

Official minutes of meeting

## **Growth Corridors Board**

**28 June 2022 17:00-19:00**

Location: Microsoft Teams

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<hr/> <b>Part A: Public items</b> <hr/>	
<b>1. Attendees and apologies</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
<b>Board members:</b>	
Peter Broxton (Chair)	
Loren Jones (Vice-Chair)	
Tony Bochenski	
Chris Farrow	
Cllr Tom Jennings	
<b>In attendance:</b>	
John Adlen	
Stephen Fitzsimons	
<b>Apologies:</b>	
Cllr Richard Beacham	
Gemma Davies	
Nicola Heron	
Linda Hilton	
Charles Jarvis	
Cllr Nick Mannion	
Martin Wood	

Item	Action
<b>2. Declarations of interest</b>	
a) Cllr Tom Jennings and Stephen Fitzsimons declared an interest in Birchwood Park on behalf of Warrington Borough Council pertaining to item 7.	
<b>3. Minutes and matters arising</b>	
The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.	
<b>4. Public speaking time</b>	
No requests were received from members of the public to attend or speak at the meeting.	
<b>5. Governance</b>	
<b>a) Format of meeting</b>	
Peter Broxton reported back to the Board on discussions held with other Chairs of LEP sub-boards regarding the format of future meetings. The consensus was that a hybrid approach to meetings was preferred with some meetings being held virtually and some face-to-face.	
<b>Action:</b> It was agreed to alternate Growth Corridors Board between virtual and face-to-face, with the face-to-face meetings entailing a site visit to one of the sites within the two Growth Corridors.	JA
<b>b) Progress against purpose pyramid</b>	
This item was deferred until the next meeting due to the amount of business to get through.	
<b>c) LEP Delivery Plan 2022/23</b>	
The Board reviewed the Growth Corridors section of the draft LEP Delivery Plan 2022/23 and the following points were made:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The importance of strengthening the nuclear cluster at Birchwood</li> <li>▪ Shared Prosperity Fund should be added to the list</li> <li>▪ Is it the role of the Growth Corridors Board to attract VC/finance?</li> </ul>	

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**6. Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone****a) Investment programme update**

John Adlen updated the Board on the EZ investment programme, noting that new claims for Blocks 22-24 totalling £1.2m had been submitted and that Patrizia had informed the LEP of its requirement to draw down the £1m allocated for upgrading the electricity infrastructure at Birchwood Park, which was expected to be drawn down in September.

**b) Investment pipeline**

John Adlen updated the Board on the EZ investment pipeline, noting that there are currently four schemes in the pipeline:

- **Vortex (Newport Business Park)** – currently on hold at the request of the developer.
- **Enviroo (Protos)** – awaiting revised investment case.
- **Waste to Hydrogen Plant (Protos)** – awaiting revised investment case.
- **Quadrant Phase 3 (Birchwood Park)** – investment case to be considered under item 11b.
- **Alderley Park** – investment case to be considered under item 11a.
- **Thornton Science Park** – University of Chester have appointed a preferred development partner and both parties currently undertaking due diligence. A meeting has been set up between the LEP and the preferred development partner.

**8. High Speed Growth Corridor**

John Adlen reported to the Board that a renewed focus was required on HS2 and the High Speed Growth Corridor, especially opportunities related to the HS2 Depot at Winsford, new opportunities around Warrington Bank Quay Station arising from the IRP and the cancelling of the Golborne Link and the renewed interest from government in the potential of the Crewe HS2 Hub to contribute to the Levelling Up agenda.

**9. Marketing and promotion**

John Adlen reported that he had attended the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREIIF) in Leeds from 17-19 May. The event was attended by over 4,000 delegates, of which there were over 500 investors, 300 developers and 200 local authorities. There was a significant level of interest from investors and developers in the Crewe HS2 hub and High Speed Growth Corridor concept, which the LEP and CEC officers will follow up. It had been agreed to explore the potential for a sub-regional presence at next year's event.

**10. Cluster and sector development****a) Life sciences**

A verbal update on the life sciences sector was given by Peter Broxton. It was reported that The LEP has received an approach from Chester Zoo regarding their being part of the Cheshire Science Corridor and an initial meeting has been held between John Adlen and Joe Manning from the LEP with the Zoo to explore the development of an animal life sciences cluster around Chester/Ellesmere Port – it was noted that the University of Liverpool's Leahurst veterinary centre was located in Neston.

**b) Energy**

A verbal update on the energy/net zero sector was given by John Adlen.

**10. Town centres**

Gemma Davies reported that Levelling Up Fund bids were being prepared for Ellesmere Port Town Centre and Northwich and that the Chester One City Plan was in the process of being updated.

Stephen Fitzsimons reported that an SPF workshop had been held with stakeholders and that levels of footfall in the town centre were back to 70-80% of normal levels but that there was a good level of interest from occupiers in food and beverage units.

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**Part B: Non-public items**

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**11. EZ investment cases****a) New Laboratories (Alderley Park)**

The Board considered an application from Alderley Park Ltd. seeking a total of £6m grant to develop 120,000 sq ft of new laboratory space at Alderley Park. The Board approved the investment in principle but subject to the following clarifications and conditions:

- i. Evidence is provided by the applicant of lettings rates and demand for existing and pipeline spaces at Alderley Park
- ii. Clarification from the applicant of their calculations of retained business rate estimates and agreement with the independent appraisers of the project of a retained business rate estimate for the scheme
- iii. Confirmation that the level of grant applied for represents value for money and the minimum possible cost to the public sector
- iv. A satisfactory State Aid/Subsidy Control legal opinion
- v. Agreement of an 'overage' clause in the grant funding agreement.

**b) Quadrant Phase 3 (Birchwood Park)**

The Board considered an application from WBC Birchwood Park Trustee Limited seeking a total of £232,076 grant to provide enhanced sustainability measures on the development of two speculative industrial units totalling 38,500 sq ft at Birchwood Park. The Board approved the investment in principle subject to the following clarifications and conditions:

- i. That the applicant provides further evidence of costs in relation to the construction of the scheme and the cost of the proposed environmental improvements.
- ii. Confirmation that the level of grant applied for represents value for money and the minimum possible cost to the public sector.
- iii. A satisfactory State Aid/Subsidy Control legal opinion.

**12. AOB**

There being no other business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

