



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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**BUSINESS BOARD: MINUTES**

**Date:** Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**Time:** 2.30pm – 4:10pm

**Location:** Huntingdonshire District Council offices, Huntingdon

**Present:** Aamir Khalid (Chairman), Austen Adams, Councillor Anna Bailey (substitute for Councillor Charles Roberts), Tina Barsby, Douglas Cuff, William Haire and Andy Neely

**24. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Apologies had been received from Mark Dorsett, Mayor James Palmer and Councillor Charles Roberts.

Members were reminded that all decisions, when made by the Combined Authority, were conditional pending confirmation from government that local growth funds had been released for allocation by the Business Board. It was noted that following a successful meeting with the Government, civil servants were in the process of producing final documentation to be signed off by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Rt Hon Greg Clark, which was due to be completed shortly.

Doug Cuff declared a disclosable interest agenda item 3.1, Growth Deal Project Proposals January 2019, (Minute no. 28). He was not present whilst the item was discussed or for the vote.

Councillor Bailey also declared an interest as the County Council Member for the division of Ely South with regards agenda item 3.1, Growth Deal Project Proposals January 2019, (Minute no. 28).

**25. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH NOVEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the Business Board meeting held on 26th November 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**26. FORWARD PLAN**

It was noted that an item had been omitted on the Forward Plan for the meeting on 25th March 2019, which would be a report seeking the Business Board's final approval of the Local Industrial Strategy and the recommendation for its approval by the Combined Authority Board.

The Board was also informed that the review of remuneration for private sector members would be completed in late February and that a report would be presented at the meeting on 25th March 2019. One member expressed a desire for the remuneration committee to discuss the issue with Board members before making conclusions, which was agreed by the Director of Business & Skills. **Action required**

After clarification of these two additional items for the meeting on 25th March 2019, it was resolved to note the Forward Plan.

## **27. LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY – FIRST DRAFT**

The first draft of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) was presented to the Board to provide members with the opportunity to participate in the development of its content and overall direction. Members were informed that following the publication of the national Industrial Strategy in December 2017, attention had progressed to considering how to incorporate the national agenda on a local level and that the resulting evidence based approach undertaken by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) would lead to a compelling LIS to present to the Government. It was emphasised that the strategy was based on the strengths of the Cambridgeshire and attempted to build from them and develop them as part of a 'bottom up' philosophy.

Members were reminded that along with Mayor James Palmer and as part of the Devolution Deal, they were aiming to double output over the next 25 years, which would require attacking the growth agenda in a particular way. The three priorities were identified as recalibrating the growth dynamic, removing constraints to the growth of Greater Cambridge and achieving a better integration of industry across the area. It was suggested that working towards employment-driven growth was problematic and that the focus should shift towards a productivity-driven growth, by tackling productivity issues on a localised basis, supporting a wide range of sectors and working with Central Government and the Oxford-Cambridge arc.

Discussing the draft strategy, members praised its clarity and structure, as well as the bottom up, evidence based philosophy, thanking Metro Dynamics and the wider Combined Authority for producing it in such a short period of time. It was noted that LIS's of other local authorities were often targeted sales pitches solely aimed at receiving greater investment and while it was acknowledged that this was a fundamental objective of the document, the Board was keen for it to contain substance over style. The authors of the strategy emphasised that there were still sections to be added, including one on the opportunities and strengths that already lie within the region, such as life sciences and agritech, that would show how the strategy also aimed to make it a better area to live, learn and work in. Members agreed that the strategy might benefit from such softer content that promoted the communities and what it would feel like to live here in the future.

Looking at the finer detail of the LIS, it was suggested that there could be greater clarity over the term 'agritech', with members of the board that specialised in the area offering their assistance. Being such a key part of the strategy, it was important to avoid any confusion. The same was considered over economic issues, as it was noted that the strategy would not only be read economists and therefore it was important to adapt the content for all readers. Members also recognised that increasing productivity was not a question of doing things faster, increasing automation and using less people because the whole process was based on innovation, skills and agility, which required a people-based approach. It was suggested that this message could be included to emphasise that the aim was 'better for less' instead of 'more for less'. There were doubts expressed over the intention to work with 500 companies, arguing that such a high number might reduce overall effectiveness and that it might be worthwhile to operate with a more targeted model.

In discussing the next stages of the process, the Board agreed that it would be productive to take the more solidified strategy back to local authorities and businesses across the region to seek their support and affirmation of its direction. It would then return to the Business Board for their approval at the next meeting on 25th March 2019 with greater validation before final approve from the Combined Authority Board on 27th March 2019. That would complete the local stage of the process and discussions would begin on attaining Government support before the official launch in May 2019.

It was resolved to:

Discuss and comment on the draft of the Local Industrial Strategy – providing steer for officers in developing the next version.

## **28. GROWTH DEAL PROJECT PROPOSALS**

The Business Board received a report on the first two projects to have completed the internal and external assessment stages of their applications for Growth Deal funding.

Having separated the two applications into separate decisions to accommodate the caveats put forward by the Board, it was resolved to:

- a) Consider the reports by external assessors of projects submitted for Growth Deal Funds.
- b) Recommend Bid A to the Combined Authority Board for approval.
- c) Recommend Bid B to the Combined Authority Board for approval, subject to there being recognition of the source of the funds from the Business Board by the recipient and that two conditions precedent are satisfied before any funds are released
- d) Note the summary of Small Grants approved under delegated powers.

## **29. (DRAFT) ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN FOR BUSINESS AND SKILLS**

The Business Board considered the draft Annual Delivery Plan for Business and Skills having been advised that a final draft would be produced for the Board's approval at the meeting on 28th May once the Local Industrial Strategy and the Skills Strategy had been finalised. Attention was drawn to the Business and Skills team's five main activities, which were development of key strategies, management and delivery of strategic funds, direct support to businesses, business space provision and management, as well as the commissioning and management of skills programmes. It was noted that the Measures of Success listed on page 83 of the report were only indicative as the final measures would be drawn from the finalised Local Industrial Strategy.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Consider the content of the draft Annual Delivery Plan.
- b) Recommend that the Combined Authority Board note the draft Annual Delivery Plan for Business and Skills.

## **30. RURAL COMMUNITY ENERGY FUND – MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Business Board received a report detailing the management and administration of the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF). At the previous meeting on 26th November 2018, the Board approved the principal of the Combined Authority acting as the Accountable Body for the RCEF but requested a further report on its management and administration.

After expressing their appreciation for the clarifications, the Board resolved to:

Agree that the Greater South East Energy Hub assumed the RCEF management role, administered the fund and employed the Community Energy Advisor.

## **31. BUSINESS BOARD FUTURE PLANNING**

Having sat on the Business Board for three meetings, members were invited to discuss how they felt the Board could operate in either more effective or different ways.

A discussion was held over the possibility of Board members being allocated portfolios in order to sponsor their particular topics during Board meetings and beyond. Members were concerned that assigning portfolios might detract from the objective of working to join sectors together and may lead to less attention being paid by members to issues that lay outside their respective portfolios, although they were open to the idea of championing certain projects or strategies.

One member suggested that it would be helpful for the Board to receive updates on the Combined Authority's approach to supporting Business, as well as insight in to the Mayor's objectives. Members also expressed interest in being informed on the wider

impacts of the Board's decisions, noting that the outcome was arguably more important than the process. Becoming more informed about the industries and sectors discussed by the Board was considered to be desirable, with a proposal to visit businesses across the region to allow for members to educate themselves and subsequently make more informed strategic decisions. There was also a request for more representatives of the private sector to participate in meetings, rather than just Combined Authority officers.

A proposal was made that future Board meetings could be restructured to allow for a shorter formal meeting on items requiring a decision to be followed by more informal discussions on a wider range of topics. Members expressed enthusiasm for the idea, noting that it would allow for greater focus on strategy rather than reports. It was further suggested that meetings could be held in business locations around the region to encourage participation from the private sector and raise awareness of the Business Board, as well as its status, noting that the private nature of the meetings created uncertainty and mystery over what the Board did and how it worked.

It was reiterated that it would be desirable to provide the ability for members to attend the meetings via video conference. The Board noted that while such facilities would be advantageous, it was desirable for members to be present at the meetings. There was clarification that the Terms of Reference included attendance requirements but it was requested that there be more clarity, rigour and formality in the process. **Action required**

The Board also indicated that it was keen to develop relationships between its Members, with a proposal to receive each other at their own place of work to develop their understanding of each other and their individual knowledge and skills.

## **32. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was resolved unanimously to note that the date of the next meeting would be Monday 25th March 2019 and that the meeting would be held at Shire Hall in Cambridge.

It was noted that members had still not been informed of future meeting dates beyond 28th May 2019. They were informed that the meetings calendar for 2019/2020 had recently been confirmed and that the dates would be circulated shortly. **Action required**

Chairman