

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Tuesday, 12 March 2019 at 2.00 pm at Conference Room A/B, Cumbria House, Botchergate, Carlisle. CA1 1RD

PRESENT:

Mr WJ Wearing (Chairman)

Mr J Airey
Mr J Bell
Mr SB Collins
Ms C Driver

Mrs S Evans
Mr M Hawkins
Mr C Hogg
Mrs V Tarbitt

District Council Representatives:-

Mr R Gill	-	Copeland Borough Council
Mr M McLeavy	-	Barrow Borough Council
Mr P Nedved	-	Carlisle City Council
Mrs J Raine	-	Eden District Council
Mr G Vincent	-	South Lakeland District Council

Also in Attendance:-

Ms H Blake	-	Senior Manager - Policy and Scrutiny
Mrs L Harker	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Ms J Lappin	-	Chief Executive, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership
Ms C Notman	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair informed members that this was a special meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board, which had been convened to enable members to scrutinise Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) draft Local Industrial Strategy for the County.

He explained that LEPs had to make arrangements with their Accountable Body for scrutiny of its activities. It was explained that the Council was the Accountable Body for Cumbria LEP and work was ongoing to develop longer term arrangements for LEP Scrutiny, which would be considered in due course by members.

Members were informed that in the meantime the Scrutiny Management Board was providing scrutiny of the LEP and that was the purpose of this special meeting.

It was explained that as the LEP involved councils across Cumbria, a representative from each district council had been invited to join the Board at this meeting. The Chair welcomed his district colleagues and advised that although they were not voting members of the Board he encouraged them to scrutinise the draft Strategy alongside County Council members. It was explained that the Committee would reach its conclusions by consensus and would take account of all contributions in finalising its response to the LEP.

147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr K Hamilton, Mr J Lister, Mr J Mallinson, Mr B Shirley and Mr M Wilson.

148 MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Board was noted.

149 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

With reference to agenda item 5 – Cumbria LEP – Governance, Strategy and Delivery Progress Report (minute 151 refers) Mr C Hogg declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a member of the LEP Culture Group.

150 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting for any items of business on this occasion.

151 CUMBRIA LEP - GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report by the Chief Executive of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP), a company limited by guarantee, which gave an update on their governance, delivery and strategy arrangements.

Members received a brief overview and noted that the Board had refreshed its membership which now included better gender representation with one-third of it being female. It was noted that the Local Assurance Framework had been revised and a new version was being developed. A discussion took place regarding the Annual Performance Review and members noted that issues from 2018/19 had been addressed and had moved from inadequate to good.

The Board welcomed that CLEP were committed to the highest standards of transparency and accountability. It was explained that the wider stakeholders and public were discharged through the Annual General Meeting (AGM); participation in the wider governance structure of the LEP and engaging in wider stakeholder events, such as the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Consultation Events. Members welcomed the inclusion of the public to the AGM and emphasised the need to inform communities of such events and the importance of making the LEP understandable to them.

Members were informed that regular networking took place around the country with regular meetings between LEPs and chief executives of local authorities. It was explained that Cumbria was investigating taking on lead roles nationally.

The Board discussed CLEP's Scrutiny arrangements and members noted that work on implementing the new Combined Economic and Productivity Scrutiny Committee was now underway, with local authorities collectively agreeing that Cumbria County Council should lead on the co-ordination of the Committee. It was explained that whilst the new Committee was being formed the Accountable Body had advised that the Scrutiny Management Board would fulfil this function in the interim, given the need for CLEP's activities to be scrutinised.

A discussion took place regarding the need for dedicated support for the Committee and questioned where the funding to enable this, and task and finish group activity, would come from. The LEP Chief Executive anticipated this would take the form of quarterly meetings and confirmed that they were committed to fund the scrutiny function but was awaiting costings from the County Council.

During the course of discussion it was suggested that private sector co-optees be considered as members of a future scrutiny committee.

The Board noted the role of the LEP was to develop an evidence-based Local Industrial Strategy that identified local strengths and challenge, future opportunities and the action needed to boost productivity, earning power and competitiveness across the area.

The Board were informed that Government had produced guidance with regards to the Strategy which had been taken into account together with consultation with other authorities.

Members noted that with regards to the allocation of funds the LEP identified and developed investment opportunities; prioritising the award of local growth funding; and monitoring and evaluating the impact of activities to improve productivity across the local economy. It was explained that they used their convening power to bring together partners from private, public and third sectors whilst collaborating with a wide range of local partners to act as an informed and independent voice for their local area.

The Board noted their responsibilities which included developing an evidence-based Local Industrial Strategy which set out a long-term economic vision based on local consultation. It was explained that an annual delivery plan and end of year report,

including key performance indicators to assess the impact of their Local Industrial Strategy, funding and interventions, to inform objective assessment on LEP performance.

A discussion took place regarding the Growth Deal Programme and it was emphasised that a big priority was to ensure the LEP could deliver a full amount of growth deal and have contingency plans. Members were informed that the LEP were cautiously optimistic that they could deliver Cumbria's Growth Deal.

Members noted that part of the development work included the implementation of contingency plans should any of the in-development projects not proceed to contract. It was highlighted that the biggest issue was influencing future funding such as the Shared Prosperity Fund and Strong Towns Fund.

The Board discussed the Government White Paper 'Industrial Strategy; Building a Britain fit for the Future' which outlined plans to boost productivity and the earning power of people throughout the UK. It was noted that this was framed around five foundations of productivity and four grand challenges. During the course of discussion members were informed of the disparities which existed between the east and west of the county.

Members noted that one of the major challenges in the county was the declining working age population and it was acknowledged there was a need to look at attracting more people to work in Cumbria whilst retaining older workers and addressing worklessness.

The Board drew attention to isolation and deprivation drawing attention to the Barrow area. It was explained that whilst Barrow was the second largest town in Cumbria isolation and deprivation was a big problem and contributed to the number of people leaving the area to seek employment elsewhere. It was explained that infrastructure and public transport were also major factors which contributed towards isolation in the area and it was felt this needed to be addressed to alleviate some of the problems incurred.

During the course of discussion the Board felt that good infrastructure throughout the county was essential. It was confirmed that the LEP were fully aligned with the Strategic Transport Plan and could provide gap funding where required.

The Board noted that Cumbria had the smallest pool of people with graduate level qualifications in England of any LEP area. It was explained there were challenges in size of geography. It was explained there were areas with high rates of unemployment, deprivation, low skills, poor health and worklessness with particular issues in parts of the West Coast, Barrow and parts of Carlisle. Members highlighted the number of small economies within Cumbria and felt there was a need to understand them and investigate how they could work together to ensure they were united and delivered the best for Cumbria's citizens.

It was highlighted that deprivation existed in areas with successful, and often growing employers. The Board drew attention to the number of people in temporary employment and the need to ensure those people obtained the skills to secure a

permanent post. A discussion took place regarding those who were unemployed due to redundancy and members highlighted their valuable skills and assets which should be taken into consideration for future employment. Officers acknowledged this and confirmed that a key role of the LEP was to respond to economic shocks.

Members drew attention to the lack of information regarding young people in the county and the role the University of Cumbria could play in upskilling them. The Board was informed that a careers hub had been launched in January together with engagement taking place with schools and further education establishments. It was emphasised that there was no shortage of aspiration for young people but the challenge was to make this visible.

The Board felt that cultural activity was required to encourage young people to stay in the county. It was explained that a shadow board of young people would be established to investigate this further.

Members felt there was a requirement for engagement to be undertaken to bring long-term young unemployed back into productivity. This was acknowledged by officers and informed the Board that deep localised programmes would be developed to investigate this further.

Members were informed that the geography of the county was challenging, highlighting the importance of excellent digital and mobile connectivity. The Board raised the importance of connectivity and expressed their concerns emphasising that this was still very localised in Cumbria. It was acknowledged that there were challenges regarding this but explained that support was being sought from a number of sources.

During the course of discussion attention was drawn to those areas of the county which had fast broadband facilities and attracted people from other parts of the country. It was explained that a large majority of those people lived in the county but were home workers and employed by organisations outside the area and not part of the local economy.

The Board noted the importance of a good infrastructure to attract and retain people and businesses together with new housing for growth and affordability. It was explained that housing was heavily back-loaded and needed to be accelerated. Members highlighted the growing number of second/holiday homes in the county and asked that this be borne in mind for future data and when considering additional housing as they did not contribute to the local economy.

During the course of discussion it was felt there had been minimal reference made to the Eden area and very little engagement and communication had taken place. The Board was informed there had been correspondence sent to the Leader of Eden District Council and the Chair of Eden Local Committee had been updated. The Chief Executive of the LEP welcomed suggestions for any future communication mechanisms and issues which it was felt should be included in the Local Industry Strategy.

In conclusion the Board welcomed the headline targets which included improving productivity levels in Cumbria (geographically and sectorally), delivering inclusive growth by reducing economic disparities and levels of workless families and maintaining the workforce and attracting more people of working age to live in the county.

Officers acknowledged the comments made by members and informed the Board that work was being undertaken to ensure that all areas of the county were represented in the final document.

The Chair, on behalf of members, thanked Jo Lappin for a detailed presentation and asked that the Board be kept updated as necessary.

152 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the next ordinary meeting of the Board, which did not include District Council representatives, will be held on Friday 28 June 2019 at 10.00 am at County Offices, Kendal;
- (2) longer term arrangements for LEP Scrutiny would be considered in due course.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm