

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
LEEDS CITY REGION ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT COMMITTEE  
ROOM 1, WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET,  
LEEDS**

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**Present:**

Mark Roberts	Private Sector (Interim LEP Board Chair)
Helen Featherstone	Private Sector
Amir Hussain	Private Sector
Professor Simon Pringle	Private Sector
Kamran Rashid	Private Sector
Andrew Wright	Private Sector
Beckie Hart	Business Representative
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Matthew Morley	Wakefield Council
Councillor Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Council
Councillor Jenny Lynn	Calderdale Council (Observer)

**In attendance:**

Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Caroline Allen	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Philip Witcherley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Patrick Bowes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Julie Haigh	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Briggs	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Bowes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Marianne Hewitt	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Jennifer Robson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**1. Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair noted that this was the first time that the Board had met since the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Chair reflected that, throughout her remarkable life, Her Majesty The Queen had displayed an exceptional commitment to West Yorkshire and its

people. Following her first visit to the county in 1953, Her Majesty The Queen had continued to attend multiple engagements in West Yorkshire over successive years, visiting many local businesses and frequently offering her support to business communities.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed his respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and sent his deepest condolences to the Royal Family.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mayor Tracy Brabin, Professor Shirley Congdon, Councillor Richard Cooper, Councillor Denise Jeffrey, Councillor James Lewis, Mandy Ridyard, Councillor Tim Swift, Kully Thiarai and Councillor Andrew Waller.

## **3. 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.

Andrew Wright declared an interest in relation to Item 10 due to him being a member of the University of Leeds Steering Board for the Nexis bid.

Kamran Rashid declared an interest in relation to Item 10 due to him being part of the team responsible for the winning bid for the City of Culture 2025 on behalf of Bradford Council.

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe declared an interest in relation to Item 12 due to her being Leader of Bradford Council.

## **4. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Chair explained that Item 12 had been identified as containing exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 Section B paragraph 3 of the Leeds City Region Partnership Access to Information Annex. It had therefore been recommended to the Board that the press and the public should be excluded during consideration of this item.

**Resolved:** That, in accordance with Part 1 Section B paragraph 3 of the Leeds City Region Partnership Access to Information Annex, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 12 on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

## 5. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board held on 15 June 2022 be approved.

## 6. Governance Arrangements

### **The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal & Governance Services regarding changes to governance arrangements**

The Chair introduced the item and asked the Head of Legal & Governance Services to present the report to the Board. The Board was asked to:

- Note an update in relation to the process to recruit a new private sector LEP Chair and Board Members.
- Approve the proposal in relation to the revising of governance arrangements between meetings.
- Approve the proposal in relation to the remuneration review for the new Chair between meetings.
- Confirm a LEP Diversity Champion.

The Head of Legal & Governance Services explained that, at the June Annual Meeting authority had been delegated to the Chair to explore options and progress a recruitment process to fill three private sector representative vacancies, in consultation with the LEP Chief Executive. It had been hoped that the proposed timeline and recruitment procedure for the new Chair could have been shared with the Board at this meeting. However, the Board was still awaiting the approval of The Leeds City Regional Enterprise Partnership Integration Plan which had been submitted to the Government on 27 July 2022.

The Head of Legal & Governance Services advised that the process for the recruitment of the new Chair necessitated a change to the governance arrangements for the Board. To enable the recruitment process to continue without undue delay, the Board was asked to delegate authority to the LEP Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to make such revisions to the governance arrangements as appropriate, which may include:

- The LEP Constitution
- Procedure rules
- The Recruitment and Appointment Procedure for Private Sector Representatives (which includes the Chair)

The Board had previously been advised at the June meeting that the remuneration in relation to the role of LEP Chair would be retained and would be assessed independently prior to recruitment commencing. The Head of Legal & Governance Services informed the Board that this process would take

place in parallel with the revisions to the governance arrangements and would be carried out by the LEP Chief Executive in consultation with the Mayor between meetings.

The Board was advised that these processes may commence prior to the next LEP meeting in December, but that the Board would be kept up to date with progress.

The Board was also asked to endorse the process to appoint a LEP Diversity Champion to join the Board as a co-opted Member in accordance with the best practice set out in the Leeds City Region Assurance Framework. The LEP Procedure Rules require the LEP Board to appoint a member to act as the LEP's Diversity Champion in order to encourage diversity and ensure that the LEP is acting in line with its diversity statement.

A number of Expressions of Interest had been received, however the process had not concluded at the time of publication of this agenda. The Chair proposed the appointment of Asma Iqbal at the meeting subject to the approval of the Board.

Board members welcomed Asma to this new role and expressed their thanks to all those involved in the recruitment process.

**Resolved:**

- i. That the update in relation to the process to recruit a new private sector LEP Chair and Board Members be noted.
- ii. That the proposal in relation to the revising of governance arrangements between meetings be approved.
- iii. That the proposal in relation to the remuneration review of the new Chair between meetings be approved.
- iv. That Asma Iqbal be appointed as the LEP Diversity Champion as a co-opted Member of the Board for the term of office of the Interim Chair.

**7. Mayor's Update**

The Mayor's Update was presented to the LEP Board on the Mayor's behalf by Councillor Pandor. Councillor Pandor highlighted several matters to the Board:

- The Mayor was presently abroad on a trade mission in India. The purpose of the mission was to establish stronger links with India on behalf of The Board and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- Councillor Pandor noted that the Mayor had been actively promoting her new bus fares initiative called 'Mayor's Fares'. From 4 September,

single journeys will be capped at £2 and the MCard DaySaver will be £4.50, reduced from £5.50 – an almost 20% saving on the current price.

- Since the LEP Board last met, the Country have a new Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP. Councillor Pandor also explained that The Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP had been appointed as the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- Mayor Brabin continues to call on the government to do more immediately to tackle the Cost-of-Living Crisis. It is likely there will be further announcements on Friday 23 September as the newly appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, is expected to present a mini budget to Parliament.

The Board thanked Councillor Pandor for the update.

## 8. Economic Update

### **The Board considered a report of the Director of Strategy, Communications and Policing which provided an update on the latest economic and business intelligence.**

The Chair introduced the report by noting the significant impact the current economic climate was having on businesses within West Yorkshire. He then asked The Head of Research and Development to present the Economic Update to the Board along with a presentation on the recent LCR Business Survey.

The Head of Research and Development highlighted to the Board several macroeconomic issues that were affecting West Yorkshire and were outlined in the report:

- CPI inflation rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to July 22, up from 9.4% in June, and was now at a 40-year high
- The key driver of inflation over the period was food prices, which had risen by 12.7% in the last year. The largest risers were bread and cereal, reflecting the pressure on wheat and grain prices caused by the Russia-Ukraine War. More than a quarter of the world's wheat exports come from Russia and the Ukraine.
- Producer input prices rose by 22.6% in the year to July 2022, down from a record high of 24.1% in the year to June. However, producer output prices rose by 17.1%, up from 16.4%. This indicated that there was still headroom for producer output prices to rise further in the coming months, allowing businesses to fully pass on the impact of inflation to consumers.

- On 4 August 2022, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted by a majority of 8-1 to increase the Bank rate by 0.5 base points, from 1.25% to 1.75%. This measure had been taken in an attempt to reduce inflationary pressures in the UK. The Bank also forecast that real wages were expected to decline by 3.5% throughout 2022 with a further 4.25% fall in 2023.

Consequently, the economic environment remained challenging for both households and businesses in West Yorkshire.

The Head of Research and Development then turned to the LCR Business Survey which was the result of fieldwork carried out by BMG Research during June to August 2022 and indicated that:

- 41% of businesses believed that their performance had improved over the past 12 months
- 43% of businesses expect the business climate to remain as it currently is, whilst 30% expect it to worsen
- 30% expect to increase employment levels over the next 12 months
- 30% of respondents expect their wage bill to remain the same over the next 12 months
- Of the 66% that expect their wage bill to increase, over half anticipate wage increases of less than 10%
- 69% expect the prices they charge to customers to increase over the next 12 months
- Over half expect that price increase to be between 5 and 10%

The Head of Research and Development noted that, in response, a number of Business Support Programmes had been established to support businesses during this challenging period.

Members made several observations as follows:

- Businesses in West Yorkshire were continuing to face challenges due to the significant increases in energy costs. While this varied from sector to sector, manufacturing businesses were seeing their energy bills increase by around 250%. Work was currently being undertaken by the CBI to obtain further data from businesses within West Yorkshire to help determine the full impact of this.
- It was noted that businesses had been given an emergency package of government support including a cap significantly reducing the price paid for energy from 1 October. However, under this plan, the support from government would only last for six months. As such, it was observed that this was creating considerable uncertainty. Several Board members shared the view that the current energy crisis is likely to last for several years and that longer term help would be required for businesses in West Yorkshire.

- Board members expressed a collective desire to see more analysis undertaken of the impact the energy cost crisis is having on the West Yorkshire economy with assessments on what could happen in a worst-case scenario if additional help was not provided by central government. It would also be an opportunity for the Combined Authority to think about what further measures may be taken within its own remit to offer direct support to businesses.
- It was agreed that a strong focus should be on encouraging businesses to reduce their energy output voluntarily through the adoption of sustainable technologies to help reduce their dependence on oil and gas given the fluctuating prices and the fact that the government's intervention is an acknowledgement that the energy market was not functioning effectively.

**Resolved:** That the latest intelligence around the state of the UK and West Yorkshire economy, and how it relates to ongoing or future work plans be noted.

## 9. Economic Strategy

### **The Board considered a report of the Interim Director of Policy and Development on the proposed approach to creating an Economic Strategy for the West Yorkshire Region.**

The Chair introduced the report and noted that it had much in common with the previous paper; he then invited the Interim Director of Policy and Development to present the report who explained that the purpose of the report was to seek the Board's views on the proposed creation of an Economic Strategy for the West Yorkshire Region from 2022 to 2030. The intention was for this Plan to help tell the overall story for the region by capturing our strengths and opportunities.

The Economic Strategy will be the overarching Plan under which will sit the existing and new strategies and policies. The existing strategies that consider our economic objectives include the Economic Recovery Plan, Business Productivity and Resilience Plan, Innovation Framework, Digital Framework and the Healthtech Strategy. Each District Partner also has an economic strategy or plan.

The proposal is to write the strategy in collaboration with Local Authority (LA) and wider partners to ensure that it acknowledges and considers the economic strategies on a local level. The Board's views were therefore sought as to any other organisations that should be invited to participate. The proposal is for a three-pronged approach:

- Review existing policy and refer to the findings of the work

underway to address the current cost of living crisis and use this to inform our approach to creating the right conditions for a thriving economy by 2030.

- Review the approach to sectors to ensure that we have a robust and resilient method to ensure economic growth and a thriving region by 2030.
- Conduct a scenario planning exercise to test our economy's resilience against possible scenarios to inform how we plan for mechanisms and interventions to help ensure economic resilience and capitalise upon opportunities.

The Interim Director of Policy and Development noted that the approach will draw upon existing policy approaches including the Mayoral Pledges, the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy, State of the Region Report, the Economic Recovery Plan, the Fair Work Charter for West Yorkshire, and Local Authority policies.

The Board made several observations:

- The last time there was a Strategic Plan was back in 2014. Although many approaches had been tried since this time, a unified strategy is required in order to maximise the amount of support provided to businesses within West Yorkshire.
- The demographics of our workforce have changed considerably since 2014 as have skill shortages, our net zero commitments and home working patterns. It was also noted that the Combined Authority's work on sectors had evolved and that this is particularly relevant at present as many programmes were going through the assurance processes. Members of the Board expressed support for the approach in the paper which will review the existing strategies and consolidate them. The new Economic Strategy will also consider how West Yorkshire may evolve further up to 2030 and beyond.
- Members of the Board felt that the new Economic Strategy would help to encourage further inward investment both locally and from government given that a comprehensive plan which links our existing commitments with new ones is likely to be well received by decision makers in Whitehall.
- It was agreed by many members that the new Economic Strategy should build upon the work of the existing Industrial Strategy and West Yorkshire Recovery Plan and that it was vital to repurpose existing work so this was not lost, while ensuring our priorities evolve to address the Cost-of-Living-Crisis and our commitments to net zero.

**Resolved:**

- i. That the views of the Board on the approach to creating an Economic



Strategy for West Yorkshire be noted.

- ii. That advice as to what success looks like be provided and that expectations for the strategy be set, and
- iii. That the Board be involved in reviewing the strategy as it evolves.

## **10. Committees Update Report**

The Board considered a report providing an update on the work of the six Thematic Committees as follows:

- Andrew Wright, Deputy Chair of the Business Economy and Innovation Committee, presented an update on proceedings of the Committee which met on 12 July 2022. He advised that the Committee now has several new members and that the focus of the Committee continued to be on promoting the growth service which is an important part of the solution to the cost-of-living-crisis. The mayor's Manufacturing Taskforce had now also been launched and was steadily progressing.
- Helen Featherstone, Deputy Chair of the Culture, Heritage & Sport Committee presented an update on the meeting of the Committee which met on 21 July 2022. She explained that the Committee also has several new members. A central focus of the last meeting was the Creative Catalyst Programme which is presently engaging with 56 businesses. It was noted that the Mayor's Screen Diversity Programme had also been launched to encourage young people to gain some experience in the entertainment industry.
- The Chair, Mark Roberts, presented an update on the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee which met on 19 July 2022 to discuss the State of the Region monitoring indicators, the Climate and Environment Plan, two connected reports on flooding and the Carbon Impact Assessment.
- In the absence of Shirley Congdon, Deputy Chair of the Employment & Skills Committee, Mark Roberts, presented the update on the Employment and Skills Committee which met on 6 July 2022 to discuss a draft of the Digital Skills Plan, which the Board would later consider at Agenda Item 10.
- Amir Hussain, Deputy Chair of the Place, Regeneration & Housing Committee, presented the update on proceedings of the Committee which met on 7 July and 1 September 2022. The committee had received and considered updates on Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure, Safer Parks, Digital Infrastructure, Housing Revenue Fund and the Brownfield Housing programme, including Project Approvals.

- Councillor Hinchcliffe, Chair of the Transport Committee, presented the update on proceedings of the Committee which met on 1 July 2022. This included the latest position on the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Mayor's Fares Scheme, Enhanced Partnership Scheme and the transport indicators for the next iteration of the State of the Region report. The Committee had also approved the progression of five schemes through the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework.

**Resolved:** That the updates from the Thematic Committees be noted.

## 11. Cultural Framework

### **The Board considered a report of the Head of Transport Policy which provided an update on the revised Culture, Heritage and Sport Framework.**

Helen Featherstone introduced the item updating the Board on the development of the revised Framework and seeking their feedback.

She explained that, over the next three years, the Combined Authority was looking to invest £11.5 million in culture, heritage and sport. The Combined Authority therefore requires a Framework that identifies the outcomes that are a priority to focus on and how these investments are sequenced.

The Culture Committee meeting in March 2022 agreed that the region's Culture, Heritage and Sport Framework should be revised in consultation with a range of stakeholders from the sector, and our communities. The proposed timeline for this is as follows:

- Priorities workshop with culture and sport sector: 12 April 2022
- External consultation exercise with and sector and community groups: April – Sept 2022
- Public Consultation on Your Voice: 25 July – 18 Sept 2022
- Draft Cultural Framework to Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee: Oct 2022
- Formal sign off by LEP and Combined Authority: Dec 2022

Since March 2022, the Combined Authority had held a range of face-to-face workshops and online sessions to seek views on the Framework. One of the aims of consulting with the Board was to ascertain how best to engage with business to help grow the creative industries sector.

As part of the Framework, the Combined Authority were in the process of reviewing the business support offer for the creative and sport sectors to ensure that a range of different models, including co-operatives, CICs and social enterprises, can benefit from business support.

Helen Featherstone sought the Board's view on the Framework and asked for their feedback.

Members made the following comments:

- It was observed that many large tech companies were offering free courses to enable people to go through an isometric training process. This could help them to develop new skills and could also encourage young people to get involved in the tech industry. As such, it might be helpful to promote such courses as an alternative to other formal qualification routes.
- In relation to cultural activities, Board members agreed that it would be helpful to map our activities within specific areas and consider which organisations were already delivering programmes to see how this can be best leveraged.
- It was hoped that new Cultural Framework would bring about further funding for cultural activities and that these new investment priorities would be identified once the framework had been finalised.

**Resolved:**

- i. That the development of the revised Culture, Heritage and Sport Framework be noted, and;
- ii. That the feedback of Board members be noted and any further comments be provided to the Combined Authority's Head of Culture, Heritage and Sport, and;
- iii. That particular consideration be given to 'Theme 4 Business' of the Framework (see page 14 of the appended Framework document), and that the role of the LEP should be articulated in this section of the Framework;
- iv. That following feedback from the public engagement and stakeholder engagement (including the LEP Board), a final version of the Framework be drafted, and shared with the LEP Board and Combined Authority for final approval in December 2022.

**12. Digital Update**

**The Board considered a report of the Head of Transport Policy on the Digital Skills Plan.**

The Chair introduced the item following which Andrew Wright presented the report to the Board. The report sought input from the Board on:

- The proposed interventions in the Digital Skills Plan.
- The Board's endorsement of the Digital Skills Plan (including proposed performance targets) before its submission to the

Combined Authority.

- The Board's views on the proposition of refreshing the Digital Framework and understanding how the Board proposed to be involved.
- The Board's views on the proposition of converting the Local Digital Skills Partnership into a Local Digital Partnership, once the LDSP project ends.
- Asked the Board to consider the regional challenges around digital skills such as the need for social inclusion, place making, business support and inward investment. The Board also agreed to a deep dive on digital as a separate meeting in the future.

Andrew Wright highlighted several items to the Board which the Digital Skills Plan aims to address including:

- West Yorkshire has the fastest growing digital sector outside of London and is the UK's number one location for tech scale-ups. Increased digital skills would support this ecosystem.
- Increased digital skills would enable greater digital transformation across other key sectors, such as Manufacturing, Engineering and Health. Increased digitisation would help them to compete and support their sustainability.
- Over 80% of all jobs in West Yorkshire currently require the minimum of basic digital skills.
- With 80% of the 2030 workforce already in employment today, reskilling the existing workforce would be a major challenge between now and 2030.
- Fewer than 10% of pupils take a Key Stage 4 Computing qualification in West Yorkshire and girls are far less likely than boys to study digital-related courses.
- Socially, reducing the numbers of digitally excluded residents would have wider benefits on elements such as physical and mental health, regeneration and education.

The aim of the Digital Skills Plan was to prioritise skills and training to ensure everyone in West Yorkshire is equipped with the skills they need to secure work and to support local businesses and be a champion for our regional economy.

Members made several observations:

- Members of the Board noted that a great deal could be learnt from how the City of London successfully promotes cultural activities such as by ensuring that digital and skills are interconnected, with promotion activities linked to well-known tourist sites.
- A comprehensive sectoral approach should involve skills in addition to place and infrastructure such as 5G, smart cities, broadband and connectivity measures.

- It was hoped that any Digital Skills Plan would be ambitious in scope by establishing a strong partnership between the public and private sector by linking the needs of employers with the aspirations of individuals.
- Members of the Board noted that it was vital to emphasise the challenges in mapping digital skills onto qualification levels which can vary considerably from individual to individual.

**Resolved:**

- i. That the Digital Skills Plan be approved before its submission to the Combined Authority Committee.
- ii. That the Board note the proposal to convert the Local Digital Skills Partnership into a Local Digital Partnership once the LDSP project ends and that the feedback provided by Board members be noted.
- iii. That the Board note the proposal to refresh the Digital Framework and that the feedback provided by Board members be noted.
- iv. That the proposal to adopt the Digital Skills Plan as a deep dive on digital be accepted.

**13. Enterprise Zones Programme**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Economic Services regarding the Enterprise Zones Programme which was identified as containing exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 Section B paragraph 3 of the Leeds City Region Partnership Access to Information Annex, and where officers considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**Resolved:** That the recommendations set out in the Exempt Report be approved.

**14. Minutes of the Combined Authority held on 23 June 2022**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority meeting held on 23 June 2022 be noted.

**15. Draft Minutes of the Combined Authority held on 22 July 2022**

**Resolved:** That the draft minutes of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority meeting held on 22 July 2022 be noted.

**16. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 1 December 2022.