

Private and Confidential

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 20th December 2023 at 5.00pm in the Savoy Suite - The Exchange, 4th Floor, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ

Present

Debbie Francis OBE (Chair)

Graham Baldwin	Mark Rawstron
Miranda Barker OBE	County Councillor Aidy Riggott
Councillor Alyson Barnes	Alison Robinson
Ann Dean MBE DL	Councillor Mark Smith
Kam Kothia OBE DL	

In Attendance

Andy Walker, Interim Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration, Blackpool Council
Hannah Lysons, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), Lancashire County Council
Heloise MacAndrew, Director of Law and Governance, Lancashire County Council
Mark Wynn, Executive Director – Resources and Section 151 Officer, Lancashire County Council
Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council
Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director – Lancashire Skills Hub, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Martine Winder, Economic Policy and Communications Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Mick Gornall. Officer apologies were received from Neil Jack and Antony Lockley.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. **Declarations of Interest**

None

5. **Chief Executive's Update and Marketing Coverage**

Andy Walker, Interim Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership presented a report to the Board which outlined activity of the LEP in the 2023/24 financial year as well as an update on the marketing activity which has been undertaken to bolster the image of the LEP in its final year.

It was noted to the Board the success of the Cyber Festival and the amount of publicity which was gained around the event. It was further noted that work to update the Invest in Lancashire and Visit Lancashire websites was lagging.

Comments and questions were as follows:

The Board noted that with the establishment of the National Cyber Force in Lancashire, there was an appetite to build of a local cyber product supply chain which would bring a substantial investment. It was queried whether a portal or landing page to allow individuals or businesses to register interest in being involved could be developed alongside the work to refresh LEP websites.

It was reiterated the need for a consistent brand identity across all Lancashire websites and the importance that any updating allows communication across sites so that information provided is clear and cohesive.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report and approved a further tendering exercise to procure further consultancy support in respect of developing the Lancashire Cyber eco-system and advancing the plans for an Innovation Hub at Samlesbury.

6. **Availability of Finance in Lancashire Update**

Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire LEP, presented a report which provided the Board with a update on the Availability of Finance in Lancashire programme of work which was first approved by the Board in July 2022.

It was reported to the Board that an updated action plan was in place based on feedback from the stakeholder group, and work was being done to update the funding website.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board:

- (i) Noted the report; and
- (ii) Approved that the report be published on the LEP website.

7. Foreign Direct Investment Action Plan Update

Sue Roberts presented a report to the Board which provided an update on the work being done surrounding the Foreign Direct Investment Action Plan.

It was reported to the Board that the work being undertaken was mapping the foreign owned companies within Lancashire in order to create niche sectors which can be used to separate Lancashire from the rest of the world in terms of investment plans going forward.

Comments and questions were as follows:

The Board requested that before the publication of baseline report and action plan as set out in the recommendations, that work is done to improve the information in the Low Carbon and University sections of the report.

It was noted that the Universities within Lancashire have well established international links which were not highlighted within the report, and it was highlighted the importance of making use of those existing links and relationships. It was also further highlighted that many of the Colleges within Lancashire have similar international links.

Resolved: Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board:

- (i) Approved for publishing the Foreign Direct Investment baseline report at Appendix A; and
- (ii) Approved for publishing the Foreign Direct Investment Action plan update at Appendix B

8. LEP input to Lancashire Devolution Consultation Exercise

Andy Walker gave a presentation to the Board updating on the Devolution Deal for Lancashire. It was reported that the proposal was at a public consultation phase, and Board members were encouraged to respond to the consultation questionnaire both as individuals and as representatives of their business areas and encouraged that the questionnaire be shared through business networks so that a wide variety of responses and opinions can be obtained. It was reported to the Board that the LEP could provide an additional response outside of the questionnaire to give a more detailed response.

Board members were supportive of the proposal and agreed to formulate a more

detailed response to be submitted as well as individual responses to the questionnaire.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board agreed:

- (i) That members would individually complete the devolution consultation questionnaire and advocate for others in the business community to do so too.
- (ii) That the interim Chief Executive completes a devolution consultation questionnaire on behalf of the LEP.
- (iii) That the interim Chief Executive in collaboration with the Chair of the LEP produce an additional response to be submitted outside of the questionnaire format to provide a more detailed response to the proposal from the business community, subject to full Board approval.

9. Arrangements for LEP Closure

Andy Walker presented a report to the Board which outlined the practicalities of the winding up of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

The Board were informed that sub-groups and sector groups of the LEP would continue to meet informally beyond March 2024 however would not receive the support of Democratic Services.

Board members queried whether the winding up process for the company of the LEP had been completed. Andy Milroy confirmed to members that the company had been wound up at Companies House and all directors had been resigned.

It was reassured to the Board that director indemnity insurance was in place through to June 2029.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the updates.

10. LEP Governance and Committees Report - December 2023

Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), Lancashire County Council, presented a report containing governance and committee meeting updates since the last Board meeting held on 20 September 2023.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report as set out.

11. Any Other Business

The Board wished to thank all LEP Officers for their hard work and dedication to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership over the last 13 years. A further thanks was extended to the support officers from Democratic Services.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: That the next Lancashire Enterprise Board meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 4:30pm.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: The Board considered that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated against the heading to the item.

14. LEP Integration Update

Andy Walker presented a report and gave a presentation to the Board which outlined the current status of integrating the LEP into Local Democratic Institutions and the formation of a Business Board.

The Board expressed their views and concerns, and it was agreed that the Section 151 Officer of the accountable body would return to the Board with a more detailed proposition.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report and presentation.

15. Operating Budget Report

Mark Wynn, Executive Director – Resources and Section 151 Officer, Lancashire County Council, presented a report to the Board which outlined the financial position for the current year, expenditure plans, and an estimated closing position.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report.

16. Growing Places Report - Ormskirk Court Hotel increased loan

Sue Roberts presented a report to the Board which outlined an increase in loan request from the borrower in respect of the Ormskirk Court Hotel project.

Resolved: In accordance with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Local Assurance Framework, the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board agreed:

- (i) To increase the value of the Facility Agreement to £2,560,000 to cover the cost of completing the development due to changes in circumstances.
- (ii) Considered and approve the new timescales as set out in the report; and
- (iii) Requested that the Interim LEP CEO in consultation with the Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body and Lancashire County Council's Director of Law and Governance, approve and enter into the additional legal documentation drafted by external lawyers to vary the current Facility Agreement to protect the LEP's interest in respect of this loan.