

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 2nd December 2020
Virtual Meeting via Teams**

Present: Cllr Steve Parish (Chair), Catherine Barber-Brown, Helen Nellist, Cllr Laura Crane.

Also In Attendance:

- Phillip Cox - Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- Andy Devany - Cheshire and Warrington LEP
- Rob McKay – Cheshire Business Group
- Phil McCabe – Cheshire Business Group
- Jennie Cordwell – Warrington Borough Council (secretariat)

33. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ian Brookes.

34. Declarations of Interest

Nil.

35. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on the 2nd September 2020 were received as a correct record.

36. Membership of the Committee

The following points were noted:

- Current Membership is currently 3 Councillors and 3 representatives from the Private Sector
- Private Sector Reps have good networking links to smaller business connections and other networking groups have been created in response to Covid 19 and can therefore be utilised by this committee for future work

37. Progress Report – January 2020 to September 2020

The Committee received a presentation from Philip Cox on the above. The following key points were highlighted;

- Contact had been made with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to invite them to assess how the Scrutiny Committee was working and identify any areas for improvement. A response was still awaited

- There is a high level of interest in the work of this committee as a number of other LEPS do not have dedicated scrutiny committees
- As part of a peer review, there may be opportunity to pair with another LEP to enable deeper discusses of work undertaken by scrutiny committees across LEP organisations
- Terms of Reference for the Committee will be reviewed at the meeting due to take place in March 2021 and look at the method of working and how best to get closer to items
- Identify different committees that Scrutiny can link in to get more depth idea
- The committee discussed that the role of the Scrutiny of LEP can be a mammoth task and needs to be compartmentalised
- It was agreed to divide up the LEP committees to the committee and contact be made with each committee Chair as a starting point for discussions and observations
- The committee also agreed to look at the link between the LEP and the public sector and public involvement to enhance understanding of the work the LEP undertakes

38. Follow up on the response to Covid and the points raised at the previous meeting in respect of comments made on the recovery plan

The following points were discussed with the committee

- The LEP is leading a Workforce Recovery Group which comprises of the LEP, DWP, Job Centre Plus and Local Authorities to ensure the unemployed are fully supported and helped to find work
- The Growth Hub is the key point of contact for guidance for businesses
- The Pledge Programme has been moved online and now offers more support to help young people understand career prospects
- LEP funding of £1 million of grant funding has been made available from Accelerate
- Marketing Cheshire is providing a lead to retail and hospitality sectors in terms of providing advice and guidance
- There has been a £55 million capital investment programme via LGF, Get Building Fund and E2
- There is also an opportunity to add £1 million to small capital grant scheme for hospitality businesses
- The current Tier System has been implemented and a number of retail and hospitality businesses are under huge pressure and struggling. The situation is fast moving and future update on the position will be provided at future meetings

39. Brexit – implications for the Region

The following points were discussed with the committee

- The implications of Brexit are huge and unknown
- For most businesses, Brexit is not a top concern, Covid implications are more a concern
- LEP is looking to provide a wider resilience support for those businesses facing difficult times and supporting them with support and information
- LEP required to report back to Government on Brexit related matters but the past few months have been very Covid focused
- Information on Brexit is available on the LEP webpage is broken down in to accessible areas that is relevant and tailored to businesses
- Digital Guides have been developed also that are available now
- Sub Group of Cheshire Business Forum receive intel from government and then focus details to LEP membership organisations
- Talking Heads from Business have prepared some EU preparation and will share best practice
- Creation of Peer Network to develop Peer to Peer Network with 10 businesses in each cohort and work through issues with the opportunity to talk through issues together, cross sector and different size of business. Recruitment for this project is going well, first one this month and hoping to be completed by March
- BAYs supported with 130k for EU transition – tender for 2 full time staff to focus on business outreach for EU transition – the post will engage with government and working with businesses and marketing
- As Brexit deal becomes more apparent and budgets available have good roadmap to support businesses
- Hospitals aren't part of LEP public sector but looking at food supply and other supply questions

40. Recruitment to the vacancies on the various Committees of the LEP

The following points were noted

- Some committees not fully populated
- There are 4 vacancies on main LEP Board and 4 on the Marketing Cheshire Board
- Launching next week, there will be a single exercise to recruit and advertise for all vacancies and will include skill set requirements
- The LEP is centrally mandated to have 50/50 gender split on the Board by the next 18 months
- Open to applicants with interest in the work of the LEP, rather than skills

41. Public Participation

To receive questions from members of the public in accordance with Governance Procedure Rule 6. A total period of 15 minutes will be allocated for members of the public to speak at Panel meetings. Each member of the public shall be limited to a period of up to 5 minutes speaking.

Nil

42. Work Programme

The Work Programme was agreed and following points highlighted

- Items not discussed this year to be rolled over
- The Peer Review of LEPS in the Black Country has been completed
- It was agreed that Marketing Cheshire would be approached to see how public participation for LEP involvement can be increased.
- It was requested that at the meeting scheduled for March 2021, that briefings be provided on 2 specific aspects – Covid Response / Brexit Impacts and Borrowing from Local Authorities and how funding been allocated

43. Future Meeting Dates

Decision – The following dates were noted, all due to commence at 2.00pm, via Teams.

3 March 2021

2 June 2021

1 September 2021

1 December 2021

44. Part II – Matters to be discussed in private

Nil