

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership held on Friday, 28 September 2018 at Redhills Penrith Cumbria at 2.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Lord Richard Inglewood (Chair), Ms Jackie Arnold (Deputy Chair), Cllr Stewart Young (Vice-Chair), Cllr Giles Archibald, Mr Graham Booth, Mr John Coughlan, Mr Jim Jackson, Mr Mike McKinley, Cllr Alan Smith, Ms Rebecca Weston and Mr Nigel Wilkinson

In Attendance:

Jackie Currie Board Secretary - Cumbria County Council
Sami Falou Assistant Director - Cities and Growth, BEIS
Alison Hatcher Chair of the Technical Officers Group - Cumbria County Council
Jo Lappin Chief Executive - Cumbria LEP

The Chair opened by welcoming everyone to the Cumbria LEP Annual General Meeting.

He spoke about how the LEP was changing and the Government's expectations of the LEP going forward. He outlined how the LEP was committed to being open, transparent and accountable in all that it did. It would operate in a collaborative and consultative way and would communicate more clearly to engage with the businesses and people of Cumbria.

There were 68 confirmed attendees at the meeting, alongside the Board and LEP team members.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The meeting was asked to note that the Board had ratified the appointment of Lord Inglewood as Chair, and as such the meeting was being notified of this appointment.

RESOLVED that, Lord Inglewood's appointment as Chair for the forthcoming year be noted.

2 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

The meeting was asked to note that the Board had ratified the appointment of Jackie Arnold, MBE as Deputy Chair and as such the meeting was being notified of this appointment.

From the floor Mr Stephen Shepherd from Camerton Consultants Ltd said he had seen comments in the press about the fact that Board members were only appointed for 3 years. He asked why in this instance this was not being adhered to.

The Chief Executive informed the meeting that the appointments could actually be for up to a 6 year period, based on two 3 year periods, the first being extended by mutual agreement, in line with the LEP's Local Assurance Framework. The LAF also provided for an extension, subject to BEIS agreement.

The Chair said that the 12 month extension for this appointment was due to the transitional arrangements that were being implemented for the LEP Board. The reason for the extension was to ensure a degree of continuity was in place for the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED that, Mrs J Arnold appointment as the Deputy Chair for the forthcoming year be noted.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR - PUBLIC SECTOR

The meeting was asked to note that the Board had ratified the appointment of Stewart Young as Vice Chair Public Sector and as such the meeting was being notified of this appointment.

RESOLVED that, Cllr SF Young appointment as Vice Chair – Public Sector for the forthcoming year be noted.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Curl, Cllr C Glover, Mr R Johnston, Professor J Mennell, and Mr MJ Smith.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that, the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a true and accurate record.

7 ECONOMIC 'STATE OF THE NATION'

A presentation on the economic state of the nation was given by Stephen Nichol from Nicol Economics.

The presentation covered the following:-

- What's great in Cumbria
- A small economy spread over a large area
- Unusual 'bi-polar' economy
- GVA growth rate
- Sector performances
- Productivity
- Key manufacturing sectors
- Income and earnings
- Big challenges
- Infrastructure

The Chair thanked Mr Nicol for his informative presentation and said that the LEP was lucky to have him working on our behalf.

8 CUMBRIA LEP PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The meeting received a presentation from Jackie Arnold which detailed Cumbria LEP's performance review. The presentation detailed the following:-

- Growth Deal Ambition
- Spotlight on projects

The Chair thanked Jackie for her presentation.

9 FUTURE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

A number of separate speakers were then invited to make presentations to the Board on the LEP's future priorities including those for the remainder of 2018/19:-

- Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships (Ms J Lappin)
- Developing the Local Industrial Strategy (Ms J Lappin)
- Spotlight on Skills (Mr J Coughlan)
- Spotlight on Infrastructure (Mr J Jackson)
- Spotlight on Sectors (Mr N Wilkinson)

The Chair thanked all of the speakers for their presentations, which are attached.

10 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE LEP

Mr Nigel Wilkinson presented the annual accounts of the LEP, which were non-statutory as the company was not incorporated. He covered the following aspects:-

- Non statutory
- Detail of accounts
- Incorporation
- Transparency

The Chair thanked Nigel for the presentation.

11 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Stuart Klosinski asked about the Northern Powerhouse narrative which talks clearly about including energy and whether the LEP Board agreed that the board should be ambitious and should be looking further to embrace all forms of energy.

The Chair replied that the LEP Board had discussed this subject this morning and would be considering how energy more broadly could be considered alongside nuclear as the importance of the sector was fully recognised.

Simon Sjenitzer had noticed that Brexit was not mentioned in any of the LEP Forward Plans. He asked whether the LEP Board should be looking at this and taking a leading role.

The Chair replied that Brexit had also been discussed this morning at the LEP Board meeting, and the Board had asked that the Executive produced an economic impact assessment, which would be considered at their next meeting. However, he asked all participants to note that the LEP was not a campaigning political body and as would only be dealing with the evidence.

John Coughlan informed the meeting that the Cumbria Leadership Board, which was a group made up of public sector organisations in Cumbria, had invited the LEP Chair to attend one of their meetings to discuss this.

Stewart Young said it was extremely difficult for the LEP to plan for Brexit as there was still a lack of understanding and evidence to allow an informed view to be taken. However, he felt the emphasis of the LEP needed to be on contingency planning, as many of the industries in Cumbria would be vulnerable such as the agriculture and nuclear industries.

Freddie Markham, Greengill Holidays was interested in the comments about the decline in the population of Cumbria and he asked whether the LEP Board felt that innovative solutions such as robots might be considered in the future to address this.

John Coughlan replied that this was an interesting idea but it would be dependent on companies coming forward with projects. The LEP can provide innovative ideas but it would be relying on partners to bring projects forward.

Jackie Arnold said the University of Cumbria was currently focusing on the improvement of digital skills in the county and there were a number of ideas flowing from this.

Freddy Markham then commented that he felt it was important for the LEP to support the dualling of the A66.

Jim Jackson confirmed that the LEP was fully in support of the dualling of A66.

Tom McMullen from the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association felt the LEP should be aiming to attract ex forces professionals into the county once they retired from the forces.

Stewart Young reassured Mr McMullen that Cumbria County Council was actively engaged with this and had signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. John Coughlan informed Mr McMullen that the Leader of Allerdale Borough Council had already started these discussions.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the LEP was very interested in taking this forward and had worked closely with the REME on settlement issues in other areas. She agreed to speak to Tom McMullen outside of the meeting.

Nigel Wilkinson confirmed that his company, Winander Leisure Limited already had ex forces employees working on the Windermere Ferry.

Chris Nelson from Northern T Coal Power asked if the LEP had to choose a single priority what it would be.

The Chair said he felt infrastructure would be one of the top priorities for the Cumbria LEP. The Chief Executive added that it was important that the LEP was working with partners to address all of the big challenges for Cumbria, well and at the same time, as one single priority would not address Cumbria's economic challenges and opportunities.

Chris Ward from IOD Cumbria asked how the LEP was learning from best practice in developing the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), and made the Board aware that he had been offered access to the blue print for the process.

The Chair thanked Mr Ward for the offer, and advised that the LEP Chief Executive was already heavily engaged with the process nationally. Central Government had already indicated they were content with the process of the LIS and the direction of travel for the Cumbria LEP. However, any additional inputs would be welcomed via the Chief Executive.

Chris Ward then asked how businesses could engage with the LEP Board.

The Chief Executive advised that the new governance structure provided the opportunity for businesses alongside public and voluntary and community sector colleagues. She asked any interested parties to contact her in the first instance.

Gary Lovatt from the Federation of Small Businesses was aware that 99% of the small businesses in Cumbria were unable to meet the criteria for funding from the Cumbria LEP. He asked whether any consideration would be given to this by the Board.

The Chief Executive replied that the Cumbria LEP would be looking to make funding streams as accessible as possible and accepted that the Shared Prosperity Fund needed to be more flexible going forward.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the Annual General Meeting and wished them a good weekend and a safe journey home.

12 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 27 September 2019 at Redhills, Penrith at 2pm

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm