

## Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 13th September, 2022 at 4.30 pm at the Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

#### Present

Debbie Francis OBE (Chair)

Graham Baldwin  
Ann Dean MBE DL  
Dave Holmes OBE  
Kam Kothia OBE DL

County Councillor Aidy Riggott  
Alison Robinson  
Annette Weekes

#### In Attendance

Angie Ridgwell, Section 151 Officer, Chief Executive and Director of Resources, Lancashire County Council

Andy Walker, Interim Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Paul Evans, Assistant Director, Area Lead, Dept for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy

Phil Green, Executive Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, Lancashire County Council

Anne-Marie Parkinson, Head of LEP Co-ordination, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), Lancashire County Council

Catherine Stott, Democratic Services Officer, LCC

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Debbie Francis OBE, welcomed all to the meeting before inviting members to join her in a minute's silence in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The Chair also informed members of the book of condolences situated at the Christ Church Precinct available to sign.

Apologies for absence were received from, Councillor Ivan Taylor, Councillor Quesir Mahmood, Councillor Alyson Barnes Mark Rawstron, Mick Gornall and Claire Whelan.

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022, are confirmed as an accurate record.

### **3. Matters Arising**

It was reported that the final version of the LEP Annual Report was available for members with hard copies circulated at the meeting . It was noted that the Annual Report will officially launch in the next couple of weeks.

County Councillor Aidy Riggott provided an update on efforts to raise the profile of Lancashire and the production of Lancashire Rose badges with Board Members encouraged to take several of the badges to wear or share with colleagues.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **5. LEP Update - Budget, Workplan and Vision**

Andy Walker, Interim LEP Chief Executive, presented a report (circulated) which updated the Board on the LEP Budget, Workplan and Vision.

It was highlighted that the report detailed the LEP's approach and purpose going forward with particular emphasis on sector groups which will take a strategic approach which will in turn inform the LEP Board.

It was noted that the future policy on Local Enterprise Partnerships, and therefore the role and purpose of the LEP, is unclear at the present time whilst direction is awaited from the newly formed Government.

In addition it was reported that funding for the LEP's 2022/2023 budget had reduced compared to previous years so the Lancashire LEP's budget and action plan has been adjusted accordingly. Projects prioritised under the budget include the Eden Project, submission for the Levelling Up Fund and the Samlesbury Innovation Hub feasibility study.

In addition it was noted that the LEP currently has a healthy amount of reserves to continue funding activities including investment in the Growing Places Fund.

It was noted that a new Innovation Coordinator is required after the existing postholder had left with it reported that positive conversations have been held with Lancashire's Universities to consider a replacement.

In terms of the LEP's role it was noted that the LEP will continue to act as a facilitator of local business growth and development, and a conduit for investment into Lancashire's economy.

In addition the LEP shall continue to aid development in strategy in economic development and supports the process for a Lancashire Devolution Deal.

The Board discussed the updated Budget, Workplan and Vision and commented that the revisions were appropriate, in terms of Manufacturing and Health Sector Groups greater engagement with the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel would be welcomed with it noted a further report to strengthen further links between all the LEPs work areas will be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

- (i) Noted the approach outlined in the report, and
- (ii) Agreed that a further report regarding engagement between the LEP Board and the sector groups be brought as an item to the next Board meeting.

## **6. LEP Board Membership**

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) on the current LEP Board membership, highlighting the following:

- The LEP Board has seen three director resignations over the summer, with a further four anticipated as members come to the end of their terms in office.
- The Chair informed members of the intention to extend the terms of 1-2 members while suitable replacements were found. There would be an active effort to ensure that the gender balance of the Board remains a 50/50 split in accordance with Government guidance, in addition to seeking representation from the tourism and agriculture sectors.
- The Board will look to expand its membership once it has greater clarity over its future role and the funding available to it.

Considering the above, the Board provided feedback with it suggested that the Board look to consider refreshing the structure of recruitment. Andy Walker confirmed the current recruitment process and noted that increased use would be made of the LEP's social media channels and business contacts to target the specific sectors highlighted above.

Board Members also expressed a view that the current vacancies present an opportunity to develop the Board and retain a positive outlook regarding the LEP's future purpose.

The Board also discussed the need to positively advertise the LEP with the Board requesting that a statement be published, emphasising the continued relevance and purpose of the Board

It was clarified that at this meeting Directors were asked to give some

consideration to the appointment of a Deputy Chair and Diversity Champion and if Directors felt able to fulfil the roles to express an interest to the Chair with a view to making appointments at the next Board meeting.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

- (i) Noted the report and the subsequent questions and comments; and
- (ii) Agreed that proposals for the position of Deputy Chair and Diversity Champion are to be raised as issues at the next board meeting.

## **7. LEP Governance and Committees Report**

Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), Lancashire County Council presented a report (circulated) containing Governance and Committee meeting updates since the last Board meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022, welcoming any questions and comments.

Andy Walker provided an update on the recently held Business Support Management Board with it noted that it is intended to send letters to Government Ministers detailing concerns raised in relation to the impact of reduced funding on the LEP's capacity to support businesses. It was confirmed that letters had been drafted and were to be finalised in due course.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report and additional verbal update.

## **8. Growing Places Investment Strategy**

Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, presented a report (circulated) on the Growing Places Investment Strategy, highlighting the following:

- The Growing Places Fund is now the sole pot of funding for projects available to the LEP.
- The report intends to serve as a guide as to how the fund should be used and which areas should be prioritised for funding.
- The Chair clarified that the key question for the Board stemming from the report is whether the GPF should be applied as a grant or loan source of funding.

**Questions and comments were raised by the LEP Board as follows:**

- It would be useful to include greater detail as to which areas the fund can / can't be used with a request for further clarity as to the metrics / criteria used.
- The Growing Places fund should be applied as a loan rather than a grant and stressed the importance of providing funding support for projects in

emerging sectors.

- It was suggested that an additional report be produced to the next Board meeting outlining other funding schemes that operate in Lancashire in addition to the Growing Places, helping to provide context as to where the Growing Places Fund was most needed to address gaps in funding.
- It was requested that the Board should have some flexibility in terms of providing funding for projects outside of the scope of the existing projects.

LEP Officers reminded the Board of a report submitted earlier in the year which detailed proposed actions, measurable targets, and outcomes for the application of the Growing Places fund, as well as detailing how the Growing Places fund feeds into the strategic framework aims.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board requested that the comments made by the Board be taken into consideration with a revised Growing Places Investment Strategy to be submitted to the next Board meeting for further consideration.

## **9. Any Other Business**

None.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board meeting is scheduled to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 4:30pm, venue to be confirmed.

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

**Resolved:** That the meeting move into Part II, Private and Confidential, to consider the remaining agenda items as they contained information defined as confidential or exempt in accordance with the relevant paragraph in Part I to schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

It was considered that in all the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **12. Chief Executive's Update**

Andy Walker presented a private and confidential report (circulated) to the Board, highlighting the following:

- The closing date for Levelling Up Fund bid submissions has now passed, with a total of 11 bids made across Lancashire.
- Following the commission issued by the LEP in August regarding the

feasibility study for the proposed Samlesbury Innovation Hub, an invitation to tender was produced with one organisation appointed to advance the work.

- The Chair noted that the Board will need to consider the purpose of the Innovation Hub and how it will operate at future meetings.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report.

### **13. Growing Places Report - Ormskirk Court Hotel use of Facility Agreement**

Sue Roberts presented a private and confidential report (circulated) concerning an application to the Growing Places Fund for a development in Ormskirk.

It was noted that this application had previously been presented to and approved at the Board meeting in December 2020 with this being a revised request for additional funding.

Following a period of debate the Board requested further clarity from the borrower on how costs will be met.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

- (i) That the Board reject the recommendations on the ground that greater clarity is needed concerning how costs will be covered.
- (ii) That once a revised application and clarification is received, three members of the Board (to be delegated outside of the meeting) will meet prior to the next Board meeting to receive feedback and make a recommendation to the Board as to how to proceed.

### **14. Growing Places Report - Fleetwood FRP Ltd updated request**

Sue Roberts presented a private and confidential Growing Places Report (circulated) regarding an application from Fleet FRP Ltd.

It was noted that the Board had previously approved this loan in principle at the Board meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021. This report requested a revision to the loan.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

- (i) Approved the application as presented; and
- (ii) Requested that for future loan applications, Board members should have access to the LEP's approval criteria to inform their decisions on future loan applications.

**15. Growing Places Report - Holmes Mill Properties Ltd**

Sue Roberts presented a private and confidential Growing Places Report (circulated) regarding an application from Holmes Mill Properties Ltd.

The Board provided feedback on the criteria used and the interest rates set with a request that this loan request be offered the standard loan rate.

**Resolved:** The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board approved the application as set out with conditions as proposed in private regarding the interest rate applicable.