

North West Regional Leaders Board

9th February 2018 – Workshop

Attending

Local Authority Members

Cllr Terry O'Neill	Leader, Warrington Council (Chair)
Cllr Paul Findlow	Deputy Leader, Cheshire East Council
Mayor Andy Burnham	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Cllr Mohammad Khan	Leader, Blackburn with Darwin Council
Cllr Albert Atkinson	Deputy Leader, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Alan Smith	Leader, Allerdale Council

ESE Members

Miranda Barker	East Lancs Chamber of Commerce / RMF
Gillian Bishop	NW Employers
Philip Cox	Cheshire & Warrington LEP

Officers / Participating Observers

Mike Palin	St.Helens Council
Peter Hughes	St.Helens Council
Simon Nokes	GM Combined Authority
Katrina Hann	GM Combined Authority
Ben Dolan	Salford City Council
Emma Prideaux	Lancashire County Council

Apologies

Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram	LCR Combined Authority
Cllr Barrie Grunewald	Leader, St.Helens Council
Cllr Peter Rankin	Leader, Preston Council
Cllr Geoff Driver	Leader, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Samantha Dixon	Leader, Cheshire West & Cheshire Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Deputy Leader, Cheshire West & Cheshire Council
Cllr Rachel Bailey	Leader, Cheshire East Council
Emma Degg	NWBLT
Richard Caulfield	Association of Colleges
Warren Escadale	VSNW
Christine Gaskell	NW LEPS
Prof Steven Broomhead	Warrington Council
Sarah Pearson	Trafford Council

Background

At the previous meeting of the Board held in October 2017, it was agreed that it was timely that the role and remit of the Board be examined so as to ensure that the diverse priorities of the whole region are appropriately represented and the impact and effectiveness of the Board are maximised. It was proposed by elected Leaders that a Senior Officer Steering Group be established, and be tasked with this role. The Officer Steering Group would report to the Board and be comprised of two Senior Officers nominated from each of the five sub-regions. The Group would have the aim of supporting the Board to develop strong linkages across sub-regions and Combined Authorities (where these are in place).

Following the first Officer Steering Group meeting (held on 10th January 2018), and with the Chair's approval, it was proposed that the format of this February Board meeting be moved away from a formal meeting, to a Members-led workshop in which the future remit and priorities of the Board can be agreed.

Summary

Members were informed that the purpose of the workshop was to allow for them to have an open discussion on how they believe the Board can 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.

A presentation (attached) was delivered to the Board by Mike Palin (Chief Executive, St.Helens Council).

This set out where the Board emerged from; how the Board has operated and previous areas of research undertaken; the environment today; what is the Board's purpose and role in the future; and how it should operate moving forward.

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. To this respect, the Mayor offered his support to the Regional Leaders Board moving forward, agreeing that as not everything is 'sub-regional' in nature, and similarly not everything is 'northern', there is a place for a 'regional' body to represent the North West.

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
- Skills
- Brexit and future Export opportunities and challenges
- Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing
- Housing

The Board were made aware of the Great Exhibition of the North to be held in Newcastle 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 also agreed that the North West should consider holding its own exhibition in the near future.

Next Steps

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Friday 27th April. Before this, the Officer Steering Group will meet on Wednesday 14th March (11am, St.Helens Town Hall). At this Officer meeting, a programme of work will be commenced, with the aim of producing a proposal for the Board's approval on how it will operate moving forward.