



Cheshire & Warrington ESIF Sub-Committee

Thursday 13 June 2017

Warrington Town Hall 13:05-14:47

MINUTES

Present:

Members/Alternates

Cllr Terry O'Neill	TON	Chair
Francis Lee	FL	Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Joanne Hunt	JHu	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (Managing Authority (MA))
Jane Baker	JB	Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Andy Seddon	AS	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Joel Tagg	JT	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
John Hacking	JHa	Network for Europe (NfE)
Rosie Short	RS	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Neil Clatworthy	NC	Northwest Universities European Unit Ltd (NWUEU)
Dan Griffiths	DG	Cheshire East Skills and Growth Company (CESGC)
Andy Farrell	AF	Warrington Borough Council
Craig Bradley	CB	Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

Officers

Ola Dykes	OD	DCLG (MA)
Chris Wilcox	CW	DCLG (MA)

Observers

Sue Barnard	SB	British Business Bank (BBB)
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1. Welcome and Introduction

TON opened the meeting at **13.05**.

The following apologies have been noted:

Charlie Woodcock
Jane Pearson
Julian Cobley
Helen Hart
Chloe Taylor
Mike Baker

The following changes were also noted:

Helen Hart (DWP) has taken over the LEP lead role from Maureen Stafford and Mike Baker (RPA) has taken over the role from Karen Spriggs

Minutes from the previous meeting 16 March 2017 were agreed by the sub-committee.

2. Declarations of Interest

Dan Griffiths declared an interest in the Skills and Growth Company's 'Jodrell Bank Innovation Centre' application.

3. NPIF Update

SB presented the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF) update, outlining the numbers of enquiries and deals completed to date within the Cheshire and Warrington LEP area as well as across the Northern Powerhouse Region. As of the end of April deals totalling £1.68m have been made under NPIF, with a number of further deals to be completed by the end of June.

The Fund Managers and BBB have been actively promoting the fund and presented at a number of events across Cheshire & Warrington including the C&W LEP Strategy & Growth Group, Growth Hub Events, Growth Hub Advisor Meetings, Business Breakfasts for Cheshire West & Chester Council and attended a wide range of events.

Sub-committee members discussed available data and asked if an apportioned figure could be provided for C&W area in the future. SB confirmed that there are no set targets by LEP area, however the NPIF team collects relevant data and has started submitting a breakdown of the outputs to DCLG. This is also presented at the Regional Advisory Board (RAB), where Andy Farrell (Warrington Borough Council) is the Cheshire & Warrington representative.

4. DCLG Update

4.1 ERDF update

JHu presented the ERDF update. It was noted that there has been no significant change following the previous update with no additional projects contracted.

An additional report highlighting project progress in relation to spend, outputs and issues was presented to the ESIF sub-committee. Members gave feedback and it was agreed that this would be provided for future meetings.

JHu noted that majority of projects were performing as expected, highlighting no major concerns. Under-performing projects were discussed and advised that DCLG contract managers are in close contact with the projects to address the issues and bring forward change controls as appropriate.

4.2 Cheshire and Warrington Innovation Platform (CWIP) Outline Application

JHu summarised the assessment, proposed activities, expenditure and value for money (VfM) aspects. Issue around duplication of activities in the LEP area was raised and there was a concern that more funds could be spent for the same type activity.

Members noted there was insufficient information within the application to establish how the project activities differentiate and how they fit with other existing provision in the area.

Sub-committee agreed that they could not confirm strategic fit as the application stands.

4.3 Jodrell Bank Innovation Centre (JBi) Outline Application

DG left the room in line with the conflict of interest guidelines.

JHu advised that this project had failed gateway criteria therefore it was not being presented for strategic fit advice but for information purposes only.

The sub-committee commented that the project would be strategically important with potential to deliver outputs that are required under PA1.

DG was invited back into the room.

5. LEP Update

5.1 ESIF Activity Update

JB presented the ESIF activity update.

Members discussed proposed output and spend allocation changes from PA2 to PA3. This is subject to a wider agreement of operational programme allocations between the MA and the EC. If agreed, this would provide an additional £2.02m notional allocation to PA3.

Other impacts of the allocation changes were discussed, to include opportunities to assist SMEs with business IT support under PA3.

PA4 currently has a rolling call, however more promotion is required. The LEP was expecting a household project to be submitted, which would achieve CO30s target.

5.2 Financial Instruments

FL provided a summary update of the financial instruments and the use of Evergreen funding in Cheshire & Warrington.

The sub-committee discussed the use of Evergreen funding and potential projects.

The allocation under Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF) is as follows:
Total Budget = £13m (£5m from P1, £5m from P3 and £3m from P4).

There is ongoing work following the completion of the Ex-Ante Assessment to identify suitable projects and determine further allocation for an additional Evergreen Fund for Cheshire & Warrington LEP area.

NPIF launch event took place on 15th March 2017. There is a need to assist the British Business Bank and the Fund Managers with further events and promotions.

6. DWP Update

RS presented the DWP update and explained the DWP's structural changes, which included two teams of contract managers.

RS noted that all the committed spend so far is with the opt-in organisations. The ESF value for IP1.1 is currently £2m.

FL noted that there were no open ESF calls in Cheshire & Warrington although there were ongoing discussions regarding PA1 and PA2 calls, with a possible change from opt-in to direct calls.

There is still £29m to be committed and it was suggested that an update on what employers would like to be delivered should be provided before the July meeting.

7. Rural Payments Agency Update

CB presented the RPA update with regards to a response to the three national calls for business development, food processing and tourism infrastructure.

It was highlighted that there is a need to increase promotional activities to raise more interest in the programme

The ESIF sub-committee members agreed that they are content to delegate strategic fit for the Cheshire Lakes Project to the Rural Strategy Board. It was suggested that talks with the Rural Strategy Board may be beneficial.

AOB

Date of next meeting:

25 July 2017

Close 14.47 pm

Minutes agreed by C&W ESIF sub-committee.

Signed 

**Cllr Terry O'Neill
Warrington BC
(Chair)**

Date 25.07.17