

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 4.30 pm as a Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present

Debbie Francis OBE (Chair)

Miranda Barker OBE
Councillor Alyson Barnes
Kam Kothia OBE DL
Councillor Quesir Mahmood
Mick Gornall

Mark Rawstron
County Councillor Aidy Riggott
Alison Robinson
Councillor Mark Smith

In Attendance

Heloise MacAndrew, Director of Law and Governance, Lancashire County Council
Andy Walker, Acting Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Hannah Lysons, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), Lancashire County Council
Phil Green, Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Community Services, Lancashire County Council
Mark Wynn, Executive Director of Resources, Lancashire County Council
Maya Ellis, Senior Project Officer, Lancashire County Council
Martine Winder, Economic Policy and Communications Manager, Lancashire County Council
Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire County Council
Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of Skills and Employment Partnership, Lancashire County Council
Paul Evans, Assistant Director Area Lead – Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Councillor Mark Smith was welcomed to his first meeting of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board as the new representative from Blackpool Council.

Apologies were received from LEP Directors Ann Dean and Graham Baldwin.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

Under Matters Arising Andy Walker, Acting Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, informed the Board that the £250,000 grant from central Government had been received into LEP accounts earlier in the week and is expected to be the last grant received subject to the ongoing consultation regarding the future of LEPs.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

The Chair reminded Board members of the importance of keeping their Register of Interests up to date.

5. LEP Budget and Business Plan 2023/24

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) which outlined the intended use of the LEP's income and reserves to provide a budget for activity in 2023-24.

It was reported that the proposed figure for spend in 2023/24 after staffing, running and accountable body costs are met is £1.294m, due to the additional interest and income from the Growing Places Fund is now accessible via the Accountable Body Agreement with Lancashire County Council. The budgeted spend level represents an amount which can be deployed by the LEP in the remainder of this financial year, leaving a balance of £1.5m in reserves to support the future integration and closure of the LEP.

Andy Walker outlined the projects that Board members had previously highlighted as being areas for continued investment and established how these projects were being prioritised within the proposed business plan.

The Board were reassured that the budget accounted for flexibility to include new projects should something arise.

Comments and questions were as follows.

The Board were conscious that the established sector groups may begin to feel alienated with the future direction of the LEP and that, further to the planned development of the sector groups in the budget, that it was crucial a message of support was sent out to the individual groups to reassure them of their importance in the future of the LEP.

Further to this, it was also commented the importance that the individual sector groups have a clear point of contact to an individual or organisation in order to further the action points which have been drawn up in their respective strategies in order to make the best use of the planned funding within the proposed budget.

Thanks were expressed to the LEP team for their hard work and dedication in creating the budget and business plan.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board endorsed the budget proposals and business planning priorities as set out in the report.

6. Transfer of LEP Responsibilities to Local Democratic Institutions

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) which outlined the main functions of LEP activity which need to be transferred to local democratic institutions LEPs are no longer recognised by government after the current financial year.

The activities to be considered for transfer into local democratic institutions included:

- Growth Fund Grants
- Getting Building Fund Grants
- Samlesbury EZ District Agreements
- Growing Places Fund
- Operation of the Business Growth Hub and the Skills Hub and accountability for ongoing grants
- Any residual reserves left at end March 2024.

Board members were generally happy with the drawn up list of activities, however requested that the following also be included:

- Combined City Deal Arrangement
- Wider EZ committee arrangements
- Transport for the North commitments
- Sector Group arrangements and support
- Continuation of the Business Support Management Board and the scrutiny of Business Support

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board Members noted the update and requested that the above additional activities be included in transfer plans.

7. Shaping a Lancashire Business Board

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) which outlined what a future 'Business Board' for Lancashire might look like, to replace the current Lancashire set out what the function and form of any future Business Board for Lancashire might look like. The Board were asked to consider how to inform the process of integrating LEP functions within current and future local government structures and how to maintain the momentum and reach of the LEPs existing board, specialist functions and sector and project groupings.

The LEP Board were supportive of the report and the key assumptions which were outlined, and thanks were given to Maya Ellis, Senior Project Officer, Lancashire County Council, for her work to pull together a comprehensive initial draft structure of what such a Business Board would look like.

It was noted by members of the LEP Board that the membership of the future Business Board is crucial, and that having individuals who can drive engagement and action change such that the Business Board would achieve its intended outcomes was an important factor to consider. It was also noted by the Board that there should be a focus on including the sector groups in discussions around membership.

The LEP Board were generally opposed to using the term 'advisory' within the name of any future Business Board, and the name of the Business Board should be reflect that of similar bodies in other areas of the country for consistency and transparency.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted the report and provided the above comments and feedback.

8. LEP Governance and Committees Report - June 2023

Andy Milroy, Democratic Services Manager (Companies), presented a report (circulated) containing Governance and Committee meeting updates since the last Board meeting held on 21 March 2023.

It was reported that there had been changes in Membership to several LEP Sub-committees, including a recommendation for a new Chair of the Lancashire Skills Board ahead of LEP Director Alison Robinson's retirement in August 2023.

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

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be held Wednesday 20th September 2023 at 4:30pm.

Due to Board member unavailability, it was requested that the date of the meeting is adjusted to allow Board members to meet face-to-face.

11. 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.

12. Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership - future arrangements

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) which outlined the future arrangements of the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership and addressed ongoing uncertainty around the LEPs status as a dormant company. It was suggested that the LEP should close and transition to a Business Board as quickly as is practicable.

Resolved: The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board agreed the recommendations as set out in the report subject to the below points of clarity:

- (i) Further clarification of Director's insurance and how trailing responsibility will be handled following the winding up of the company,
- (ii) Further clarity on the terms of reference for the LEP in its transitional phase toward the Business Board once it is no longer an incorporated body.