



# Greater Lincolnshire LEP Board

Minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Via MS Teams

**Present: Board Directors:**

Pat Doody - Chair (Non-Executive Director), Cllr Philip Jackson - Vice Chair (NELC), Cllr Colin Davie (LCC), Cllr Craig Leyland (ELDC), Cllr Oliver Hemsley (RCC), Cllr Rob Waltham (NLC), Alison Ballard (BAE Systems), Andrew Hunter (UoL), Dean Fathers (Health), Gary Headland (Lincoln College, IoD and Lincs Chamber), Jo Hardy (Hardy's Farm), Julian Free (UoL), Nick Worboys (Longhurst), Simon Bird (ABP), Suraya Marshall (RAF Cranwell), Zoe King (Epix Media), Stephen Fidler (DfT), Andrew Crookham (Accountable Body & S151 Officer),

**Apologies from Directors:**

Darren Cunningham (Phillips 66), Mandy Watson (Ambitions Personnel), Debbie Barnes (CX LCC), Sarah Louise Fairburn - Vice Chair (Imp & Maker)

**Apologies from Observers:**

Clive Tritton (NELC), Simon Green (NLC), Pete Holmes (BEIS), Jo Dexter (BEIS)

**LEP Officers:** Ruth Carver, Halina Davies, Sue Groves (Note Taker)

**For Agenda items:** Natalie Poole (LEP), Nathan Wallwork (Metro Dynamics)

**Apologies and Declarations of Interest -** Apologies were noted as above.

Full declarations of interest for each individual Board Director can be found at:

<https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/about/boards/> The LEP Board were reminded that declarations of interest are required as part of LEP governance and must be updated at least annually, and if anything changes to the LEP office at the earliest convenience.

The LEP Chair welcomed Jo Hardy, Hardy's Farm to her first Board meeting. All present Board members introduced themselves.

**Minutes & Matters Arising (Paper 1) - Pat Doody/Ruth Carver**

The minutes from the Board meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were accepted as a true record and can be published.

**Matters Arising:**

- Labour shortages - Ruth Carver gave an update on activity from intelligence gathering - Meetings with BEIS and highlighting case studies. Regular feedback via weekly intelligence reports from the LEP Intelligence function to BEIS. Some changes to regulation and training and hours has been made at a national level for HGV drivers by extending their permitted driving hours and acceleration on training of drivers. A small working group has been gathering intelligence on the challenges of recruitment in the Visitor Economy sector, Heath & Care sector and the Food sector, and will develop an overarching report. A task and finish group will be formed to put together what is wanted and can be done locally.
- Julian Free is progressing an invitation to the Deputy Commander of the Defence Sector to a meeting.
- A meeting has been held with the Humber LEP and NELC about creating an umbrella organisation which would be a business voice for both sides of the Humber and would be a single voice when approaching Government on energy and decarbonisation. It will be a combination of private and public sector, but led by the business sector and will also align with the ongoing work on Decarbonisation and Freeports with the Humber Leadership Board.

Action Log (Paper 1.1) and Decision Log (Paper 1.2) were approved by the board with no further comments.

**Chair and CX Report (Paper 2) - Ruth Carver CX presented this item.**

- The CX report shows the actions taken in relation to the Delivery Plan which the Board approved.
- There is also a summary on recent Government announcements on Levelling Up, High Street Strategy, Transport Decarbonisation Plan launched by DfT, other Skills announcements and the

Innovation Strategy that has also been launched.

#### LEP Review and funding

- Letter received in late July from government regarding the future funding of LEPs which has caused concern and was circulated to Board Directors. Government is intending to give LEPs partial funding for this financial year (£250k) for which each LEP has to apply for. Usually, Government usually provides core funding of £500k on 1<sup>st</sup> April which is match funded locally so for instance the LEP budget this year is £1.6m. The letter states that funding will be provided for 6 months, up to the end of September, and states that they will use the next stage to gather financial data on LEPs performance and then decide as to whether and how they will fund the remaining 6 months.
- The delayed LEP Review has challenged what model the LEPs will move to in the future, where possibly LEPs only advise local authorities on where funding should be invested or co-joined in making investment decisions. Board Directors were concerned that is only for 6 months and although the Board can cope with the uncertainty and planning will continue, however, the staff in the team are concerned as to what happens after September.
- Recommendation from the LA's that a joint letter be sent from the Upper Tier authorities regarding the Review, particularly for Levelling Up purposes, supported by Rutland CC.
- A board level working group on GL LEP futures - Membership Pat, Sarah Louise, Colin, Andrew Crookham and one other public sector member - To meet bi monthly with the first meeting at the end of September.

#### Other Items from CX Report

- Production of an economic dashboard - it was delayed due to a software supporting issue and will be discussed at the September Board meeting, draft has been produced.
- Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan is now due at the end of August, was delayed due to other work, ie, SAP and recovery work. ESAP will be discussed at their August meeting and at the Board in September.
- Recruitment: interviews have been scheduled for the 3 vacancies.
- JF gave an update on Defence cluster- working with Defence and Security accelerator for a DASA briefing date.
- County Deals which will bring extra funding for business investment and infrastructure:
  - PJ said letters have been received from the Secretary of State by NEL and NELC regarding the options and have responded that they would like discussions on how they can progress this within Greater Lincolnshire. PD asked if there is any role for support from private businesses and PJ said it would be beneficial for Devolution and must ensure a strong business voice
  - CD - the economic geography of Greater Lincolnshire is now firmly established and the LEP has a good track record of delivery against programmes and funding allocated by Government. It is necessary that the business voice is heard and is supportive of any Devolution proposals going forward.

#### Actions:

- Letter on LEP Review from Upper tier leaders
- Task and Finish Group to be created to look at spend over the next few months, will be 2 public sector (Andrew Crookham suggested as lead of the Accountable Body) and 2 private sector members.
- Discuss with MPs the LEP Review.

#### Cllr Craig Leyland left the meeting

#### Approval of Financial Statement and Annual Report 2020/2021 (Paper 3) - Ruth Carver

- The Finance & Audit Committee were thanked for their work who meets quarterly.
- Seeking approval of the delegation to the F and A Committee Chair and LEP Board Chair to review and sign off the final version of the financial report following agreed adjustments in preparation for incorporating into the Annual Report for AGM sign off and also seeking approval to apply the

Interest Policy which would allocate the interest that is generated during the year back into the pot, approximately £110k.

- The Annual Financial Statement sets out the income and expenditure and also the balance sheet. There is a Business Lincolnshire Grant Fund and one of the applicants from which the LEP is reclaiming funding as they did not deliver the outcomes as per the condition of the grant.
- The Board was asked to note that the Invest and Grow programme and currently there is an amount of £1.9m which needs to be used as a loan to be recycled, but within that, there is also £1.2m which can be spent on capital programmes, the Board and Investment Committee asked for an options paper at the next meeting.
- Getting Building Fund balance shows that a number of projects have not spent their funding as yet, but is just a case of timing of when the report was written and will be updated for the next report. HD confirmed that a number of claims are currently being processed.
- Regarding the Audit, Duncan and Toplis carried out a full review of the annual financial report, all of the company's processes and worked with LCC as the Accountable Body. They carried out a systems walk through of transactions on a particular project at random at the findings are in the report. Full report can be made available if requested.

#### Comments:

- ❖ A discrepancy of £40k was noted, which is owed to the LEP and asked how this was to be resolved. RC responded that it is being investigated by the Accountable Body, but at less than 1% of the overall cash balance is not considered material which will mean that once resolved, the accounts can be signed off within the next month.
- ❖ It was suggested that the £1.2m capital be reallocated to the live projects due to the inflation of construction costs, if needed. This would be addressed in the options paper.

#### Update on Humber Freeport - Simon Bird

- The Humber Freeport is one of 7 chosen by the Government and the process is ongoing.
- A Steer Co meeting is held twice a month where public and private sector are involved.
- Tax Zones in the Able Marine Energy Park are in the process of being finalised and an Outline Business Case is due to be submitted imminently to MHCLG and should have a response by the end of August once it has been scrutinised.
- One of the concerns of Treasury is that it wants approved tax sites as one, but as the site is 200 hectares with a number of landowners, this is proving difficult.
- On the 12<sup>th</sup> August, the Treasury is inviting those who are submitting Outline Business Cases, ie, Humber, Teesside, Southampton and Thames who are agreed about tax sites with multiple owners and are lobbying Government to think differently.
- Customs Zones - all ports have bonded facilities, bonded warehouses which means that duty is not paid until the cargo leaves the bonded facility and the Treasury is diluting the Customs Zones and believes political intervention is needed and lobbying is ongoing.
- Looking at November for the establishment of the Humber Freeport.

#### Approval of Scheme of Delegation and Risk Register (Paper 4) - Ruth Carver

- The Finance and Audit Committee review the risk register annually and recommended to the board the version in the board pack. The board agreed the version subject to the following amendments

#### Actions:

- Review likely hoods of poor performance
- Addition to the risk register: Future of LEPs and funding models/scenarios
- Amendments to risk register: Include cyber security as opposed to data protection and wording needs to be more specific with mitigating action; loss of confidence in LEP delivery should be changed from likely to possible; future of LEP.

Decision: Board approved Risk Register with the amendments.

### **Levelling Up (Paper 5) - Ruth Carver & Nathan Wallwork**

- ❖ Board were asked to discuss what Levelling Up means in Greater Lincolnshire and whether they support the approach that the research will be looking at and the 3 lens approach. The commission will build on existing research from the Local Industrial Strategy and develop a lens on levelling up for Greater Lincolnshire. The intention of the work is to engage the Board and partners in workshops to get the one common voice for the economy. It was intended to inform debate, shape debate and feed into Devolution, Government White Papers and raise the knowledge levels. Ultimately, the document will be the view of Greater Lincolnshire.
- The Government has now given direction on Levelling Up, but means different things to different organisations, so the first piece of work would be to define the current focus on Levelling Up. It is also to commission and define the scale of Greater Lincolnshire's Levelling Up challenges.
- There is a need to define what Levelling Up means, working with partners to look at People, Place and Economy with a view to having a report for the September Board. Expenditure has already been agreed as part of the Delivery Plan.
- This is an important piece of work as it is preparing Greater Lincolnshire to be seen levelling up and the Government knows that this work is being carried out and will help GLLEP to set out a landscape where it is understood what actions need to be asked of Government ahead of the spending review.

#### **Comments:**

- ❖ From a health perspective, it is known there are inequalities that should be addressed. How can equality and diversity be assured.
- ❖ Agreed with the 3 lens approach of People, Place and Economy.
- ❖ With this commission, it is to understand the current context ahead of the White Paper, to focus on the economic lens where it impacts on Place and People; there is a need to get the scope right.
- ❖ Need to be able to help small and micro-businesses as they make up a large portion of businesses. Also, the pandemic has had an effect on SMEs digitally and has created a wider divide.
- ❖ Query as to whether another commission is necessary as some of this research has already been carried out for other reports, including the Local Industrial Strategy and would it be better to spend the funding on something else.
- ❖ Should include social mobility and digital poverty and is there something more practical that can be done.
- ❖ What are the barriers for businesses, ie, access to finance (banks and private investors). Should be a broader study with Upper Tier authorities which could be evidence for Levelling Up and also a basis to Devolution.
- ❖ Coastal businesses know what the issues are and the issues that are county-wide are infrastructure, sustainability, which are often barriers to progression.
- ❖ Upper Tier authorities have already carried out work on Levelling Up and have been involved in submitting bids.

#### **Actions:**

- The LEP Cx was asked to confirm options for the levelling up work, and any further were to be sent to the Chair or CX

### **Stephen Fidler, Andrew Crookham, Simon Bird and Nathan Wallwork left the meeting** **Natalie Poole joined the meeting**

### **EAN and Careers Hub (Paper 6) - Ruth Carver and Natalie Poole**

- The paper sets out what the performance of the existing Enterprise Advisor Network (EAN) and some of the outcomes. It also shows what an enhanced level of an EAN would look like and the proposed expansion of the EAN will take place in September with the new of the geography, which now includes North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.
- Around the country, within the Government's Skills White Paper, have set out a new model which is called a Careers Hub, which is a model that is currently operating and means that they work more closely with schools, colleges and other organisations.

➤ Request for approval of:

- Extend the current EAN for an additional academic year, which has been match funding has been raised from LCC, NLC and NELC for the first academic year, but there is a challenge for Years 2 and 3, with new appointment for one year only.
- Consider the impact of the EAN
- The LEP Board operate a Career Hub for the next academic year
- Seek a solution for longer term match funding locally for Years 2 and 3 for the Career Hub.

Comments:

- ❖ With the ongoing LEP Review and some of the issues around recruitment and retention, whether this might be commissioned and consider an alternative delivery model, the principle being correct. RC responded that match funding from Government is only allocated to LEPs, so an outsourced delivery model could not be considered at this stage.
- ❖ Could it be transferred to another organisation and RC is in discussions with LCC.
- ❖ Short term contracts are a barrier to recruitment and it was suggested that these roles be considered as Level 4 apprentices.
- ❖ One of the current Enterprise Coordinators is currently undertaking her Level 6 Apprenticeship in careers guidance through LCC and BGU, thus ensuring the coordinator stays professional and competent in the role, but also future proofing their career.
- ❖ Since 2018, there have been 3 Enterprise coordinators and they have all stayed in their roles, two have just celebrated their 2 year work anniversary

Action: The proposal to extend the existing EAN, and the Career hub for one academic year was agreed by the Board. There were no financial implications.

**The meeting closed at 12.00noon.**