

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership Board last held a public meeting in November 2021.

However, due to ongoing challenges resulting from the Covid pandemic, the Board was unable to meet formally in public until June 2022 and held regular meetings to ensure they remained informed of the latest developments and could help drive the recovery of the city region.

The Board met in December 2021 and January, February, March, April, May June, July, September and October 2022. During these meetings, a small number of emergency decisions were taken using the written procedure protocol as set out in the Terms of Reference where appropriate.

December 2021

The Board agreed:

- To approve the latest version of the GM Local Growth Assurance Framework which had been updated in line with the most recent Government guidance.
- To receive a report on the Local Growth Deal Programme and approve, subject to these recommendations also being approved by GMCA at the 17 December 2021 meeting, that:
 - expenditure of £4.645million of Local Growth Deal Funding be approved for the remaining two packages of the Oldham Town Centre Regeneration works
 - final Full Approval be granted to the Stockport Mixed Use scheme including the remaining contribution of £8.845 million from the Mayors Challenge Fund to enable a contract for the main construction works to be awarded and for the scheme to progress

February 2022

The Board agreed:

- To approve the use of flexibilities in relation to the Getting Building Fund programme as set out in the latest progress report.

May 2022

The Board agreed by written procedure:

- To approve the proposed priorities for the allocation of the £375k Capacity Funding in line with the GM Economic Vision.

NB: It should be noted that the proposed funding allocated to the delivery of GM Economic Growth Programme should read £25k not £50k as originally stated.

June 2022

The Board agreed:

- To approve the Annual Delivery Report highlighting the LEP's progress in achieving its priorities in 2021/22

July 2022

The Board agreed:

- To ratify the 2022/23 Annual Delivery Plan which had been approved in principle by the Chair setting out the key activities that will help GM LEP realise its strategic ambitions

September 2022

The Board agreed:

- To approve the proposed model for the future of GM LEP and its integration into GMCA

MINUTES FROM THE GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 16:00 ON TUESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2021 AT THE WIGAN INVESTMENT CENTRE, WATERSIDE DRIVE, WIGAN.

Board Members:

Lou Cordwell (In the Chair)

Mike Blackburn, Mayor Andy Burnham, Marilyn Comrie, Steve Connor, Amanda Halford, Chris Oglesby, Miles Rothbury & Cllr Elise Wilson

Also Present: Cllr David Molyneux (Leader of Wigan Council) & Andrew Welch (Managing Partner of Stephenson's Solicitors)

Advisors:

David Rogerson (GMCA), Lee Teasdale (GMCA), Sheona Southern (Marketing Manchester), Tim Newns (MIDAS), Mark Hughes (The Growth Company), Jesse Garrick (BEIS), Oscar Lynch (GMCA), Maria Gonzalez (GMCA), Rebecca Drakeford (GMCA), Alison McKenzie-Folan (Wigan Council), Aidan Thatcher (Wigan Council) and Andy Hollingsworth (GMCA).

GM LEP/21/48 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, and thanked Stephenson's Solicitors on behalf of the Board for kindly hosting the meeting.

Apologies were received from GM LEP Members Vimla Appadoo, Lorna Fitzsimons, Justin Kelly, Sir Richard Leese, Nancy Rothwell, Richard Topliss, Cllr Brenda Warrington and Vanda Murray.

The Chair advised the Board that officially it was the last meeting of Sir Richard Leese's membership. Members acknowledged his valuable contributions to the Board and expressed their best wishes for the future.

GM LEP/21/49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared an interest in Item GM LEP/21/57 by virtue of acting as a consultant advisor to the Oxford Road Corridor.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the declaration of interest be received.

GM LEP/21/50 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Board considered the minutes of the previous meeting of 22nd September 2021.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board agrees the minutes of 22nd September 2021 as a true and correct record of the meeting.

DISTRICT FOCUS

GM LEP/21/51 GM LEP – WIGAN UPDATE & DISCUSSION

The Chair invited Andrew Welch (Managing Partner of Stephenson’s Solicitors) to open the item. Mr Welch stated that as a major employer in the Wigan region they took part in Wigan Council’s Community Wealth Building Consortium, which enabled access to training, procurement, and apprenticeship opportunities for local residents. Making Wigan a great place to live and work was an objective shared with the local authority.

Cllr David Molyneux (Leader of Wigan Council) and Aidan Thatcher (Interim Director of Place, Wigan Council) were then invited to update the Board on developments taking place within the authorities’ boundaries and how they tied into Wigan’s vision for ‘The Deal 2030’. Points highlighted included:

- The Deal 2030 Vision was an ambitious high-level plan setting out growth priorities for 2030. It was outward facing in nature and intended to promote and reposition the Borough to further encourage inward investment. This was also informed by a series of more detailed plans that underpinned the Vision.
- The Borough sits within a strong geographical location, the quality of its schools is nationally acknowledged, and it has a strong underlying business base, providing a solid foundation on which the vision could build.
- The ‘Towns are the New Cities’ programme is seeking opportunities to retain young talent within the borough and indeed bring in outside talent as well as increase the proportion of residents with higher level skills and to make the Borough’s town centres a catalyst for wider growth.

- A number of high-profile developments were taking place in the centre of Wigan which attracting investment via the Future High Street Fund and the Heritage Action Zone.
- Some of the highest profile developments included the Galleries25 project, developing a traditional shopping centre into a more modern offer; the regeneration of Leigh town centre; the Westwood Park development close to the A49 link road; Symmetry Park at the M6 J25 Junction; and the Wigan Pier Quarter cultural offer.
- A considerable amount of culture development was taking place via the 'Fire Within' cultural manifesto.
- An Employment and Skills Strategy had also been developed to take advantage of the strengths in the region and address any challenges.

Comments and Questions

- Members welcomed the work being undertaken and noted that other regions were undertaking similar schemes in order to promote growth and attract/retain talent. How was Wigan capitalising on its own distinct assets?
- It was advised that close links had been formed with Edge Hill University to develop an offer that would deliver degree level qualifications within the Borough. It was also felt that Wigan's location could place it in an advantageous position, with it's close links to national level travel hubs such as the M6 and the Northwest Main Line and its equidistance between Manchester and Liverpool. The Borough's existing major employers had also bought into the Vision for growth and looking to support it as much as possible.
- Members enquired about what the GM LEP could do to help support the Vision. It was advised that additional support in terms of developing contacts and helping to develop ideas for further growth. Members welcomed the level of active business engagement already clearly happening within the Borough.
- The importance of the green theme in terms of the future of the GM economy was highlighted. It was advised that this was hugely important to Wigan, which was one of the authorities to declare a climate emergency. The Local Plan had been refreshed with much higher targets to ensure that the fabric of developments within the region started from a green basis. The Council was also exploring the potential of electric vehicles and work was taking place with the local colleges and Edge Hill University to provide skills for future green jobs.
- Members referenced food production as a key strength of the borough with a significant number of the top food manufacturers in the country having a base in the Borough including Heinz as an anchor employer.

There were huge innovation opportunities in terms of the development of plant-based foods.

- There is an opportunity to strengthen connectivity to the rest of Greater Manchester and beyond with potential Government transport investment able to unlock local growth.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the update on work to develop regional growth and promote the 'The Deal 2030' vision in Wigan be received by the Board.

GM LEP DELIVERABLES

GM LEP/21/52 GOVERNMENT POLICY UPDATE

An update was provided by Andy Hollingsworth (Head of Devolution Strategy, GMCA). Key spending review and budget highlighted were noted and large forthcoming decision were referenced, including the Bus Services Improvement Plan and the Levelling Up White Paper.

The Spending Review had committed that the Levelling Up White Paper would include further detail on how R&D spending would be increased outside of the current London/South East corridor. Decisions were also expected on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The outcome of the LEP Review and the Business Support Review were also expected.

It was still currently expected that the White Paper would be published during December.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Government Policy Update be noted.

GM LEP/21/53 LEP ECONOMIC MONITORING DASHBOARD

Mark Hughes (The Growth Company) provided some key highlights from the Economic Monitoring Dashboard:

- Whilst strong movement was being seen in terms of economic activity, challenges still remained with disadvantaged groups such as minority, disabled and older employee groups.
- The Business Credit Check data showed that the percentage of GM businesses showing signs of financial distress fell slightly between September and October although this may still be higher than the national trend.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the updated Economic Monitoring Dashboard be received by the Board.

GM LEP/21/54 LEP DELIVERABLES MEMBER UPDATE

The Chair advised the Board of the work that had taken place in relation to the Living Wage Week.

Further updates on the Deliverables would be provided at the next meeting.

STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE

GM LEP/21/55 GM ANNUAL DELIVERY REPORT

David Rogerson (Policy & Strategy, GMCA) updated the Board on the 2020/21 Annual Delivery Report.

The Board welcomed the report and suggested that future iterations could highlight the LEP's role in supporting Social Enterprise.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Annual Delivery Report be noted.

GM LEP/21/56 GM INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

A report was provided which updated the Board on the refresh of the Greater Manchester International Strategy and the planned approach for developing the GM International Strategy Delivery Plan.

The success of recent events was highlighted including hosting the Ambassador to Japan and the breadth of business engagement.

The Board were asked to review the International Strategy one-pager and provide feedback on how this reflects what GM is trying to achieve with the international strategy.

The Board were also asked to consider the ambition statements and how these align with the wider strategic vision of the city region.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board notes the update on the refreshed Greater Manchester's International Strategy.

2. That the Board be asked to provide feedback on the proposed strategic framework, priorities, and the approach to developing targets.
3. That the Board be asked to provide feedback on the approach to developing the GM International Strategy Delivery Plan.

GM LEP/21/57 GROWTH LOCATIONS UPDATE

The Chair asked that the Board receive the update paper and to share any thoughts or comments directly with Andrew McIntosh (Director of Place, GMCA).

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board notes the update and be asked to share any feedback directly with the relevant officer.

GM LEP/21/58 GROWTH COMPANY BUSINESS SUPPORT, INTERNATIONAL AND MARKETING UPDATE

Mark Hughes (The Growth Company) provided the latest update. The Board was advised:

- It was found that general business feedback highlighted the day-to-day pressures of dealing with the business of supply chain, labour market and inflation pressures.
- International trade stats were challenging when compared to the EU at present with post-Brexit arrangements currently being developed.
- The business community had also indicated there as an appetite to engage with the Government on the details of the Budget and what this means for future growth.
- The Resolution Foundation had prepared a report on productivity this week that may be of interest to the LEP.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Growth Company Business Support, International and Marketing Update be noted by GM LEP.
2. That the Resolution Foundation's Productivity Report be shared with the Board.

GOVERNANCE

GM LEP/21/59 BOARD MEMBER FEEDBACK ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

The GM Mayor provided the Board with an update following his attendance at the COP26 event in Glasgow. The GM message was delivered strongly throughout, promoting the region as a leading force in moving towards a green economy, and the only region with the potential to move quickly towards a carbon neutral public transport system.

The importance of the Greater Manchester Strategy as a catalyst for a new era of positive change in the region was highlighted to Board Members.

The progress made on the Clean Air Zone was highlighted. This presented clear benefits for the region and GM is exploring how to showcase the opportunities for business and support them in the transition to cleaner, compliant vehicles.

Comments and Questions

Board Member Steve Connor highlighted the Bee Net Zero programme and the lessons learned from engaging business in the journey to Net Zero.

The Board agreed that clear communication is critical, that many businesses are already transitioning to the green economy and that the private sector experience and expertise of LEP members could help shape this approach.

RESOLVED/:

1. That the GM Mayor's update on COP26 and related work in GM be received.

GM LEP/21/60 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Members were asked to feedback to officers with any suggestions for future agenda items.

Meeting closed at: 17:40

The next public meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 19th January 2022.