

BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Board Meeting
held 14th February 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		Roy Newton	x	
Yulanda Duff		x	John Simpson (CCS&W) Item 6	x	
Alex Thompson	x				

Members of the Public (for Part A)

Julie Shawcross

Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions

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

Agenda Item 2. Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No conflicts were noted.

Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation

3.1 CH welcomed Julie Shawcross. There were no public presentations.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th January 2024 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.

4.2 Regarding the sub-region's allocation of 32 places for Convention of the North, 11 have been taken up including two LEP board members. PC said he would approach the local CBI branch. Board members can continue to suggest attendees. LG gave apologies as she was unable to attend the event.

4.3 CHi had met with First Enable and mentioned skills bootcamps for the care sector.

Agenda Item 5: Chief Executive's Report & LEP Transition

5.1 PC presented his report adding the following remarks:

5.2 Papers outlining proposals for the LEP transition were presently being considered by the Local Authorities. WBC Cabinet had approved the recommendations. LG also reported that the proposals had been received positively at CWaC. CB reported that CEC corporate policy committee had supported the recommendations by 8-5 majority, with some concerns expressed by opponents that the proposals could be a precursor to devolution. CS reported that government officials have also recognised the strength and maturity shown across C&W, as exhibited by the approach to the LEP transition and creation of Joint Committee.

5.3 PC updated the board on developments for the Business Advisory Board. CHi, who had attended the workshops said that the group working on this, is proposing that when ECW is working on new policy ideas it will engage with the business advisory board at an early stage. TB expressed his support for the developing framework.

5.4 CH had attended a meeting of the LEP Network and, except for five areas where LEPs are being closed entirely and one which is undecided, like C&W most places are continuing to maintain sub regional economic development units.

5.5 PC mentioned that some formal process decisions in connection with change of name and membership may need to be taken at the March board meeting. However, all programmes of delivery will be unaffected with ongoing engagement with local stakeholders. Maintaining a legal entity has avoided disruption of TUPE transfers and contract novation. The LEP work programme will continue to be developed in close collaboration with the LAs.

5.6 Consultants have been appointed to lead the search for an interim FD.

5.7 Almost 50 applications have been received from potential training providers for wave 5 of skills bootcamps, and demand may exceed our funding allocation. Local priorities will be informed by data from Lightcast and the Cheshire and Warrington jobs portal, and discussions will continue with DfE regarding the opportunities for top up funding. LG has been speaking to LCR regarding skills but proposals of bootcamps for train drivers seem impractical due to the extensive nature of the required training.

5.8 The launch event for UK REiiFF hosted by Knights was well attended with several expressions of interest for sponsorship packages, which will be taken forward.

Agenda Item 6: Presentation on Institute of Technology

6.1 CH welcomed John Simpson, Director of The Institute of Technology, who presented a paper outlining the elements of the I.o.T, which is focussed on enhancing technical skills at level 4 and 5 (HNC, HND, Apprentice Degrees). Funding has been provided for 5 years from September 2024, with a possible extension to 15 years. Credit was given to the investments made three years ago by the LEP of £5M of Local Growth Funding which provided a foundation to support the I.o.T application for the sub-region. JS explained where the I.o.T funding would be invested across the existing HE/FE facilities.

6.2 JS explained that the next step was to raise awareness of the I.o.T and that employer engagement would be vital.

6.3 The board was very supportive of the developing programme, noting how courses could inspire the next generation and close the skills gap known to exist for industrial decarbonisation. LG would like the opportunity to visit facilities once investments are complete. JS confirmed early conversations between the I.O.T and the Pledge had already taken place.

Agenda Item 7: Presentation – Proposals for A-BID Chester (Accommodation Business Improvement District)

7.1 CM presented the background to an A-BID, which will primarily seek to convert the high number of day visitors to Chester and surroundings into an increase in the number of overnight stays in the city. He summarised various options which were being considered, with different geographic boundaries (from Chester city only to the whole of CWaC) and different approaches to funding (% of rateable value, or room rate levy), with a recommended option for “Chester city plus”, and a room rate levy. If adopted by the business community, additional funding of ca. £1M per annum would be generated for the A-BID members to re-investment into tourism marketing, events, etc.

7.2 LG and CS thought the proposals were a good idea with the caveat that use of funds must be clear. CS said CWaC is acting as an enabler and that enhancing and complimenting the existing offer as well as marketing was a key deliverable.

7.3 Clear definition of which accommodation facilities will be included has been determined (excludes for example, AirB&B, or smaller properties, e.g. pubs with a RV less than £18k.). Thought needs to be given to advertising campaigns to businesses to hold conferences in the area.

7.4 CH asked whether there was a venue large enough to hold a Convention of the North (i.e. 1000+ people) and ES asked whether university accommodation would be in scope. No was the answer in both cases.

Agenda Item 8: Paper on Local Transport Strategy

8.1 RN presented a paper outlining the need for an update of the Local Transport Strategy, which was last prepared over 5 years ago and before the Covid pandemic. The strategy would form a key component to support the ambitions within the Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Plan.

8.2 He explained that for previous strategies, information on how and when people travelled in the region was captured by Census data. However, the last Census (2021) would be unreliable because the data was taken during the pandemic.

8.3 He proposed a consultancy be engaged to generate travel diaries to help identify how people are travelling and to inform the short-, medium- and long-term priorities. The optimum time to carry out the studies was in the spring and to avoid summer holidays. £150k budget for the study would be shared £50k by the LEP and £100k equally by the LAs. The board approved the LEP share subject to approval by the three LAs for their contributions.

8.4 Once the travel information was available, the LEP would fund development of the revised Transport Strategy, up to £100k. Board members confirmed that businesses would want to be consulted, including through the Business Advisory Board, consultation events and other channels. Plans would need to reflect options for the “last mile”, which often exist between public transport infrastructure and places of work. Board members also advised consultation events with residents and colleges and not to overlook the transport links to neighbouring areas, particularly North Wales. MC stressed it was important to consider transport affordability which is a key factor for young people. The funding of up to £100k for the Transport Strategy was approved.

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

9.1 None

Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Board Meeting:

Wed 13th March, 2024 5.00-6.00pm In person, followed by “get together” with past board members and staff. Park Royal Hotel, Stretton, Warrington, WA4 4

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
17/1/24 and 14/2/24	Provide names of possible Convention delegates	All board	Ongoing