

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
LEEDS CITY REGION ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2023 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,  
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

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**Present:**

Mark Roberts (Interim Chair)

Mayor Tracy Brabin  
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe  
Councillor James Lewis  
Councillor Michael Graham  
Nicky Chance-Thompson  
Amir Hussain  
Mandy Ridyard

Andrew Wright  
Beckie Hart

Leeds City Region Local Enterprise  
Partnership  
West Yorkshire Combined Authority  
Bradford Council  
Leeds City Council  
Wakefield Council  
Private Sector Representative  
Private Sector Representative  
Private Sector Representative (SME  
Champion)  
Private Sector Representative  
Business Representative (CBI –  
Confederation of British Industry)

**In attendance:**

Ben Still (Chief Executive)  
Alan Reiss (Director)  
Philip Witcherley (Interim Director)  
Sarah Bowes (Officer)  
Myles Larrington (Officer)  
Thomas Purvis (Officer)  
Amanda Rumbelow (Officer)  
Kate Thompson (Officer)

West Yorkshire Combined Authority  
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**1. Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming two new members to the Board, Councillor Michael Graham and Nicky Chance-Thompson. He noted that Councillor Graham was the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on Wakefield Council and a member of the Combined Authority's Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee. The Chair further noted that Nicky Chance-Thompson was CEO of the Piece Hall in Halifax and was also the Deputy Chair of the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee.

The Chair also thanked Andrew Wright, a private sector member of the LEP

Board, for his contribution over the last nine years after reaching the end of his term of service.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Richard Cooper, Asma Iqbal, Councillor Shabir Pandor, Professor Simon Pringle, Kamran Rashid, Councillor Tim Swift, Kully Thiarai, Councillor Andrew Waller, Peter Mucklow and Tom Riordan.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

Amir Hussain declared an interest in Item 7, he advised the Board that he had his own data dashboard.

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

There were no agenda items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

## **5. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2022**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board held on 1 December 2022 be approved.

## **6. Mayor's Update**

The Mayor presented her latest update to the LEP Board highlighting the following matters:

- The Mayor observed that it was International Women's Day and explained that she would be hosting an event on 9 March 2023 alongside Sally Wainwright, the creator of Happy Valley, to celebrate the impact of women in West Yorkshire's communities. This year's theme was Digital, Innovation and Tech for gender equality. The Mayor also hosted an International Women's Day Dinner on the evening of 8 March 2023.
- Latest figures showed the UK had dropped five places on the international league table for women in work. Domestic childcare costs were the highest in the OECD at 33%. The Mayor explained that, while she did not currently have powers to address this directly, she would continue to encourage better, more affordable and high-quality childcare for families.

- The Mayor attended the Transport for the North Conference on 6 March 2023 to discuss concerns around the reliability of train services. For example, one rail company, TransPennine Express, cancelled 1,700 services in the first four weeks of this year. If there was no improvement, it was estimated that over 23,000 services would be cancelled by the end of this year. The Mayor noted that this was having a detrimental economic impact within West Yorkshire. She confirmed that she had been speaking with ministers, management and unions to encourage a resolution.
- The bus market remained challenging as government had agreed to extend revenue funding for another three months. The Mayor noted that this was a short-term solution, especially as one local bus provider, First Bus, had decided to implement reductions in the number of drivers and buses on to more profitable, high frequency routes rather than prioritising community connections.
- Data on the first three months of the Mayor's Fares initiative, which capped bus fares at £2.00, showed that 7.2 million journeys had benefited since it was introduced in September and had saved the public around £3.6 million in fare costs. The data also showed that bus usage had grown from 81% pre-pandemic to 87% in December.
- The Combined Authority continued to press ahead with plans for better transport in the region, which included the mass transit plan, as Leeds was the only major city in Europe without mass transit. The Mayor noted that this would not just benefit Leeds, but the whole of West Yorkshire.
- Last month, the Mayor attended the Arab Health conference in Dubai at the invitation of the Department for International Trade (DIT) and she was pleased that many West Yorkshire businesses were in attendance representing the region. The Mayor championed the 600-business strong health and life sector within West Yorkshire.
- The Mayor also recently attended a meeting in London with The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP and senior business leaders about the need to drive growth back into our economy and how mayors could make a difference to this. The attendees included the CEO of Microsoft UK, Mark Carney the former Governor of the Bank of England, the General Director of the CBI, the CEO of Octopus Energy, and British businesswoman Deborah Meaden. The Mayor made the case for further deeper wider devolution for mayors to provide them powers to support growth and greater opportunities.
- The Mayor noted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP was scheduled to deliver his Spring Statement on 15 March 2023. The Mayor confirmed she had written to him urging the government to extend energy support to households within West

Yorkshire beyond April.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for her update.

## **7. LEP Governance**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Strategy, Communications and Intelligence regarding changes to governance arrangements.

The Chair introduced the item and officers then presented the report to the Board. They explained that:

- The publication of the Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022 provided clarity that LEPs within Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas would be integrated into the MCA. Following this, in July 2022, a LEP Integration Plan (IP) for West Yorkshire was submitted to government. A request for further information was made in September 2022, which was provided and a final version of the LEP Integration Plan submitted.
- Due to Ministerial changes, there was a significant delay in government endorsing the plan. A formal letter confirming that government endorsed the IP was received on 17 January 2023.
- The Boards endorsement was sought to finalise the Articles, Terms of Reference and Recruitment and Appointment Procedure and to make such consequential amendments to the Authority's Constitution as was necessary. The Board was also asked to set a date from which the proposed changes are brought into effect.
- Recruitment of a new LEP Chair cannot take place until these governance changes are in place. As part of these changes, a revised role profile for the LEP Chair was set out in the paper for comments and consideration.

At the Combined Authority meeting in February 2023, it was agreed that a remuneration panel would be convened to make recommendations to the Mayor and the Combined Authority as to the allowance that will be payable to the LEP Chair.

The Chief Executive explained that the draft terms of reference for the LEP Chair's profile reflect what government have asked the role to reflect and elements that the Combined Authority has found successful in the past. As the Board is moving away from the existing growth model, whereby the LEP had the ability to allocate growth funds, the new role is much more about leadership, offering independent advice to the Mayor, promoting the interests of the region and being a central business voice.

The Combined Authority has had an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) examine and make recommendations of the appropriate remunerative rates for the role and these figures will be published shortly. The Chief Executive confirmed that the recommendations suggest a reduction in days, but with the

day rate remaining the same. The nature of the new role profile is reflected in these recommendations, which will be considered by the Combined Authority meeting on 16 March 2023.

It is proposed that recruitment for the LEP Chair and vacant LEP Board members commences shortly thereafter.

Members made several observations as follows:

- Several members noted that reduction in expected days may have a detrimental impact on the range of people who might be willing to apply for the role and deter applicants from diverse backgrounds.
- Members suggested that a pro-rata daily payment could be considered for the Chair, depending upon the additional work and responsibilities are undertaken.
- The changing nature of the Chair's role, and that it will become a Mayoral appointment were noted. Members felt that the LEP Chair's role needed to be able to provide independent advice. Furthermore, the West Yorkshire region has a reputation for having a strong Chair and members felt that this should continue.
- It was felt that the recruitment of more private sector members should have a focus on attendance requirements to ensure that new members are as active as possible.

**Resolved:**

- i. Members of the Board considered and provides feedback on the proposed LEP governance arrangements, and in particular the draft Articles at Appendix 1, draft Terms of Reference at Appendix 2 and the revised Recruitment and Appointment Procedure for Private Sector Representatives as set out at Appendix 3, and noted that the Head of Legal & Governance Services will finalise the same and update the Combined Authority's Constitution accordingly thereafter (in consultation with the Mayor and the Chair of the LEP Board as appropriate) to come into effect from 13 March 2023.
- ii. Members of the Board provided feedback on the draft LEP Chair Role Profile provided at appendix 4 and the draft Board Member Role Profile provided at appendix 5.
- iii. Members of the Board provided feedback on the future role of the LEP and proposed portfolios for private sector members.

## **8. Economic Update**

The Board considered a report on the latest economic and business

intelligence, particularly relating to the cost of living and doing business.

Officers introduced the report and explained that:

- On 9 January 2023, the Government announced the Energy Bill Discount Scheme, which would support eligible non-domestic properties with the rising cost of energy. This would replace the Energy Bill Relief Scheme that had been in place since September 2022, and would end on 31 March 2023.
- The Energy Bill Discount Scheme would work by offering businesses and public sector organisations discounted prices for wholesale gas and electricity. This support would run from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, with the level of support capped at £5.5 billion in order to protect the taxpayer from volatile energy markets. While all businesses would receive some form of discount, there were additional discounts for those operating in energy intensive industries. However, the scheme represented a reduction in overall support from the previous scheme of about 66%.
- CPI inflation rose by 10.1% in the year to January 2023. It was anticipated that inflation would fall sharply this year, falling to around 5% by the end of 2023.
- In January 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that its forecasts showed the UK to be the only advanced economy in the world to experience a recession in 2023. The IMF predict that the UK economy would contract by 0.6% during the year, whilst even sanctioned-hit Russia would see output grow in 2023.
- Gas futures prices have fallen by 80% from their peak in August 2022, providing a clear route down for energy prices in the coming months.

Members made the following observations:

- It was observed that there continued to be concerns from a retail perspective, given the high numbers of low-cost items in household budgets – this was up to 90% recently. This indicated that disposal income for households within West Yorkshire remained under strain due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- Many companies were facing financial strain due to having to pay back Coronavirus loans issued during the pandemic. This was leading more small businesses to go out of business as they could not afford to pay this back.
- A significant barrier to people getting into work was childcare costs and more needed to be done to address this.
- It was important to use appropriate measures to assess productivity within the West Yorkshire region to ensure this accurately reflected overall macroeconomic activity.

**Resolved:** That the latest intelligence on the region's economic performance

and wider national context and the asks of Government be noted along with feedback from members.

## **9. Committees Update Report**

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

- Andrew Wright, Deputy Chair of the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee, presented an update on the proceedings of the Committee which met on 24 January 2023. The Committee considered a range of reports to support businesses in the regional and growth the economy, including the emerging West Yorkshire Plan and aligned Economic Strategy.
- Nicky Chance-Thompson presented an update on the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee which had met on 26 January 2023. The Committee had an agenda covering a range of reports including Economic and Sector Reporting, the West Yorkshire Plan, Skills and Business Support Delivery and a number of project approvals including the Leeds 2023 Women of the World, Women of West Yorkshire scheme which would proceed with a scheme value of £1,500.00. The Committee also received a presentation from representatives of the East Bierley Community Sports Association who provided a progress report on the development of their site, including plans to increase provision for women and girls. Representatives from Bradford UK City of Culture 2025 gave a presentation on their plans to make the event a landmark moment for the city and the wider region.
- The Chair, Mark Roberts, presented an update on the proceedings of the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee which had met on 10 January 2023. The Committee considered a range of reports relating to the Mayoral pledges to tackle the climate emergency and meeting the 2038 net zero carbon target.
- Councillor James Lewis, Chair of the Employment and Skills Committee, presented an update on the proceedings of the Committee which had met on 23 January 2023. The Committee considered a range of information including the West Yorkshire Plan and a paper on Economic Strategy. The Committee also considered a paper on the Adult Education Budget which set out what had been achieved since was devolved, as well as the immediate priorities for the current service design. Papers on the current performance of employment and skills programmes and future investment of programmes were heard by the Committee along with draft recommendations of the Mayor's Green Jobs Taskforce which was due to produce its final report in March.
- Amir Hussain, Deputy Chair of the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee, presented the update on the proceedings of the committee

which had met on 5 January 2023. The Committee considered a range of reports including an Economic Update, the West Yorkshire Plan and Programme Development to develop a portfolio of workstreams and programmes under Investment Priority 3. The Committee also examined a report about Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure which included a number of development programmes. Members also considered a report to add two additional Spatial Priority Areas (SPAs) in the current set of priority locations agreed across West Yorkshire – these were Huddersfield Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor and the North Halifax Growth Area. Additional reports covered the Community Retrofit Hub Scheme, several project approvals and a report on the findings of the Safer Parks research and the next steps.

- The Chair, Mark Roberts, noted an update on the proceedings of the Transport Committee which had met on 10 February 2023. The Committee had considered a number of reports including bus service funding and the development of the Bus Network Plan, an update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), an update on The Mayor’s Big Bus Chat, the development of a new Mayor’s West Yorkshire Transport Plan, a report on the Active Travel Fund and a short update on rail matters. Following the Levelling up Fund 2 (LUF2) outcome announcement by the Government, the Combined Authority was successful in securing over £41m to deliver a package of schemes to deliver improvements to bus journeys and new active travel measures.

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

## 10. Digital Update

The Board considered a report of the Interim Head of Inclusive Economy, Skills and Culture which provided an update on the recent activity relating to digital across the region and sought members’ views on the next steps.

Officers presented the report and explained that:

- It was proposed to refresh the Digital Framework and to support this refresh, mapping of the digital tech sector in West Yorkshire has been commissioned.
- Digital Clusters Research – the digital mapping would map the entire West Yorkshire regional economy and provide a database of all businesses for future use by the Combined Authority.
- LEP Deep Dive on digital – took place on 12 December 2022. Officers noted several key discussions from this session and confirmed they would be taking this feedback forward.
- Local Digital Partnership – is in its third and final year of DCMS funding. In creating the Digital Skills Plan, the LDSP had accomplished their core targets.
- Launch of the Digital Skills Plan – this was launched on 28 November

2022. This would inform the development of a comprehensive pipeline of digital skills projects. This included a roundtable of events.

Members of the Board thanked the team, led by Marianne Hewitt, for the work they had undertaken to compile the report and initiatives.

**Resolved:** That the next steps were noted following feedback from members.

## 11. Langthwaite Enterprise Zone

The Board considered a report on the proposed enabling works to be undertaken at Langthwaite Enterprise Zone (EZ), South Kirkby, which was owned by the Combined Authority.

Officers presented the report and explained that:

- The Combined Authority had a two-phase Enterprise Zone programme covering ten designated employment sites across West Yorkshire. Phase 1 was in Leeds, together with nine sites in Phase 2 across Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield, which included the Langthwaite Enterprise Zone at South Kirkby.
- The Enterprise Zone programme seeks to maximise development of new commercial space within the region to support attraction of new business, expansion of existing businesses and the creation of new jobs.
- At the February 2023 meeting, the Combined Authority noted an indicative funding package for the Langthwaite project which included (but was not limited to) potential use of residual capital funding from the Growing Places Fund and income related to other Enterprise Zone sites. An approval was also granted for £250,000 in initial resourcing capacity to enter into the CoSTAR bidding process and to enable development of the Langthwaite site, funding through residual Growing Places Fund monies.

The Board was asked to note the contents of the report and the next steps for the Langthwaite Enterprise Zone.

**Resolved:**

- i. The Board noted the contents of the report, including next steps for the Langthwaite Enterprise Zone phase 1 project, and provided any comments.
- ii. The Board noted the indicative funding package for Langthwaite enabling works, as detailed in Section 6 of the submitted report.
- iii. The Board noted the recent bid submission to UK Research and Innovation to create a national innovation centre in the creative industries located on the Langthwaite EZ site (Phase 2) and provide

any comments.

**12. Draft Minutes of the Combined Authority held on 2 February 2023**

The Chair asked members of the Board to note that the draft Minutes of the Combined Authority held on 2 February 2023 were included in the pack of papers for information.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted the next meeting of the LEP Board would be held on 13 June 2023.