

North East Local Enterprise Partnership Board

18 March 2021

Meeting held via Zoom

Present

Lucy Winskell	Chair, North East LEP
Gillian Hall	Gillian Hall Consulting Limited
John McCabe	Fusion PR Creative
Ammar Mirza	AmmarM (UK) Limited
Andrew Moffat	
Mark Thompson	Ryder Architecture
Councillor Henig	Leader, Durham County Council
Councillor Gannon	Leader, Gateshead Council
Councillor Dixon	Leader, South Tyneside Council
Councillor Sanderson	Leader, Northumberland County Council
Councillor Miller	Leader, Sunderland Council
Mayor Driscoll	Mayor, NTCA
Ellen Thinnesen	Sunderland College
Chris Day	Newcastle University
Carol Botten	VONNE

Apologies

Councillor Nick Forbes	Leader, Newcastle City Council
Heidi Mottram	Northumbrian Water Group
Mayor Redfern	Mayor, North Tyneside Council
Kate Wickham	Gate7 Group
Erika Leadbitter	TS Marine Ltd

Officers

Helen Golightly	CEO, North East LEP
Richard Baker	LEP Director of Strategy and Policy
Paul Woods	Finance Officer, NTCA
Katy Laing	Finance officer, NTCA
Janice Gillespie	S73 Officer, NTCA
Gareth Beese	Consultant
Karen Christon	Democratic Services

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Lucy Winskell, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Gillian Hall declared an interest as a Port of Blyth Commissioner and as Chair of Mediaworks.

Mark Thompson declared an interest with the Getting Building Fund Programme as Ryder Architecture was engaged with a number of funded projects.

3 **MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28 January 2021 were approved as a correct record, subject to amendment of the minute of the discussion on the Foresight Delivery Project, which Gillian Hall agreed to provide following the meeting.

Following the meeting Gillian Hall proposed the following amendment (Para 8 refers):

“... concern was expressed about the lengthy timescale of the foresight activity project and the date on which its findings were expected, which raised questions...”

“The Chair agreed with the point of doing everything that could be done to speed up the foresight activity project”.

4 **MARCH 2021 BUDGET BRIEFING**

The Board received a briefing note on the 3 March 2021 budget which had been presented in the context of the government’s gradual roadmap to reopening the economy. The briefing note provided a summary of the economic context, and of the key measures which he positioned into three key aspects:

- Managing the economy through the end of the lockdown and tapering support as the economy recovered with a range of support measures for businesses and workers;
- Starting the process of addressing the financial position of the country, with forward guidance about rises in corporation tax and a freezing of personal allowances; and
- Stimulus measures, including announcements of a number of project and programmes and about future local and post EU funding programmes including the Levelling Up fund, and the pilot phase of the UKSPF.

Richard Baker advised that in addition to the economic and financial measures outlined in the budget, there were a number of organisational and distributional issues, and indications of a changing policy framework which would be of interest to members of the North East LEP Board.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the report and appendix.

The Chair proposed to vary the running order of the agenda and the Investment Update was taken as the next agenda item

5 INVESTMENT UPDATE

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.

The Board received a report providing a summary of funding decisions taken under delegation since the last meeting and a funding programme round up, including the latest Local Growth Fund (LGF) programme budget position; an update on the implementation of the 'Getting Building Fund' (GBF) programme; EZ programme income model and work on supporting the acceleration of a regional project pipeline.

There were no projects requiring board approval on this occasion.

RESOLVED - That board members:

- 1. Noted the advised amendments to the report;**
- 2. Approved the updated temporary funding swaps identified in Table 4 to maximise Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund 2020/21 budget expenditure.**
- 3. Noted the delay in the delivery of the Cross Tyne Ferry Landing Relocation project and that discussions would take place on options to inform recommendations to the Board in May;**
- 4. Agreed that reserve projects be explored to ensure the full use of the £47m Getting Building Fund Grant by March 2022 with the options reported in May 2021.**

6 STRATEGY, POLICY AND ANALYSIS TEAM UPDATE

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.

The Board received a report providing an update on current key activities being taken forward by the Strategy, Policy and Analysis Team and seeking comments from the members on the current future plans.

The Strategy, Policy and Analysis Team was responsible for three core activities within the LEP Executive Team:

- Co-ordination and support for development of regional North East economic strategy documents and processes on behalf of the LEP;
- Regional policy and strategy projects; and
- Building and promoting the availability and use of economic evidence, data and analysis.

Richard Baker provided an update on projects previously discussed and commissioned at the board including: the Tourism Action Zone, where activity had been repositioned as a potential regional tourism plan; and Net Zero, where the LEP would bring a regional dimension and coordination role to work already taking place.

The board was briefed on the LEPs research and analysis capacity to support LEP programmes and activity with partners, including the university, local authorities and government departments, to increase the knowledge base.

RESOLVED – That board members:

- **Noted the update on the current work programme; and**
- **Noted the appended latest Covid–19 intelligence report.**

7 TRADE AND EXPORT STRATEGY

The Board received a report and presentation providing a briefing about the North East Export Strategy development, reviewed emerging findings and identified next steps.

A presentation was provided to the board and Gareth Beese provided background and progress on development of the strategy and made observations about: the performance of the export market; exports by sectors and market; and key themes. A summary was provided on: priority markets; emerging sector propositions; and support required for differing exporters.

The Chair thanked Gareth Beese for the detailed presentation and advised the board that he could be contacted directly with additional information.

RESOLVED – That Board members:

- Noted the background set out in this paper and accompanying presentation;
- Agreed to further consideration of how to use the emerging strategy as the building block towards the overall internationalisation strategy;
- Discussed how best to remain connected to the emerging NPH Export Strategy development, determining where the NPH proposition could benefit the North East LEP, and where North East LEP was stronger alone, or should work with non-NPH partners; and
- Agreed to discuss with DIT about future resourcing and the plan to progress the approaches set out in the strategy

8 SEP UPDATE

The Board received an update on the delivery plan setting out the progress against the five Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) programmes and the performance against plan targets since the 2019 refresh.

The report highlighted matters in relation to: Business Growth; Innovation; Skills, Employment, Inclusion and Progression; Transport; Investment and Infrastructure; Strategy and Policy; and Communications. The full programme delivery update was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

A Board member reflected on the board meeting and commented on the need to galvanise political, business and community support to exploit the strengths and opportunities of the area and create a more inclusive region. The Chair welcomed

the comments raised and agreed to discuss opportunities for the board to have time for strategic thinking, with the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED - The Board noted the Programme Delivery Update.

9 **CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

The Board received a report updating Members on some of the discussions the Chair and Chief Executive had been involved in since the last Board meeting in December.

RESOLVED - The Board agreed to note the report.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

11 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted as 27 May 2021.