

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LEEDS CITY REGION ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD
HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2021**

Present:

Roger Marsh OBE DL (Chair)
Prof Shirley Congdon
Helen Featherstone
Kate Hainsworth

Amir Hussain
Rashik Parmar MBE

Professor Simon Pringle
Kamran Rashid
Mandy Ridyard
Mark Roberts
Joanna Robinson
Kully Thiarai
Andrew Wright

Councillor Judith Blake CBE
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe
Councillor Denise Jeffery
Councillor Shabir Pandor
Councillor Tim Swift MBE

Private sector member & LEP Chair
FE & HE representative
Private sector member
Private sector member & LEP Diversity
Champion
Private sector member
Private sector member & Chair,
Employment & Skills Panel
Private sector member
Private sector member
Private sector member
Private sector member
Private sector member
Private sector member
Private sector member & Chair, Business
Innovation & Growth Panel
Leeds City Council
Bradford Council
Wakefield Council
Kirklees Council
Calderdale Council

In attendance:

Councillor Andrew Waller
Tom Riordan
Peter Mucklow
Ben Still
Caroline Allen
Brian Archer
Melanie Corcoran
Alan Reiss
Angela Taylor
Ian Smyth
Sarah Bowes
Alexander Clarke
James Flanagan
Ruth Chaplin

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62. Chair's Comments

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new year and advised the Board that the West Yorkshire devolution order had been approved by the House of Commons. This was a significant step and would now be laid in the House of Lords with a view to the deal becoming law.

The Board passed on their good wishes and congratulations to Councillor Judith Blake on being selected to become a Peer in the House of Lords. In response, Councillor Blake thanked the Chair for his kind comments and looked forward to continue working with the LEP when she takes up her seat later in the year.

63. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

64. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the requirements of the LEP Board Members' Code of Conduct, Members were reminded of their obligations to review their individual register of interests before each LEP Board meeting and to declare any interests.

65. Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items on the agenda requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

66. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 be approved.

67. Covid-19: Response and Recovery

The Board considered a report of the Director, Economic Services which provided an update on developments around the COVID-19 crisis, including economic intelligence.

Members were given a presentation which highlighted the challenges and provided the latest information on the delivery and development of products and services.

An update on the latest activity and intelligence was outlined in the report although it was recognised that full data is not yet available to understand the period following the end of November's lockdown and the restrictions currently in place. The latest COVID-19 insights report was attached at Appendix 1.

It was noted that a review of the Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) was being

undertaken because of the changes and the further impacts on the economy since its adoption in September 2020. Work was continuing on implementing elements of the ERP within existing resources as the Comprehensive Spending Review in November did not provide detail of any Government funding to support the delivery of regional economic recovery plans. It was reported that at their meeting in November, the Combined Authority had approved £13.5 million to fund two partnership programmes from the ERP enabling the existing [re]boot and Employment Hub programmes to be extended. A submission will be made to inform the Budget currently scheduled for March 2021, highlighting the key aspects of the ERP that cannot be progressed within current resources.

Resolved: That the latest update around the economic impacts of COVID-19 and progress on the delivery and development of the response to the crisis, including on the Economic Recovery Plan, be noted.

68. EU Exit

The Board considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and Communications which provided an update on the EU exit, including the implications of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Members were given a presentation which outlined the key headline implications of the Agreement and the impact on key sectors. It was noted that work is ongoing to understand the core text and full implications for the Leeds City Region.

Members discussed and welcomed the support being provided as many businesses were finding it difficult to understand the changes. At their recent meeting, the Business Communications Group had also welcomed the support but had raised concerns about the large number of complex enquiries relating to imports. It was recognised that the volume of EU Exit-related enquiries was rising and some required specialist support because they were complex. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) had allocated c.£250,000 to assist in the delivery of business support up to 31 March 2021. The LEP has appointed Enterprise Growth Solutions (EGS) to deliver an EU Exit support service which will provide advice via a team of experts and this facility will be initially available until the end of March 2021. The LEP was also supporting the West and North Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce to build capacity to provide specialist advice on the new import and export documentation and regulatory requirements and, in partnership with York and North Yorkshire LEP an outreach service was being provided for support to businesses. It was also proposed to appoint two delivery partners to provide advice with legal and finance issues related to EU Exit and it was expected that additional support in respect of marketing and communications would be provided in the near future.

It was noted that as a result of the EU-UK Agreement further financial resources may be required to support businesses in maximising the opportunities and minimising any potential negative impacts of the deal's

implementation. This would be subject to further analysis and intelligence relating to key issues.

Resolved:

- (i) That the initial analysis of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement be noted.
- (ii) That the activity being undertaken in terms of business support with businesses in the Leeds City Region be noted.

69. Comprehensive Spending Review

The Board considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and Communications which provided information on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) following the announcement by Government on 25 November 2020.

It was noted that the CSR was set for one year, 2021-22 and a summary of the Chancellor's announcements and the Office for Budget Responsibility's forecast was attached at Appendix 1. It was reported that the CSR did not mention mayoral capacity funding or funding for LEPs and Growth Hubs or extension to the Local Growth Fund and further information would be provided to the LEP Board when it becomes available. The report outlined the elements of the CSR which may align with the Combined Authority's and LEP's economic recovery priorities of good jobs and resilient businesses, skills and training and accelerated infrastructure and proposals are being brought forward for funding the plans from local devolved funding where available. There had also been no announcement of additional funding for local economic recovery plans although there may be opportunities to fund some of the priorities detailed in the Economic Recovery Plan. It was reported that the Build Back Better Council had been launched, bringing together business leaders from across the country to work in partnership with the Government to unlock investment, boost job creation and level up the whole of the UK. The Council had 30 members and the Board expressed their disappointment that the North were not well represented on the new body and consideration would be given as to how this may be addressed.

Resolved: That the elements of the Spending Review as they may be seen to align with the Combined Authority's and LEP's economic recovery priorities be noted.

70. Panel and Committee Reports

The Board discussed and noted the Panel reports which were presented for information.

It was reported that the Business Innovation and Growth Panel had met on 24 November 2020 and the Board noted the significant areas of activity which had been discussed at the meeting.

The Employment and Skills Panel had met on 25 November 2020 and had discussed a range of initiatives including progress towards devolution of the Adult Education Budget and details were outlined in the submitted report. A refresh of the Employment & Skills Plan was being undertaken and a report would be brought to the next meeting.

The last meeting of the Green Economy Panel had been held on 18 November 2020 and the Board noted the report which outlined the work being undertaken in several areas including the Carbon Emission Reduction Pathways study.

The LEP Capital Programme (Investment Committee) report provided updates of the progress made on the implementation of the LEP Capital Programme for 2020/21 and the Growth Deal including the current overprogramming, the Getting Building Fund, the Growth Deal Business Support Programme and the Transport Fund.

The Board discussed the recent work of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel particularly in respect of the Inclusive Growth Framework, support for the region's Third Sector and a Good Work Standard for the Region. Members welcomed the work of the Panel and supported the proposed next steps which were summarised in the submitted report.

The Panel Chairs were thanked for their updates.

Resolved: That the reports be noted.

71. Inclusive Growth Framework

The Board considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and Communications on the Inclusive Growth Framework.

It was reported that a draft Inclusive Growth Framework had been developed by the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel to promote well-being, the acquisition of relevant and transferable skills, inclusive digital and transport connectivity and good work for everyone, with a view to delivering an inclusive economic recovery.

The draft Framework was attached at Appendix 1. Members welcomed the clarity of its goals and ambitions and had a detailed discussion on the development and importance of a strategic regional approach to inclusive growth. They considered the key issues outlined in paragraph 2.13 of the submitted report and Members were thanked for their valuable comments which included:

- The need for Inclusive Growth to be fully embedded into the region's assurance framework to ensure all funded interventions drive inclusive outcomes and equality.
- Recognition of the key role of the third sector, working with the public and private sectors, in ensuring an inclusive economic recovery.

- Support for the working indicator set shown at Appendix 2, with proposals to include healthy years of life as a key measure of progress, consider an “early years” wellbeing measure, and compare the proposed indicators against World Happiness Report indicators.
- Within each headline indicator, there is also a need to understand the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on specific affected groups, eg youth unemployment.
- There was strong support expressed for the proposed interventions shown at Appendix 3, with a shared view that ambition should be further increased, including in terms of:
 - Additional support for specific proposed interventions, such as to promote digital inclusion;
 - Prioritising ‘early win’ interventions, in order to maximise impact, and identify and address any barriers, eg to regional third sector engagement;
 - Ensuring that there is sufficient LEP capacity in place to translate the high level proposals into delivery;
 - Building on what is already being done locally and to communicate this effectively; and
 - Ensuring that the Inclusive Growth agenda is also strongly promoted by the other LEP agendas, including Business, Innovation & Skills, Green Economy, Housing & Place, and Employment & Skills.

It was therefore recognised that the Framework will need to strongly shape and inform the ongoing work of the Panels and Committees through the work of proposed Inclusive Growth Champions. It was also agreed that a section for ‘Inclusive Growth Implications’ should be included in future LEP Board and Panel reports.

Resolved:

- (i) That the LEP Board endorse the Inclusive Growth Framework for adoption as part of the wider Strategic Economic Framework.
- (ii) That ‘Inclusive Growth Implications’ be considered in future LEP Board and Panel reports.

72. Innovation Framework

The Board considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and Communications on the Innovation Framework.

The report provided an update on the development of the Leeds City Region Innovation Framework and the draft document was attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report. Members discussed and supported the overarching vision and 11 priorities of the draft Innovation Framework which will guide future activity and investment across all partners in Leeds City Region. The Business Communications Group had discussed and supported the Framework and had highlighted that many business were having to be innovative because of the current economic situation. The following further

comments were made:

- Focus on decarbonisation/green as well as health
- Need to work with schools
- The Framework should be accessible and kept simple
- Better signposting is needed on the website

Members were advised that the West Yorkshire Innovation Festival was to be held during the week commencing 15 March 2021 and anyone interested in participating should contact the LEP.

The draft Innovation Framework will be considered by the Combined Authority on 4 February 2021.

Resolved: That the LEP Board endorse the overarching vision and priorities of the Innovation Framework and recommend its adoption to the Combined Authority as part of the Strategic Economic Framework.

73. Digital Board

The Board considered a report of the Director, Policy Strategy and Communications which provided an update on the Digital Board.

The report set out progress on activities to support digital transformation and the work being undertaken to deliver the Digital Framework, as overseen by the Digital Board.

It was noted that the Digital Board prepared a proposal for priority action areas to support rescue and recovery which is set out in the Economic Recovery Plan and Lives Transformed by Digital Tech proposition. The outcome of the funding ask of Government was awaited but the proposition is aimed at ensuring everyone can reap the benefits of digital technology as the economy begins to recover. The Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 set out a number of commitments around digital tech and these were outlined in Appendix 1.

Mandy Ridyard provided an update on the work of the Local Digital Skills Partnership which was formally launched in October 2020. Members were also advised that the University of Leeds, in partnership with the LEP, had been successful in securing funding to develop a regional space strategy. A steering group, chaired by Mandy Ridyard, had been established and she gave an overview of the work being done to identify local capabilities and develop a unique proposition through a regional action plan.

Resolved: That the activities underway and progress to deliver against the Leeds City Region Digital Framework be noted.

74. Strategic Rail Update

The Board considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and

Communications on strategic rail matters affecting the City Region.

Members were given a presentation by Mark Roberts who was the LEP's representative on the Transport Committee and Transport for the North (TfN). He provided an update on developments in respect of several rail issues including HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Rail Needs Assessment.

The Board discussed the Rail Needs Assessment which had been published by the National Infrastructure Commission. The West Yorkshire Leaders had written to the Secretary of State for Transport to express their extreme disappointment that the report failed to sufficiently address the economic consequences of the rail projects for the region. Whilst there was a focus on regional connectivity, it was considered to be insufficient to address the levelling up agenda for the North and that the region's long-awaited rail schemes were being compromised because of other projects such as HS2 going over budget. It was considered important for freight to be included particularly because of the congestion it can cause on the network.

It was reported that an initial preferred Northern Powerhouse Rail network had been endorsed by the TfN and they would submit the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) in Spring 2021.

Members were asked to provide any further comments or feedback to Mark Roberts or Liz Hunter, Head of Transport Policy.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

75. Business Planning and Budget 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Director, Corporate Services which provided the draft corporate business plan on a page and information on the budget for 2021/22.

Members noted the work being undertaken to develop next year's business plan and associated budget and the need to take into account factors where there remains uncertainty. These included the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU exit, the ending of the Growth Deal funding programme and the ongoing work to become a mayoral combined authority. In respect of the Growth Deal funding programme, it was understood from the November budget that there will be no further funding specifically available only to LEPs. The £4 billion levelling up fund announced will be open to LEPs, combined authorities and local authorities and details of how to apply are expected in the near future. It was noted that the LEP network was pressing Government on the lack of forward funding for LEPs which was major concern in terms of how the LEP can deliver its objectives, particularly with regard to the regional economic recovery from the pandemic. This would also be raised at the Annual Performance Review with officials from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which was to take place on 27 January 2021.

The budget will be accompanied by business plans for each directorate and these had been summarised as an individual plan on a page which was attached as a draft at Appendix 1. It was acknowledged that because of the above mentioned factors, there was significant risk and uncertainty that needs to be taken into account in the budget setting process and some flexibility would need to be built into the business plans. A report would be prepared for a future meeting once the budget had been finalised. The Combined Authority would be considering the proposed budgets and business plans on 4 February 2021.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

76. Corporate Performance

The Board considered a report of the Director, Corporate Services which provided an update on a range of corporate and governance matters.

Members noted the summary of the 2020/21 revenue budget spend as at November 2020 which was attached at Appendix 1 and summaries of the performance and headline strategic organisational risks were provided in Appendix 2.

In respect of the Statutory Accounts 2019/20, it was reported that the external auditor had reported their findings to the Governance & Audit Committee on 27 November 2020. The accounts had been published by the 30 November 2020 statutory deadline. Members were advised that the LEP financial statement which is audited as part of the overall annual audit remained unchanged from the draft published on the LEP website in summer 2020.

The Board noted the work of the internal audit team and the revised whistleblowing policy which was attached at Appendix 3. This had been updated to bring together existing Combined Authority and LEP policies to provide greater transparency and ease of access for the user.

Resolved: That the report and revised whistleblowing policy be noted.

77. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 10 November 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 10 November 2020 be noted.

78. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 27 November 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 27 November 2020 be noted.

79. Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 10 December 2020

Resolved: That the draft minutes of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 10 December 2020 be noted.

80. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 February 2021.