

**BOARD MEETING**

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

**held on 11th July 2018, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford CW7 IAH**

**Present:**

Christine Gaskell Cllr Samantha Dixon Prof Tim Wheeler

Chris Hindley Meredydd David Stephen Kinsey

Pete Waterman Graeme Bristow Ged Barlow

Robert Mee

**Apologies:**

Cllr Rachel Bailey Cllr Terry O’Neill Gary Steen

John Downes Clare Hayward

**Attending / Observing:**

Philip Cox (LEP Chief Executive) Mark Livesey Frank Jordan

Andy Farrall John Adlen Katrina Michel

Sandra Rothwell

**Agenda Item 1: Apologies and Introductions**

1.1 Christine Gaskell welcomed Board Members. Apologies were received from Cllr Terry O’Neil, Cllr Rachel Bailey, John Downes, Clare Hayward and Gary Steen.

**Agenda Item 2: Conflicts of Interest**

2.1 Stephen Kinsey declared an interest in respect of agenda item 7.

**Agenda Item 3: Public Presentation**

3.1 No members of the public were in attendance.

**Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 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 Sandra Rothwell to the meeting. Sandra had recently been appointed to lead the work around the establishment of the refreshed Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub and private sector engagement programme. Sandra was formerly CEO of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP and had overseen the setting up of a very highly regarded Growth Hub there. Addressing the board, Sandra explained that she was keen to speak with members to explore their views around what good private sector engagement looks like, which would help inform her thinking.
* Welcomed the news that Cheshire and Warrington had been asked to participate in the next UK-China Regional leaders summit in Dalian, China later this year (probably September/October). The delegation would comprise representation from Glasgow, the Northern Powerhouse, alongside the Mayors from Tees Valley and Sheffield City Region. The FCO would be looking for a delegation of around 50 and so we would be looking to invite around 10 to 15 businesses from the sub-region. In discussion it was agreed that supporting collateral would be important and that that should also be translated into Chinese. The University of Chester would be happy to help in that regard.

**Agenda Item 6: Statutory Accounts**

6.1 The Deputy Chief Executive introduced this agenda item and explained that following an audit of the accounts, the LEP had received a clean bill of health. The Statutory Accounts had now been approved by the Finance and Audit Committee and were being brought before the Board to seek approval for the Accounts to be deposited at Companies House. In discussion is was noted that:

* The Statutory Accounts to the 31st March 2018, had closed with a deficit of £76,000. This could be accounted for by the decision taken in year to attend MIPIM at a cost of around £40,000, alongside the costs of office relocation and reconfiguration, which had not been budgeted for at the start of the year.
* This left the LEP with closing reserves of £359,000. The Board had previously agreed that reserves should be held at a level that could be used to deliver an orderly close of the business which would mean holding reserves of around £220,000.
* Given the Board had already agreed that £100,000 of reserves should be drawn down to fund intensive work to ensure that remaining ESIF funds are fully committed, the reserves were at the right level.

6.2 The Board agreed that the Statutory Accounts should now be deposited at Companies House – **Action LEP Executive**.

**Agenda Item 7: Enterprise Zone Investment**

7.1 John Adlen, Growth Director, introduced this agenda item and took the Board through a brief presentation which set out the rationale for investing in the Enterprise Zone, the tools at the LEP’s disposal and a potential self-financing investment pipeline.

7.2 The discussion concluded with a specific proposal to invest £3.87m in Glasshouse at Alderley Park. The investment would be realised by drawing down Growing Places Loan funding and then repaying that with interest, once the Glasshouse began generating business rates.

7.3 The Board recognised the advantage in securing early development ie the sooner business rates were generated the greater the level of retained business rates over the lifetime of the EZ. The Board also noted that business rates would be generated, irrespective of the timing of occupation and so risks were very low. The Board unanimously agreed the Glasshouse investment and looked forward to further updates.

7.4 The Deputy Chief Executive pointed out that the process had thrown up process considerations and would return to the Board with a scheme of delegations proposal. The Board agreed that would be helpful.

**Agenda Item 8: Communications and Marketing Director**

8.1 The Chief Executive introduced his paper, explaining that the Board had been clear in its desire to see the appointment of a communications and Marketing Director. The paper had attempted to set out the broad objectives for the post and to seek the Board’s view on those ahead of launching the recruitment campaign.

8.2 In discussion it was noted that:

* to find a single individual with all of the skills described by the paper would be extremely challenging.
* Given the skills of current LEP officers, the links to Whitehall were perhaps less important.
* It would be important to have experience of running inward investment campaigns and engaging with potential investors, both nationally and internationally.
* It would be important to also engage with existing resident and businesses.
* It would be important to understand which services might be bought in e.g. social media support and so to concentrate on the core skills the candidate would need.
* The budget already existed given recent staff changes and so this did not require additional budget.
* The Executive should proceed with making the appointment.

**Agenda Item 9: Board Sub-Committee Reports**

9.1 The Board noted the minutes as tabled.

**Item 10: Any other business**

10.1 The Chair announced it would be Katrina Michel’s last Board meeting and thanked her for her excellent support and counsel. The Board wholly endorsed this.

10.2 The Board was asked to reflect on whether it would be helpful to alternate the location of Board meetings to other areas of the sub-region, and when doing that to provide Board members with the opportunity to look at projects supported by the LEP.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

Wednesday September 19th 4:30pm.

**Action points:**

**Action**: LEP Executive to deposit Statutory Accounts and work up a scheme of delegation for Board consideration.