



MINUTES OF CUMBRIA LEP SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING – LEP REVIEW INCEPTION MEETING

24th May 2017, Dodd & Co, Carlisle

Present: Chris Holmes (chair), David Beeby, Martin Ward, Suzanne Caldwell (minutes), Rob Wadsworth and Brian Holdsworth (S4W – inception meeting only)

Apologies: Public sector Panel members were not present because it had previously been agreed that this activity would be led by the private sector members because of organisational conflicts of interest.

1. PRE-MEET

The Scrutiny Panel held a brief pre meeting to discuss priorities and process.

2. INCEPTION MEETING

Chris welcomed S4W. He outlined briefly the background to the review, which is being led by the Scrutiny Panel, with the backing of the Board and Partners, and the impetus having come from both public and private sector partners. He explained why it is being led by the Scrutiny Panel and why public sector members were not present. He added that MPs are also keen for this review to be undertaken. David pointed out, in his role as Chair of the CBI in Cumbria that although the CBI did not sign up as a LEP partner when **the LEP was established, the view of the membership is that the LEP is not performing** and that the CBI should try to get involved and help to improve it.

The members of the Scrutiny Panel highlighted some of the concerns and priorities which have come out of various discussions held:

- The wide desire to see taxpayers' money spent well and more strategically for the benefit of Cumbria and to see more money being allocated to the county.
- Concerns about the operation of the LEP with, for example, a very strong perception that decisions are made in advance by the Chair and County rather than the full Board.
- Perceptions of the LEP having turned business people off wanting to be part of the Board.
- The importance of looking at – is the LEP trying to do the right things (strategy) and is the LEP doing them right (governance, effectiveness of the Board, influence in Government, etc.).



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- Feedback from MPS that Cumbria LEP is not perceived well in government.
- Concerns about focus and strategy, for example with the County Council buildings coming out as the number one prioritised project, and the need for a clear and appropriate strategy, back up by over ready projects.
- Concerns that the County Council uses its role as accountable body to control the LEP, rather than acting purely as an accountable body.
- Concerns around staff employed or seconded in by other organisations and therefore controlled by them.

It would also be helpful to have some guidance on composition of the Scrutiny Panel.

There was discussion of nuclear new build, which will happen or not with or without the LEP. New build should pay for related infrastructure rather than this come out of LEP resources. There was also some discussion of the opportunities available through initiatives such as the potential repository to bring more funding into Cumbria.

It was agreed that the following would be provided to S4W:

- List of current LEP Board members, past private sector Board members, LEP Partners, MPs and other key contacts (e.g. chair of Skills & Employment Commission).
- Copy of the public sector letter and related documentation which sparked the review.
- Minutes of the last Annual Conversation (these need to be chased).
- Previous surveys re the LEP
- Business Survey

Action: SC

It was agreed that some face-to-face interviews would be important as well as phone and other contacts, and that it would be good to include some relevant contacts in Whitehall.

It was also agreed that Chris would send an email to stakeholders who may be contacted to alert them to this (Suzanne to draft).

Action: CH/SC

It was also agreed that Suzanne would check whether it was possible to give S4W restricted access to the Chamber's survey tool which would enable them to set up and run specific surveys. This



would enable an email survey which could be sent to the Chamber database and circulated through other private and public sector partners to their databases also.

Action: SC

S4W confirmed that they would meet Graham Haywood next time they came to the county.

The timetable was discussed, given the delayed start. It was agreed that there was a need to slip the deadlines to enable the review to be done properly. It was decided:

- To aim for a final draft for 17th August, but to review this as the review progresses
- To aim for a first draft by the end of June

The final draft will be shared with the LEP Partners and Board, prior to production of a final version for publication.

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of S4W with the Scrutiny Panel would be Tuesday 20th June, 2pm at Dodd & Co, Rosehill, Carlisle, and that the full Scrutiny Panel would be invited to this meeting.

Action: SC