



<b>Report to:</b>	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
<b>Date:</b>	7 December 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>West Yorkshire Business Board</b>
<b>Director:</b>	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director Inclusive Economy, Skills & Culture
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To confirm the proposed way forward for the evolution of the LEP Board.
- 1.2 To seek feedback into proposals to strengthen private sector engagement more broadly.

## 2. Information

- 2.1 The outcome of the LEP review and the changes to statutory requirements has provided an opportunity to review how the Mayor and the Combined Authority engage with the private sector.
- 2.2 The LEP Board has provided a key convening role over the years to ensure the voice of the private sector is heard, particularly around business issues. The thematic committees also provide this strong connection with the private sector, ensuring the private sector voice is heard across a range of agendas and within the decision making process.
- 2.3 The proposals below set out how we can strengthen and build on this engagement through improvements to both formal and informal means.

### New West Yorkshire Business Board

- 2.4 Earlier this year, the LEP Board discussed its evolving role with an emphasis on ensuring that the strong partnership between the public and private sector is further strengthened.
- 2.5 Since these discussions, extensive engagement has taken place with new and existing 'LEP Board' members and business representative groups to inform and shape a new public private partnership. This engagement culminated in a private sector engagement event on 15<sup>th</sup> November in which the following recommendations were proposed:
- The LEP Board from here on in will become known as **the West Yorkshire Business Board (WYBB)**.
  - Some meetings of the Board are to be held in **private** to allow for more informal discussions and debates. Supporting notes will be prepared to support these meetings. Reports will be taken to committees and the Combined Authority on the outcome of these discussions. In line with the current requirements of Article 10 of the Constitution, the Board will hold a minimum of one meeting each year in public.
  - The WYBB will provide **thought leadership** on a range of regional issues, focusing on business and the economy.
  - Members to have **specific portfolios** and areas of expertise within which to support the Mayor and Mayor's Business Advisor including participating in events and roundtables on behalf of the Combined Authority.
  - Provide a key route for **commissioning research** to support activities, for example by the Yorkshire & Humber Policy Engagement & Research Network (Y-PERN) and the West Yorkshire Scientific Advisory Group (WYSAG).
- 2.6 It should be noted that although the Board will become known as the West Yorkshire Business Board, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2014 as modified by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021 ("the WYCA Order") still makes reference to the "Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership" for the purpose of West Yorkshire Combined Authority membership . The legal position will only change when the current legislation is amended so that reference to the LEP is no longer required.
- 2.7 To support the above, a new Mayoral Business Advisor (MBA) has been appointed to provide leadership and advice on a range of business issues. Mandy Ridyard, as new MBA will also chair the West Yorkshire Business Board meetings.
- 2.8 To further strengthen the new West Yorkshire Business Board, a number of new members have been appointed by the Mayor and Combined Authority Chief Executive:

- Annette Joseph MBE – Digital and tech
- Jane Atkinson CBE – Energy/ Climate
- Sherin Matthew – Digital and tech
- Aaron Holt – Manufacturing
- Lisa Johnson- Digital and tech
- Natalie Sykes – Transport
- Nicky Chance -Thompson – Culture/Heritage (formerly co-opted member)
- Asma Iqbal – Professional Services (formerly co-opted member)
- Fara Butt – Manufacturing (formerly co-opted member)

They join the existing private sector members of the Board who are:

- Mandy Ridyard (Chair and Mayor’s Business Advisor) – Manufacturing
- Kully Thiarai – Culture
- Kamran Rashid – Third sector
- Professor Shirley Congdon – Higher Education

#### Public/Private Partnership Arrangements

- 2.9 The model of partnership between the public and private sector in West Yorkshire is held up at a national level as good practice. It is important that this model of deep partnership continues to evolve. The private sector will remain represented within the Mayoral Combined Authority and its committees and will continue to be a fundamental partner in decision-making and delivery (see item 10). Nominations to the Combined Authority and its thematic committees are made annually as part of the annual meeting process which provides an opportunity for the WYBB to review nominations going forward.

#### New Mayoral Council

- 2.10 To ensure the Mayor and the Combined Authority are maximising engagement channels with a range of larger business and thought leaders, it is proposed to establish a Mayor’s Council. Chaired by the Mayor, it is proposed that this will convene some of the largest and most influential businesses and stakeholders in the region to provide the voice of large business in the region:
- Support international activity including trade visits and foreign direct investment activity.
  - Influence mayoral and Combined Authority policy and programmes (along with the WYBB).
  - Ensure the Combined Authority understands big business challenges in the region and can utilise appropriate levers to support these employment intensive businesses.

- In time, develop a partnership of ambassadors and champions for West Yorkshire, lobbying for and promoting West Yorkshire.

#### A Framework for Business Engagement – Stronger Together

- 2.11 In addition to this new public private partnership to replace the LEP Board, and the new Mayoral Council, a Business Engagement Framework is being developed to further strengthen all engagement with the private sector.
- 2.12 Whilst formal and informal business engagement does already take place, current arrangements do not always allow business views/insights to be used in a way that can support policy and programme development across the whole range of CA agendas.
- 2.13 In addition, current business engagement does not always represent the entire business population and reflect the views of a cross-section of West Yorkshire businesses.
- 2.14 More diverse business engagement not only results in better policy design and programme development aligned to the needs of all our communities, it also provide the opportunity to develop and own a shared narrative across the public and private sectors for West Yorkshire.
- 2.15 At the private sector engagement event on 15 November 2023, this was discussed and the following recommendations/principles proposed. These will be developed and discussed further with the West Yorkshire Business Board.

#### Areas of focus include:

- Providing clear reasoning as to why businesses should engage with the Combined Authority e.g. key sector strengths, economic health of the region.
- Look to existing networks and strengthen our connections rather than begin everything from scratch.
- Appreciate the value of building relationships with the third sector, academic institutions and government departments.
- Learning lessons from the successes and challenges of previous iterations of regional private sector engagement.
- Developing a clear value proposition and “elevator pitch” for the region for business leaders, ambassadors and other allies to promote West Yorkshire.
- Making sure there are workable actions for both the Combined Authority and private sector representatives.

- 2.16 In parallel, consideration is being given to the strategic relationship between the Combined Authority and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector, with discussion ongoing. A Memorandum of Understanding will be explored with the sector to define and agree roles and responsibilities and ways of working.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

- 3.1 Tackling the climate emergency will remain a key priority for the new Board.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 Inclusive growth will remain a key priority for the new Board.

### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 The focus on equality and diversity within the LEP constitution and EDI will remain a key priority for the new Board and Council.
- 5.2 The Combined Authority intends to ensure that both the West Yorkshire Business Board and new Mayoral Council represent West Yorkshire's diverse population and business community.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 It should be noted that core funding from Government for LEPs nationwide will be withdrawn from April 2024.

### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The 2014 Order does not require the Combined Authority's LEP Member or their substitute to be a private sector representative. However, private sector representation secures direct private sector input into the Combined Authority membership.
- 7.2 By law, the Combined Authority's LEP Member must be non-voting. However, the voting Combined Authority Members may resolve that this provision does not apply.

### **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

### **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 That the Combined Authority approves the proposed changes to the LEP.

## **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

There are no appendices to this report.