

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

At a meeting of the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership held Remotely on Thursday, 23 September 2021 the following Members were

PRESENT:

Mr A Hamid MBE (Chairperson of the Board)
Paul Corcoran
Prof Dame Janet Beer
Elaine Bowker
Lynn Collins
Laura Pye
Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram
Angela White OBE

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Basnett, Managing Director LCR LEP
Tony Wade, Finance Director, LCR LEP
Dr Aileen Jones, Interim Executive Director of Commissioning and Strategic Delivery, LCRCA
Kirsty McLean, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations, LCRCA
Tony Reeves, CEX Liverpool CC
Simon Reid, Growth Platform
Pete Sandman, Growth Platform
Ben Flanagan,
Mick Allen, BEIS

APOLOGIES:

Melinda Acutt
Mayor Joanne Anderson
Dr Jonathan Hague
Mike Hulme
Mark Whitworth
Councillor Janette Williamson

Jill Coule, Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer, LCRCA
John Fogarty, Executive Director of Corporate Services, LCRCA

481. WELCOME AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (V)

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No Declarations of interest were submitted by Board Members, but the Chair requested that any Board Members provide notification of interests as soon as possible either by e-mail or verbally during the meeting.

482. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (P)

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 22 July 2021 were considered.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE, asked Mark Basnett to provide an update on any matters arising.

Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) checked that everyone was happy with the minutes as an accurate record of the last meeting. He noted that the minutes were very detailed. He requested that in future, in relation to the update section, the content would be kept to a minimum and with more detail on the other substantial items where the decisions were made.

Board Members agreed the minutes as a correct record.

Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the Local Enterprise Partnership referred to a number of matters arising from the minutes:-

LCR Freeport

At the last meeting, it was agreed to recommend the appointment of [REDACTED] as Chair to the Leaders of Mayors of the City Region and [REDACTED] as a member. Mark Basnett indicated that both [REDACTED] were pleased to accept their appointments.

He added that 3 places on the Board remained to be filled. Following the direction from the LEP Board to ensure diversity on the Freeport Board, the Special Appointments Committee was reconvened and several candidates were interviewed. The Committee recommended the appointment of [REDACTED]. Mark provided a pen portrait of each candidate's background and expertise. This recommendation was also due for consideration and endorsement by the City Region Leaders and Mayor shortly.

Kirsty McLean, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations endorsed Mark Basnett's comments and that the Board was comprised of a good mix of skills to take the Freeport forward.

Mark Basnett also mentioned that there was one vacancy on the Freeport Board, but the Appointments Committee was of the view that it would be useful to hold back one vacancy, in the event that another particular expertise or person was identified.

The Board agreed the recommendations in relation to the Freeport Board appointments.

Kirsty McLean, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations provided a brief update on progress with the Freeport bid. She explained that the Outline Business Case was submitted to Government by the deadline and it was subject to sign off by the Combined Authority later that week. Government had already started going through the detail and a three-hour meeting had taken place with the Treasury the previous day which had provided good feedback so far and continued at pace. There was also a focus on investment opportunities for the wider City Region so that the Freeport would be beneficial for all parts of the City Region, not just those that were immediately involved. She added that Mark Basnett was also doing some work on the inward investment approach and the marketing of the City Region as a whole, maximising on the benefit of the Freeport. Kirsty undertook to provide further updates in due course.

Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the LEP commented that there had been a significant amount of interest generated by the potential Freeport without undertaking any marketing. There were exciting prospects ahead, particularly given the unique position of Liverpool in relation to the US market.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE paid tribute to the amount of work undertaken to date by Kirsty McLean and thanked everybody involved.

LCR Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the LEP referred to the Comprehensive Spending Review summarised at the last board meeting. A lot of progress had been made by colleagues in the Combined Authority and he asked Kirsty McLean, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations to provide an update to Board Members.

Kirsty McLean explained that the CSR was due to be submitted to Government by the end of September 2021. It was based on discussions with Board Members and feedback received separately. The draft submission had been compiled but Kirsty was keen to compliment partner submissions and invited Board Members to provide any last-minute comments/feedback for inclusion. She asked if any additions or comments to be sent to her as soon as possible.

Updated plans for COP26 and NZNW

The Deputy Chair Paul Corcoran provided an update on the latest plans for the COP26 event in Glasgow and the work of Net Zero North West (NZNW).

Paul Corcoran explained that there were two different groups. NZNW was the industry group which represented a lot of the private sector organisations as well as the LEPs for the Northwest, led by Ged Barlow. He stated that he was the Liverpool City Region and LEP representative on that Board. The other group was the wider Northwest group who had been working to develop the presence for COP26. Support was also being provided by Gill Wood (Combined Authority Deputy Portfolio Holder for Climate Emergency and Renewable Energy and Growth Platform Sector Champion supporting the LEP Clean Growth Sub-Board) and Rachael Bampton-Smith. A lot of work was ongoing in readiness for the COP26 with specific events in the Liverpool City Region. An electric bus tour was being planned, a small event at the Floral Pavilion in New Brighton focussing on small businesses and the community sector and a large event in St George's Hall on 12th of October, focussing on tidal and the wider energy sector in City Region. The City Region was also hosting a local Green Zone event on 'Energy Day on 4th November 2021, taking place in 'The Heath' in Runcorn

Paul further explained that in relation to the event in Glasgow, the Metro Mayor and other regional Leaders would be taking part in a panel discussion on youth involvement in the climate agenda in the 'Green Zone'. There would also be two further breakfast and dinner sessions in Glasgow, each of which would be Northwest events.

Paul added that a sponsorship package for private sector businesses was available if anyone knew of any businesses who wanted to get involved.

Paul concluded and stated that there was lots of activity and some great collaborative work and across the entire region, both private and public sector coming together.

Kirsty McLean, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations echoed Paul's comments on the fantastic joint work being done and a real collaborative effort. Kirsty indicated that there was speculation that the Government may save some of its CSR announcements around 'Net Zero' and climate change for the COP26 event in Glasgow. That was already being borne in mind and work was being undertaken to emphasise the CSR 'asks' as well the strengths in the City Region, as part of putting that case forward to government.

The Deputy Chair, Paul Corcoran added that Gill Wood was ensuring that all of the City Region Colleges and Universities were engaged and that our young people were actively involved in the creation of and present at the various different events. It was important to

make sure that we're raising awareness of the opportunities for great careers in this area. He indicated that he could liaise with Gill if anyone needed to get in contact with her.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE asked if the full event itinerary had been released yet? He asked that it be sent through once released so it could be circulated to see if there was any interest in attending.

483. BOARD MEMBERS' FEEDBACK (V)

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE, invited Board Members to provide an update on the current position within their sector.

Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram

Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram provided an update to the Board on his recent activities. In particular:-

- The Convention for the North was likely to be held on 14 October 2021 at St Georges Hall and some brief detail on the content of the event;
- The opportunity to showcase the assets of the whole of the North to Government at the event;
- The event would be on a smaller scale compared to the previously due to covid; and
- Prospective funding of between £480 and £790m million following a detailed evidence-based bid pulled together by Combined Authority Officers.

Professor Dame Janet Beer

Professor Dame Janet Beer provided an update to the Board in relation to the Higher Education Sector. In particular:-

- 2021-22 was a really strong admission cycle in relation to home students;
- Uncertainty around the numbers of international students due to issues with travel restrictions;
- Recovery from covid and ongoing financial pressures;
- The launch of the 'Pandemic Institute', the importance of this in relation to prevention work in the future and the creation of jobs and investment; and
- Ensuring a warm welcome to new Students.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE welcomed the news about admissions and the opening of the 'Pandemic Institute' and commended everyone on the great work. The Chair added that it was good to see Students again in the City Centre and how lively it was.

Paul Corcoran

The Deputy Chair, Paul Corcoran provided an update on the Creative and Digital Board. In particular:-

- Key areas discussed at the Sector Board meeting earlier that week;
- A piece of work being undertaken by 'Emap' on how the skills and the talent space had been evolving post-lockdown and how he would like Amanda Follit to attend a Board meeting to share the information with the Board;
- Interesting work in the 'cluster' spaces and the benefits of defining them for investors coming into the City Region;

- Thanks to Ben Heywood for the presentation to the Sector Board on investment support and the work of 'LCR Ventures';
- The end of the 'Kickstart' programme and the negative aspects of the programme;
- The great news about 'Fire Sprites' being acquired by Sony Games and the commitment to stay in the City Region which will generate jobs; and
- How we need to improve the promotion of investment opportunities for larger businesses.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE indicated that both he and the Metro Mayor wrote to Government about the 'Kickstart' programme and the response was very disappointing.

The Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram also expressed his disappointment and explained that the letter to Government was meant to be helpful and highlight flaws that practitioners had found within the process. The response didn't address any of the fundamental issues that they could have put right.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE felt that the point made about promotion of investment was very relevant and was something to take forward and devise a case study. There were great things happening which weren't always widely known or publicised. The Chair undertook to pick this issue up separately with the Deputy Chair in order to get some media coverage and take it as a case study to the global summit.

Lynn Collins

Lynn Collins provided an update from the Trade Union sector. Lynn mentioned the upcoming end of the job support scheme and withdrawal of the extra £20 per week Universal Credit. She referred to a meeting of the Poverty and Life Chances Standing Action Group she had attended on Tuesday evening which considered a report compiled by the Research Team on the combination of both of those things happening at the same time. In the Liverpool City Region there were still 32,000 people on furlough and it was unclear how many of that number would turn into redundancies. It would be a few months before that information was available as there was no statutory requirement for SME's to report redundancy information. Also the cut in Universal Credit of £1040 per year, together with the rise in fuel prices would have a devastating impact on the poorest in the Region. Lynn indicated that the presentation was really interesting and informative and would circulate to Board Members.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE expressed his concern about the end of the Universal Credit top-up and also the amount of vacancies in the City Region that can't be filled. His Company was struggling to fill vacancies paying real living wage. Numbers of vacancies in the North West, were particularly high. The Chair felt that there needed to be a hub to bring them all under one roof as there were lots of opportunities. He undertook to pick that up separately with Lynn Collins.

Laura Pye

Laura Pye provided the Board with an update on the visitor economy sector, in particular:-

- Extreme difficulties with staffing with large numbers of vacancies in the visitor economy sector;
- Issues with dynamic pricing models and agency costs preventing getting people into long-term sustainable jobs;
- Closure of hospitality following an outbreak amongst staff;
- Government policy placing employers in difficult positions;
- Concern of rising infection rates and the onset of Winter; and

- The prospect of a difficult few months ahead.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE indicated that all areas are struggling for employment, even Government agencies.

Professor Dame Janet Beer suggested that Laura talk to the Head of Careers at the University and undertook to pass on the contact details. She suggested that if there was capacity part-time work, there were a lot of students who would be interested and it could be an un-tapped source.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE suggested that Mark Basnett get involved in looking at the issue also.

Elaine Bowker

Elaine Bowker provided an update on the Further Education Sector, in particular:-

- A strong start to recruitment in terms of young people and adults;
- Over-recruitment could lead to issues with funding;
- Catch-up learning was a major issue and the City Region had been adversely impacted more than other areas of the North West;
- There was a crisis situation both Nationally and locally in 3 particular sectors – hospitality and catering, logistics and health and social care;
- The need for employers to professionalise hospitality and catering as a skills-based industry and better pathways were being developed;
- Demand in Logistics had massively increased and the College had purchased a new centre;
- Health and Social care and ensuring that more young people come into that sector and move into Higher Education;
- Massive growth in technology;
- Work being undertaken on Race Equality, nationally and locally and how to showcase the great work being done as a City Region, along with public and private sector partners; and
- Apprenticeships were booming, but numbers were expected to drop following the end of furlough.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE agreed that professionalism was a key process. He suggested that a further discussion should take place on the issue.

Laura Pye also agreed with professional career pathways and skills development, but the current staffing situation would make that difficult.

Elaine Bowker indicated that she could assist Laura by providing students to work in the sector now.

The Deputy Chair, Paul Corcoran referred to an example of great partnership working between the City of Liverpool College and the Everyman and Playhouse Theatres. There could be some learning to take on board from it.

Angela White OBE

Angela White OBE echoed the comments regarding vacancy issues

Angela White provided an update to the Board on the Third Sector, in particular:-

- Work was being undertaken on the VS6 and VCF Sector Manifesto and it would be on the agenda for the next Board Meeting;
- It was also being discussed with Combined Authority and the Metro Mayor's Team;
- A Third Sector appointment had been made to join the Employment and Skills Board;
- There was a Climate Change Conference on 2nd December 2021 with speakers including the Metro Mayor;
- A small pilot project called 'Business to Charity' mentorship was working well; and
- There was an upcoming 'Child Poverty' Conference in Sefton with Dame Julia Unwin DBE and it would be beneficial to have a contribution from the LEP in a workshop.

Tony Reeves

Tony Reeves provided an update in relation to Local Authority activity, in particular:-

- Massive employment issues but with opportunities to get things right;
- The need to increase Apprenticeships;
- The role of anchor institutions and how we can do more to create opportunities for local businesses;
- Opportunities in terms of community wealth building, employment agencies, more social enterprises;
- Partnership working on an employment initiative to reduce re-offending with the creation of a laundry service for use by Hotels and Hospitals;
- The missed opportunity to increase the Kickstart programme to address long-term gaps in employment;
- An increase in footfall by 6% in August 2021 compared to August 2019;
- The challenging situation in Liverpool City Council, but great progress was being made, particularly with fantastic support from Combined Authority colleagues; and
- The opening of the 'Pandemic Institute' and coverage by the media on an international level.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE felt it was clear that we needed to get the message out about what's available in the City Region in order to attract talent to fill vacancies. He asked if it was possible to get communication colleagues from the City Council, LEP and the Combined Authority to promote opportunities. He asked Mark Basnett to co-ordinate it.

Tony Reeves also reported that G7 Foreign Ministers were due to visit Liverpool in December, as well as 28 South Asian counterparts which presented a great opportunity for the City Region. He stated that he was working with Combined Authority colleagues and the Government in preparation for the visit.

Hate Crime incidents

Paul Corcoran, Deputy Chair, referred to the spate of hate crime in the City Centre over the Summer, predominantly against the LGBTQ community. As a result, a number of different businesses met to talk about what's happening on the ground and this raised a number of issues which needed to be addressed including, a lack of police presence, door staff skills and clear communication on behaviour. Deplorable behaviour was taking place and the commitment from some partners was disappointing. There was a need to set out a clear precedent of a zero-tolerance approach. He asked for support from Board Members and businesses to support the development of a clear action plan to eradicate this behaviour.

Tony Reeves said that there were detailed discussions taking place as it was a major concern. Clare McColgan was involved with Merseyside Police.

484. LEP REVIEW (P)

The LEP Board considered a paper which provided an update on the implications of the delay in the Government's completion of the LEP Review.

Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the LEP explained that the report proposed a way forward for the City Region to ensure that the strategic advisory and delivery insight functions, performed currently by the LEP main Board and sector Sub-Boards, were retained and strengthened as partnership boards for the benefit of the City Region businesses and residents, alongside the business support delivery role of Growth Platform, irrespective of the delayed outcome of the Government's LEP Review.

The report also set out what funding was likely to be available and how it could be used in conjunction with organisational changes and cost savings, to support the transition and development of the key functions, ensuring they remained relevant, independent, simple and sustainable for the benefit of the City Region in the years ahead.

Mark Basnett stressed the value and insight brought by the LEP and the business Boards and the City Region has benefited from this over the course of many years.

Mark also reported that the Annual Delivery Plan, which aligned to the work of the Combined Authority on LGF projects, as well as other funding projects was being finalised and delegated authority was sought for the plan to be signed off in consultation with the Chair in the next 48 hours for publication which was a Government requirement.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE reiterated the uniqueness of the Liverpool LEP and how it was an exemplar of how LEPs should operate. He expressed his disappointment at the situation.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the detail of the report be noted and the key principles and functions proposed by the LEP Review Working Group, be endorsed;
- (ii) that the LEP Chair be authorised to oversee appropriate use of the remaining GPF funds to support the proposed transition of the LEP functions, in line with the principles and functions referenced in (i) above, working with the LEP Review Working Group, the Combined Authority and LA partners, including cost savings and structural changes where appropriate; and
- (iii) that the Managing Director of the LEP, in consultation with the Chair be authorised to sign off the Annual Delivery Plan for submission to Government.

485. SECTOR UPDATE: DRAFT VISITOR ECONOMY RECOVERY STRATEGY (PR)

The Board considered a presentation from Laura Pye and Pete Sandman from Growth Platform on the draft Visitor Economy Recovery (VE) Strategy

The presentation highlighted:-

- The importance of the VE Sector for the Region as one of the most successful sectors in the City Region economy;
- Its contribution to the economy and the key dependencies in terms of leisure and business tourism;
- The huge impact of Covid-19 across this sector in particular;

- A relatively successful Summer for the sector, although there was a lack of international tourism;
- The impact of Covid-19 on the Investment Strategy;
- The development of a short-term Strategy in line with the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan in partnership with the Growth Platform and Amion Consulting;
- The overarching aims and objectives of the Strategy;
- The 4 focus areas for the Strategy;
- Progress against priorities for SIF and Accommodation BID;
- Successful funding bids, including Destination Marketing;
- The need to focus more on marketing of major business and sporting events for demand generation;
- Progress against priorities for business support and skills;
- Detailed data within the sector dashboard;
- An outline of the National DMO review, the submission from the City Region and recommendations;
- Key Milestones to work to; and
- The long-term approach that was required.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE indicated that the presentation would be shared with Board Members.

Lynn Collins suggested that a piece of work could be developed around the Fair Employment Charter, getting employers in the sector to publicly aspire to achieving the status and raising standards. She explained that there were a number of Trade Union campaigns running in the sector including a pilot in Greater Manchester on zero tolerance of harassment in the night-time economy. A conversation could be initiated with the Team on Fair Employment and the LEP to develop this further.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE agreed and referenced the link to Elaine Bowker's comments on professional standards earlier in the meeting. The Chair asked Mark Basnett to co-ordinate this with Lynn Collins and also invite Elaine Bowker to be involved.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE thanked Laura Pye and Pete Sandman for their very thorough presentation.

486. RACE EQUALITY REVIEW UPDATE (V)

Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the LEP informed the Board that the LEP Executive and Growth Platform had reviewed the findings of the Race Equality Review undertaken by Innervision.

Mark explained that a detailed set of actions had been developed falling into 3 categories. As a result, a delivery plan had been developed which would be considered by the Growth Platform Board the following week. Some of the actions in the Delivery Plan included the creation of a clear diversity statement, training for staff and a refresh of policies, some of which had already commenced. He added that it was clear that it was not a quick and simple fix in relation to this agenda, a comprehensive cultural change was required across the whole organisation. The action plan set out short, medium and longer-term actions some of which were already progressing. The ambition was to be an exemplar on Race Equality and share knowledge and learning with other organisations, particularly in the private sector.

Mark indicated that he would circulate more detailed information to Board Members following the meeting and further updates would be provided to future meetings.

Mark Basnett also referred to the Race Equality Business Support Working Group which was established as a result of the Combined Authority's Race Equality Programme Board created in 2020. The purpose of the Working Group was to look at the barriers and challenges for people from BAME communities and help those communities to realise their potential in terms of starting and developing a business. The Group was initially chaired by Lorna Rogers for the first six months and it was agreed over the Summer to evolve the Working Group and engage more private sector membership. Expressions of interest were received to join as Chair of the group as well as Group membership. A Special Purpose Appointments Committee was convened involving the Chair, Elaine Bowker and Lorna Rogers from the Combined Authority where the expressions of interest were reviewed and 4 candidates were interviewed. Mark asked Elaine Bowker to present the recommendations of the Committee to the Board.

Elaine Bowker explained that there were 4 strong candidates interviewed and the unanimous decision and recommendation of the Committee was that Michelle Charters be appointed as Chair of the Working Group for a 12-month period and that Ben Owusu be appointed as Deputy Chair. Both candidates had much to bring to the Group in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. It was also recommended that the 10 people who expressed an interest in joining the membership of the Group, along with the 2 unsuccessful candidates for the position of Chair, be invited to become members of the Group. Elaine asked the Board for endorsement of those recommendations.

Elaine Bowker also suggested that in order to highlight Race Equality more at LEP Board level, that Michelle Charters be asked to join the LEP Board as a co-opted Member for a 12-month period and this would demonstrate the commitment of the Board to driving forward the Race Equality agenda.

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE thanked Elaine Bowker and Lorna Rogers for their involvement in the process and he asked that the Board endorse the recommendations put forward by Elaine Bowker on behalf of the Special Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the recommendations of the Special Purposes Committee to appoint to the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair of Race Equality Business Support Working Group, be agreed;
- (ii) That the recommendations of the Special Purposes Committee to appoint the 12 candidates who submitted expressions of interest be appointed to the Membership of the Race Equality Business Support Working Group, be agreed; and
- (iii) That Michelle Charters be invited to join the LEP Board as a co-opted member for a 12-month period.

487. DRAFT LIVERPOOL CITY REGION EXPORT STRATEGY (PR)

The Board considered a presentation from Mark Basnett, Managing Director of the LEP, along with Ben Flanagan, the City Region's Head of International Trade on the development of an Export Strategy for the City Region.

The presentation highlighted:-

- The importance and benefits of export including GVA targets;
- A breakdown of exported products and services in the City Region, mostly in the East of the City Region;

- The top 60 exporting companies in the City Region;
- Key markets to target;
- Key issues to address; and
- 4 proposed actions as part of the Export Plan and the actions that could be taken both Nationally and locally.

The four proposed actions were detailed as follows:-

- Strategic Account Management of LCR's Top 60 Exporters to support their long-term presence and growth in LCR;
- Maximise use of existing services, better coordination, promotion and focus on key sectors & markets;
- Integrate export support with other business support services – a holistic approach with GP/CA/DIT/Chambers
 - Product Development & Innovation
 - Leadership, Management, People & Skills
 - Finance, Sales & Marketing; and
- Establish LCR Export Peer Networks to share knowledge, know-how, ambition and confidence.

Mark added that the Strategy was still subject to consultation and welcomed the views and input from the Board. Further updates would be brought to future Board Meetings.

RESOLVED – That the proposals for action be endorsed.

488. CHAIR'S UPDATE (V)

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE provided a brief update on his recent activities.

He referred to the LEP leading on the digital proposition for the North and thanked the Deputy Chair for his input. An update would be provided at a future meeting. The Chair advised that he would be attending the Global Summit in Windsor hosted by the Prime Minister and the Royal Family, in October 2021 representing the City Region. He highlighted that this was a massive opportunity for networking and an exclusive group of people had been invited. He undertook to keep the Board updated.

489. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair, Asif Hamid MBE indicated that the next meeting of the Board was due to be held on 25 November 2021.

He thanked everyone for their attendance and hoped that they stayed safe.

Minutes 481 to 489 received as a correct record the 25 day of November 2021

Chairperson of the Board

(The meeting closed at 10.31am)