

NORTH WEST REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Friday 13th April 2018**

Persons present (Voting Members)

Cheshire and Warrington

Councillor Terry O'Neill (Chairman) (Warrington)
Councillor Rachel Bailey (Cheshire East)

Cumbria

Councillor Alan Smith (Allerdale)

Lancashire

Councillor Albert Atkinson (Lancashire)
Councillor Mohammed Khan (Blackburn)

Liverpool City Region

Councillor Barrie Grunewald (St Helens)
Councillor Andy Moorhead (Knowsley)

ESE's

Miranda Barker (East Lancashire Chamber / RMF), Lynn Collins (TUC), Warren Escadale (VSNW), and Yana Williams (AOC NW)

Also in attendance (non-voting)

Gillian Bishop (NW Employers), Steve Fothergill (Sheffield Hallam University), Katrina Hann (GMCA), Simon Nokes (GMCA), Mike Palin (St Helens MBC), Peter Molyneux (Transport for the North), Emma Prideaux (Lancashire CC), Peter Hughes (St Helens MBC), Joanne Griffiths MBE (St Helens MBC)

12 APOLOGIES

The Board were informed of apologies received from Councillor Anstee (Trafford), Mayor Andy Burnham (Greater Manchester City Region), Richard Caulfield (AOCNW), Emma Degg (NWBLT), Councillor Samantha Dixon (Cheshire West and Chester), Councillor Driver (Lancashire), Baroness Hughes (GMCA), Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram (Liverpool City Region), Professor Mark E. Smith (Lancaster University) and Mayor Mike Starkie (Copeland).

13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the North West Regional Leaders Board held on 6 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

14 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

15 DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD - UPDATE

Mike Palin, Secretariat to the Board, presented a report which updated Members on the progress made by Officers on the actions/tasks that arose following the Away Day held on 9 February 2018.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD

The purpose of the Away Day was to have an open discussion on how the Board could move forward; around what policy areas and objectives it should focus on; and how best the focus of the Board can be channelled to deal with the challenges, threats and opportunities facing the North West, specifically where there is clear added value in regional level consideration and collaborative action that can secure or enhance regional assets and interests.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, was invited by the Chair to speak to the Board. The Mayor outlined his priorities for his term of office, and how he believed the opportunity was now for the North West sub-regions to be devolved significant powers from central government.

Those in attendance were asked to discuss in groups what they believed should be the priorities for the Board to take forward. It was unanimously agreed by all that the following areas should be considered the Board's priorities:

- Transport & Infrastructure;
- Employment and Skills;
- Brexit and future Export opportunities and challenges;
- Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing; and
- Housing

The Officer Steering Group was convened on 15 March 2018. At this meeting, it was proposed that when setting priorities for the Board, Leaders and Officers should pay attention to those priorities being set by central government, Combined Authorities and LEPs. Given the current funding allocating for the Regional Research Collaboration (£68,000), it was noted that the Board and its Officers had to ensure that there was sufficient capacity to deliver on the work surrounding the key priorities, and not to be spread too thinly.

As well as focussing on the broader priorities set out in the report, it was proposed the Board should act as a facilitating body in the sharing of knowledge and best practice across North West authorities. This would benefit those authorities smaller in scale who have limited number of staff to cover these research areas. It was also agreed that the Board should act as a body to lobby central government. The importance of the two Combined Authority Mayors in Greater Manchester & Liverpool in acting as a powerful voice for the North West was reiterated.

The Board were also made aware of the 'Great Exhibition of the North' (GEN) to be held in the North East in June 2018. It was agreed by all that this presented an opportunity for the Board to present its agreed/shared priorities to a wider audience. It was proposed that the Board focus on three out of the five priorities in the first instance in order to move forward in a meaningful way.

The NW Regional Research Collaboration had now been running for a number of years, providing dedicated capacity to analyse critical shared issues for the NW's LEP areas. New Economy (now the GM Combined Authority) had managed the research programme on behalf of the partner organisations.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD

The collaboration has brought significant benefits, providing research capacity to investigate collective opportunities and challenges, but also in terms of facilitating knowledge sharing between partners. It has enabled partners to leverage additional sources of funding to explore strategic projects in more detail and at scale, positioning the North West at the heart of the latest thinking on economic growth and public service reform issues.

It had been proposed that the work of the Research Collaboration be directed by the priorities set out by the Board – and the Officer Steering Group – to compliment the evolving evidence base.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the priorities set out in the report be agreed, with the ‘Skills’ priority amended to ‘Skills and Employment’;**
- (2) a representative of Transport for the North be invited to attend the Board as a Participating Observer;**
- (3) Officers be instructed to continue the work undertaken to develop the Board – focussed on the main priorities agreed by Members – in order to maximise impact and effectiveness band; and**
- (4) a meeting to be arranged between the Chairman and the two Metro Mayors to discuss the support they can off the Board in the future.**

16 TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH (TfN) UPDATE

Peter Molyneux gave a presentation which updated the Board on the Transport for the North following its first meeting as a Sub-National Transport Body held on 5 April 2018.

* **Resolved that Peter Molyneux be thanked for his attendance and the presentation be noted.**

17 THE REAL LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Professor Steve Fothergill from the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University gave a presentation which informed the Board of the real level of unemployment following a piece of work undertaken by the University.

The presentation showed that although unemployment had fallen, Britain was still a long way off full employment, with hidden unemployment concentrated in the weakest local labour markets. In older industrial Britain, and some seaside towns, there remained a major unemployment problem.

Future research could be to look at statistics for those who were self-employed, on minimum wage and zero contracted hours.

* **Resolved that Professor Fothergill be thanked for his attendance and the presentation be noted.**

NORTH WEST REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD

18 NW REGIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION (RRC) UPDATE

A report was submitted by Katrina Hann (GMCA) which provided a final quarterly update for the 2017/18 research programme. The update summarised the key pieces of work undertaken by the RRC over the last 12 months and the progress made over the last quarter.

As part of the 2017/18 research programme, research had been undertaken as follows:

- Researching the economic benefit of co-working spaces, incubators and accelerators across the NW;
 - The NW Brexit Monitor;
 - Researching the NW's exports and potential impacts from Brexit on trading patterns and labour market of the North West.
- * **Resolved that the work being undertaken as part of the 2017/18 research programme be noted.**

18a UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN THE NORTH WEST

A report was submitted by Katrina Hann (GMCA) which aimed to introduce the Board to Universal Credit and the key issues stemming from its implementation in the North West. The report analysed statistics concerning the take up of Universal Credit across North West LEPs, proportions of out of work benefit claimants, Universal Credit claimant characteristics and sanctions. The report also collated evidence regarding the impact of Universal Credit in the areas of housing, personal finances, food banks and digital skills.

- * **Resolved that:**
- (1) the report be noted; and**
 - (2) A future report on Universal Credit be brought to the Board at a suitable time.**

19 NW REGIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION – RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2018/19

A report was submitted by Katrina Hann (GMCA) which updated the Board on the Research Programme 2018/19.

The North West (NW) Research Collaboration had now been running for seven years, providing dedicated capacity to analyse critical shared issues for the NW's LEP areas. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority manages the research programme on behalf of the partner organisations.

The collaboration had brought significant benefits, providing research capacity to investigate collective opportunities and challenges, but also in terms of facilitating knowledge sharing between partners. The collaboration had been extremely successful with a substantial body of research produced.

At the start of 2016/17 the NW Regional Leaders Board (RLB) agreed a new three-year business plan for the regional collaboration. As in previous agreements, it

NORTH WEST REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD

was agreed that funding for the next three years would be split between LEP areas based 50% on equal share and 50% on population.

The second year of the agreement (2017/18) has seen major pieces of work completed on: the economic benefit of innovative workspaces, exports and 50+ skills. The Brexit Monitor also formed a major component of the 2017/18 programme and this included capacity to examine the labour market in the North West in more detail, particularly reflecting on the potential impact of Brexit on the labour market. Capacity has continued to be provided to respond proactively to issues as they arise and for policy briefings. Capacity has also been used to undertake work on the impact of Universal Credit in the NW.

The priorities for the final year of the current programme (2018/19) have been informed by discussions at a recent RLB workshop and subsequent senior officer group meeting. Further discussion at the Regional Research officer group suggested that there was scope for research on:

- Brexit
- Science, technology and advanced manufacturing
- Transport / infrastructure

In addition, capacity will also be set aside for ad hoc projects and to:

- Brief LEPs on the implications for the NW of major policy announcements and data publications
- Bring together relevant evidence from the above themes to support NW sub-region's voice within the North e.g. via Convention for the North

The proposed business plan for 2018/19 was included in the report and regular updates on progress with the research would be provided to the Board.

It was proposed that the funding of the collaboration be maintained at the same level as previous years (£60,000):

- Liverpool City Region - £11,850
- Greater Manchester - £17,550
- Cumbria - £8,100
- Cheshire and Warrington - £10,350
- Lancashire – £12,150

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the work that has been undertaken for the NW as part of the 2017/18 Business Plan be noted; and**
- (2) the broad themes proposed within the Business Plan for 2018/19 be agreed and indicative funding split, acknowledging that the research programme, as defined, is reliant on the outlined contributions from all LEP areas.**

20 NORTH WEST BREXIT MONITOR UPDATE

A report was submitted by Katrina Hann (GMCA) which updated the Board on the key economic and policy developments in relation to the UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU). The March edition of the North West Brexit Monitor

NORTH WEST REGIONAL LEADERS BOARD

was attached to provide a real-time view of the economic and policy impact of Brexit.

* **Resolved that the contents of the March Brexit Monitor be noted.**

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 20 July 2018 (AGM) at 10.30am, St Helens Town Hall.

-oOo-