Convention delegates	All board	