

North East Local Enterprise Partnership Board

25 January 2024

(5.00 - 6.40 pm)

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lucy Winskell	Chair, North East LEP
Colin Hewitt	Ward Hadaway
Ammar Mirza	AmmarM (UK) Limited
Emily Cox	Lloyds Banking Group
Alan Johnson	Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK (NMUK)
Phil Redman	Mott MacDonald
Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
Cllr Nick Kemp	Newcastle City Council
Dame Norma Redfern	North Tyneside Council
Ellen Thinnessen	Education Partnership North East
Heidi Mottram	Northumbrian Water
Chris Day	Newcastle University
Phil Redman	Mott MacDonald

Apologies

Cllr Amanda Hopgood	Durham County Council
Cllr Tracey Dixon	South Tyneside Council
Cllr Graeme Miller	Sunderland City Council
Cllr Richard Wearmouth	Northumberland County Council
Mayor Jamie Driscoll	North of Tyne
Mark Thompson	Ryder Architecture
Sam Whitehouse	High Force Research & LightOx Ltd

Officers present

Helen Golightly	Chief Executive, North East LEP
Colin Bell	Business Growth Director, LEP
Michelle Rainbow	Skills Director, LEP
Jen Robson	Communications & Corporate Services Director, LEP
Henry Kippin	Chief Executive, NTCA and Interim Chief Executive of NEMCA
Janice Gillespie	NTCA – Chief Finance Officer
Katy Laing	NTCA - Strategic Finance Manager
Thomas Athey	Senior Analyst, North East LEP
Rosalyn Patterson	Democratic Services, Newcastle City Council

1 **WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Dixon, Cllr Hopgood, Cllr Miller, Cllr Wearmouth, Mayor Driscoll and Mark Thompson.

The Chair advised that Carol Botton had stepped down as the Voluntary and Community Sector representative and thanked Carol on behalf of the Board for her outstanding contribution.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

3 **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING ON THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 30 November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

4 **ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE**

Helen Golightly introduced the Annual Delivery Plan update report and asked the Board if it had any questions with regards to the report.

During the ensuing discussion and in response to questions, it was noted that:

- There were a number of pieces of stand out work which could be drawn more attention to as well as the inclusion of other things delivered by LEP members.
- The final end of year paper, due to the next meeting, would set out how the work would transition into the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority moving forward.

5 **BUDGET - INDICATIVE OUTTURN 2023/24 AND INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR NEMCA 2024/25**

This report was confidential as it contained commercial information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation and was not for wider circulation.

Janice Gillespie presented the report which provided the forecast outturn revenue budget position for the North East LEP for 2023/24, including the performance on the Enterprise Zone account, Local Growth Fund (LGF), Getting Building Fund (GBF) and the North East Investment Fund (NEIF).

RESOLVED - That the Board agreed to:

- i. **Note the net zero budget outturn position for 2023/24.**
- ii. **Note the indicative balance position for the extended year end to May 6, 2024.**

- iii. **Note the estimated end of year position of the Enterprise Zone and North East Investment Account.**
- iv. **Note the Initial Draft budget proposals for NEMCA for the period 7 May 2024 – 31 March 2025.**

6 LEP LEGACY ACTIVITIES

Jen Robson (Communications & Corporate Services Director, LEP) gave a presentation to the Board on LEP legacy activities and celebrating achievements. The presentation covered the work and research undertaken around the value added of the LEP to the regional economy, which areas of LEP delivery had been most effective and impactful and how those areas would transfer and be retained within the new combined authority.

Emerging recommendations from that work were identified which included;

- Maintaining the evidence hub and committing to data-led decision making within the new combined authority.
- Ensuring opportunities for co-created strategy development and programme delivery in the new governance structure and operating model.
- Ensuring partnerships continued to be nurtured.
- The LEP should be used to help shape the new organisation.

It was noted that the final report would be shared with key partners in due course and a celebration event would be held at the Vermont Hotel following conclusion of the final LEP Board in March.

During the ensuing discussion and in response to questions, it was noted that:

- In comparison to other regions that had already undergone transition into a regional combined authority, it was noted that the North East was incredibly joined up and working collaboratively.
- The importance of making sure the narrative led into the activity of NEMCA, ensuring there was alignment and coordination was highlighted as a priority.

7 ECONOMIC UPDATE

Thomas Atley presented a report which provided an economic round up. It was noted that the story was positive for the region in terms of progress on more and better jobs. The number of total jobs was approaching the pre-Covid total, with the latest data on employment in better job occupations showed an increase of 90,000 since 2014.

The total number of businesses has increased in the region by 2.4% since 2020, third highest percentage increase across the eight core city LEP areas. It was noted that the number of businesses dropped nationally therefore the region has closed some of the gap in the number of businesses per head with England. There were 10% more businesses with 10 or more employees in the region. Increases in postal and courier services had driven the overall increase in the number of businesses since 2020, increasing by 160%.

Although the data was not quite caught up, it was noted that the ‘better jobs’ were mainly within the public sector.

8 SKILLS - LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD

Michelle Rainbow (Skills Director, LEP) gave a presentation on the key work areas of the skills team since 2015, to feed into the development of the NEMCA skills portfolio.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that:

- The NE LEP led the Gatsby pilot around career guidance, which helped development of practice and improved the quality of provision for young people. Through the national Careers Strategy in 2017 this set statutory requirement on secondary schools and colleges.
- At that point the pilot looked to expand through North East Ambition and at the end of 2023, 177 schools and colleges across the North East are part of the Careers Hub.
- Additional support was being provided to 14 schools – careers linked to curriculum.
- Three secondary schools were receiving intensive support on transition.
- All five universities were receiving support via Technical Education.
- SEND specialist hubs were now in place at 32 SEND schools and nine in Alternative Education provision.
- The North East was recognised nationally and internationally for its work in careers and technical education.
- The priorities for the future were identified as;
 - Single unified careers system
 - Skills, training and work experience
 - Social justice
- An ongoing commitment to support educational organisations to progress against targets was noted. As well as supporting employers at the heart of education.

RESOLVED – That the Board agreed to:

- i. **Note the progress made over the last 10 years on skills activities in the seven local authority areas.**
- ii. **Note the recommended forward plan in terms of continued future activity within the current remit.**
- iii. **Explore opportunities to invest in innovative, inclusive future programmes within careers education and guidance, particularly for adults in work or a co-ordinated approach for those out of work or at risk of redundancy.**

9 CHALLENGE NORTH TYNE REVIEW

Colin Bell (Business Growth Director, LEP) presented a report to the Board on the Challenge North of Tyne programme which aims to solve problems that are shared by multiple stakeholders, to support the development of market leading solutions that address key challenges.

An independent evaluation identified that the programme had delivered a number of outcomes, including;

- 50 Stage 1 grants were issued - £5,000 unmatched
- Seven Stage 2 grants were awarded – 50% private sector matched, up to £20,000
- The return on investment was £8 for every £1 invested.

In terms of lessons learned it was noted that;

- Further consideration needed to be given to providing more clarity and focus on challenge definition in future programmes to enable more focused innovation
- Further capacity building required
- Support of ongoing commercialisation, ensuring long term pathways to support commercial reality.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the findings of the successful Challenge North of Tyne programme evaluation and the lessons learnt.

10 **DEVOLUTION UPDATE - BUSINESS BOARD**

Henry Kippin (Chief Executive, NTCA and Interim Chief Executive of NEMCA) gave a devolution update to the Board which outlined the process for transitioning to the NEMCA Business Board. Government guidance as to the role and purpose of the Business Board was noted, as well as the policy priorities that any future Board would need to align to.

During the ensuing discussion and in response to questions, it was noted that:

- Alignment of themes was important and a structure to take issues forward was required.
- Clarity on the challenges and in particular the language used, was important.
- It was important not to lose what was already in place, all partners and stakeholders needed to enhance what was currently there.
- The Board needed to stay strategic and focussed and add value. Clarity was therefore sought around how it was going to make a difference and how the voice of businesses would be heard.
- There needed to be clear Terms of Reference and the Board should shape and define two way relationships.
- Dates for future meetings would be welcomed in order to keep work moving.
- Inclusive growth needed to be at the centre.

RESOLVED – That the LEP Board delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to amend the paper in line with discussion and feed the paper through for political consideration.

11 **CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

Noted.

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

13 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 21 March 2024 from 4.30pm. The meeting will be the last North East LEP Board before integrating into the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority and will be held at the Vermont Hotel, Newcastle starting at 4.30pm followed by a celebration event to thank partners.

ACTIONS

Action		
End of year plan to set out next stage of work with NEMCA	JR/HG	To be included in End of Year report to 21 March 2024 Board
Draft TOR of NEMCA Business Board to be updated and put on NEMCA Forward Plan	HG/HK	Forward Plan for June Cabinet tbc