

LEP - Business Support Management Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 14th March, 2019 at 10.30 am
at the Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall,
Preston**

Present

Michael Blackburn (Chair)

Gillian Bardin
Miranda Barker

Paul Foster
Stuart Thompson

Also in Attendance

Richard Kenny, Interim Director of Economic Development and Planning
Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager - Business Growth, LCC
Peter Thomas, University of Central Lancashire
Cath Rawcliffe, Democratic Services Officer, LCC

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Mike Blackburn, welcomed all to the meeting, round table introductions were made. Apologies for absence were presented from Frank McKenna.

Peter Thomas attended as a substitute for Sue Smith.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

The Chair asked officers to clarify whether Board Members were required to complete a register of interests form in addition to declaring an interest in the relation to any items on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2019

Attention was drawn to items 5 and 8 of the Minutes.

In respect of item 5 of the Minutes with regard to the development of the Local Industrial Strategy, it was agreed that a county wide, business consultation event

or series of events, supported by the LEP and Lancashire County Council, would be held at the earliest opportunity.

In respect of Item 8 of the Minutes with regard the Lancashire Energy Strategy, it was queried whether the narrative statement 'Low priority would be given to shale gas' was correct. The Chair commented that he recalled that the LEP Transition Director, who was present at that meeting, had questioned "whether shale gas has too low a profile in the Energy Strategy". The Chair also recollected that the Board had agreed that "shale gas wasn't top of the list but it couldn't just be low profile either", following confirmation from the other Board Member present at that meeting, it was agreed that this be recorded as an amendment to the Minutes. Following further discussion, it was also agreed that a report on the potential economic opportunities around shale gas should be presented to The North and Western Lancashire and East Lancashire Chambers of Commerce 'Shale Gas Portal'.

Resolved: That:

- i) Subject to the above amendment in respect of Item 8, the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 January 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair of the Committee.
- ii) The LEP and Lancashire County Council, be asked to arrange a county wide, business consultation event or series of events, on the development of the Local Industrial Strategy at the earliest opportunity.
- iii) A report on the potential economic opportunities around shale gas be presented to the Lancashire Chambers of Commerce 'Shale Gas Portal'.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairman highlighted points of action from the previous minutes. The issues raised and the actions arising in respect of Items 5 and 8 were noted.

It was also noted that at today's meeting, Regeneris Consulting would be presenting a 'Summative Assessment' on Growth Hub activity for the period 2016-2018 and Steer Consulting would be reporting on the Lancashire Local Industrial Strategy.

5. Boost 2016-2018 External Evaluation Report

Lauren Newby, Associate Director, Hatch Regeneris, presented a Powerpoint presentation on the summative evaluation assessment of Boost 2 – Lancashire's Business Growth Hub, for the period 2016-2018.

The Board was informed that an interim and final (summative) assessment is generally included as a funding condition in all ERDF projects, but also provided an opportunity to reflect on those aspects of the project which had worked well and those that could be improved.

The Board noted that the evaluation had drawn on a variety of relevant information including case studies of Growth Hubs elsewhere, and was underpinned by five key requirements, as set out in national programme guidance:

- 1) Relevance and consistency
- 2) Progress against contractual targets
- 3) Experience of delivering and managing the project
- 4) Economic impact attributable to the project
- 5) Cost effectiveness and value for money.

The key findings of the evaluation were summarised together with the strengths and ongoing challenges faced by the Boost project. It was noted that many of the issues identified had already been addressed through the commissioning of Boost 3, but it was proposed to continue to monitor the commitments to improvement and remediation in the future. Overall, the outcome of the evaluation of Boost 2 showed a strong performance against target.

Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager responded to questions raised by the Board in relation to one of the output targets (P13). He explained that Guidance which emerged from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government late in the programme had a negative impact on the output targets which Boost had otherwise been on track to exceed. This occurred because of the changing interpretation of ERDF guidance, where previously it was advised that a programme could claim both a P13 (number of enterprises receiving IDB support) and a C1 (number of business assists). This decision late in the programme meant that a substantial number of P13 outputs had to be removed and the Boost programme was unable to mitigate against this within the short time period remaining in the programme. The Board was pleased to hear that no-one had lost out financially as a result.

Andrew also responded to a number of questions in relation to the support currently available to businesses and the ongoing issue of how to encourage partners to work better together, smartly. It was hoped that Freshfield PR, who were co-ordinating the marketing and promotional activity for Boost, may be able to help in this respect.

The Board joined with the Chair in congratulating Andrew, Boost Programme Manager, who, according to the findings of the evaluation report, was 'a visible and personable "ambassador" whose commitment was a testament to the success of Boost'.

The Chair also thanked partners, colleagues, officers and everyone involved in delivering Boost 2. He commented that the knowledge and experience gained and lessons learnt in delivering Boost 1 and 2, would prove useful when developing the Local Industrial Strategy in Lancashire, the subject of the next item on the agenda.

Resolved: That:

- i) The summative evaluation assessment attached at Appendix A to the report be noted.
- ii) The remedial actions identified to address the areas of concern highlighted in the report, be noted.
- iii) The Board continue to monitor the commitments to improvement and remediation moving forward in respect of the ongoing challenges faced by the Boost project.

6. Process to develop a Local Industrial Strategy for Lancashire and the role of the Business Support Management Board

A report was presented on an update on the initiation of the process to develop a Local Industrial Strategy in Lancashire (LIS).

The Board was reminded that at previous meetings, it had considered the requirement placed on Local Enterprise Partnerships to develop a Local Industrial Strategy. It had been agreed that local businesses and their representative organisations should play a strong role in developing these key documents. The report provided an update on the initiation of the process and updated the Board on the progress with the trailblazer development in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands.

The Board was advised that since their last meeting, the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had formally commissioned Steer Economic Development to provide consultancy support to drive forward a programme of work that would frame and populate a Local Industrial Strategy in Lancashire. In addition, the LEP had received a small, locally matched grant to commission research support via Lancaster University.

Simon Pringle of Steer Economic Development, took the Board through the work plan which has three phases as follows:-

- 1) **Developing the Evidence Base:** To gather and review an already extensive business base within, and across, the County, together with pipeline projects;
- 2) **Developing Strategic Priorities:** Drawing in private, public, and voluntary sectors to identify priorities and options, and build consensus on way forwards; and
- 3) **Action Plan:** developing investable propositions including pipeline projects to deliver the agreed strategic intent.

It was reported that the process would require effective stakeholder engagement underpinned by a 'co-production' approach. Subject to discussion, Steer proposed local Theme/Project leads be identified. They also proposed to work with these Leads to utilise local networks and partnerships, to develop propositions socialise findings and recommendations among key stakeholders. It was suggested that the work would be shaped by the series of questions set out in the report, based on the What Works Centre guidance on LIS development.

It was noted that the trailblazer LIS areas would be publishing their strategies

shortly. This included Greater Manchester who had taken the opportunity to initiate 'The Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review' which had commissioned work in four areas:-

- Analysis of productivity,
- Analysis of education and skills transitions,
- Exploration of the city region's innovation ecosystems, national and international supply chains and trade linkages; and sources of global competitiveness,
- Work to review the infrastructure needs of Greater Manchester for raising productivity, including the potential for new approaches to unlock additional investment

The Board agreed that whilst resource and government input would inevitably be more limited in Lancashire, the majority of research undertaken by Greater Manchester was transferrable and could be emulated in Lancashire. Specific reference was made to:

- Health and Equalities,
- Skills training
- Transport and infrastructure
- Housing
- Identifying emerging global markets

It was also agreed that it was important to collaborate with other authorities, partners and businesses including those outside the county boundary.

The Board raised concerns with regard to the proposed timescales for the work programme and the processes in place. It was felt that the timescales should be extended and that consultation with the business community should take place at an earlier stage in the process. Simon agreed to convey these concerns to the Head of Service, LEP Co-ordination, the officer responsible for producing the work programme.

Following further discussion on the process and procedures, it was recommended that the author of the LIS documents should be involved from an early stage; that it would be helpful for social enterprise partners and other businesses to submit a narrative statement rather than data; and that the emphasis should be put on people (including employability and skills), followed by place.

Resolved: That:

- i) The report be noted.
- ii) The Head of Service, LEP Co-ordination be asked to extend the timescales for the programme of work and bring forward consultation with the business community.
- iii) The research undertaken by Greater Manchester be emulated in Lancashire with specific reference to the areas highlighted above.

7. Reporting to Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

That the recommendations at item 11 below, be reported to the LEP Board.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Business Support Management Board was scheduled to be held on Thursday 9 May 2019 at 10.30am in Committee Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

10. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: The Business Support Management 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

11. BEIS Growth Hub Funding 2019-20

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972. It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interests in disclosing the information.)

A report was presented with regard to the grant provided by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to Lancashire's Business Growth Hub.

Resolved: That:

- i) The Schedule 3 response to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, setting out the parameters of Growth Hub operation in Lancashire as set out at Appendix A to this report be endorsed.
- ii) The Schedule 1 response, setting out how BEIS funds will be used in Lancashire as set out at Appendix B to this report, be endorsed.
- iii) That the recommendations set out at i) and ii) above, be reported to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board.