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Cheshire & Warrington Economic Prosperity Board Proposed Terms of Reference and Operation.

1. Introduction & Background.

- 1.1. As part of the development of sub-regional structures and the LEP it was proposed to establish a Combined Leadership Board (CLB). The function of the CLB was to bring the Leaders and Chief Executives of the 3 Councils and the Chair of the LEP together to do 3 key things:
- To focus on bringing together and coordinating the activities of the 3 Councils on Economic Growth
 - To act as an interface between the LEP and the Sub-regional Leadership Board (which has wide sub-regional public agency representation)
 - To provide public agency oversight of the LEP's activity and its Accountable Body.

The Combined Leadership Board concept was outlined in the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) submitted to Government earlier this year. The Combined Leadership Board has met.

- 1.2. Since the CLB was conceived the debate joint sub-regional economic 'structures' has intensified – focusing around the models of Combined Authorities and Economic Prosperity Boards (as formal /statutory governance arrangements as defined by Government). There is also an increasing debate around combining LEPs so that they cover a wider geographic area and to reduce their number. The national picture is therefore 'in-flux' and is evolving. The concepts of Combined Authority and Economic Prosperity Board were models developed before the LEP model – and the two models do not fit comfortably together (as they are both intended to do the same thing – one local authority focused and one being business led in partnership with Councils). Both the Sub-regional Leadership Board and the LEP has considered these options and decided not to progress either national models at present, but to keep the concept under review (pending the national picture becoming clearer). The reasons for this decision was based upon:
- The extensive statutory processes involved – it was felt that our combined energies would be best focused on delivering economic growth rather than structures
 - The value of these national models was questioned
 - The two national models overlapped and conflicted with the role of the LEP (which is our priority sub-regional conduit for growth).

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- 1.3. However, Sub-regional Leaders have agreed to translate the Combined Leadership Board into a local version of an Economic Prosperity Board and tasked the sub-regional 'Economic' Directors to outline its Terms of Reference and operation. This is the purpose of this report.

2. C&W Economic Prosperity Board - Purpose and Terms of Reference

- 2.1. Appendix 1 outlines the proposed Terms of Reference for the C&W EPB.

2.2. Purpose

In a 'nutshell' the purpose of the C&W EPB will be:

- To coordinate LA activity to 'create the climate for economic growth' (a priority in the C&W SEP) – i.e. to provide the economic 'glue' for the sub-region
- To better deploy LA's resource capacity (human and finance) to support economic growth and LEP activity
- To operationalise the C&W SEP for LAs
- To broker / establish a single C&W sub-regional LA 'voice' – generally and on specific issues
- To provide public / democratic governance and oversight of the LEP, C&W Transport Board and Marketing Cheshire and monitor their performance (a 'shareholder' overview)
- To provide oversight / support of the LEP's Accountable Body
- To manage / develop regional / neighbouring LA / Combined Authority relationships and alignments
- To manage / develop LA interface and relationships between sub-regional LAs and national government and its agencies in the economic growth arena
- Provide an interface between the LEP and the wider activities of the Sub-regional Leadership Board
- To bring together and develop the economic growth agenda and the sub-regional public sector reform activities together.

The C&W EPB would also be the forum where the evolving debate on sub-regional economic structures (Combined Authority / Economic Prosperity Board) will take place together with the emerging national shape of subnational approaches.

3. Relationships with other Sub-regional Structures

- 3.1. It is worth clarifying what the role of the C&W EPB is in relation to the role of other sub-regional bodies:

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- Sub-regional Leadership Board – this focuses on the wider public service reform (non-economic) agenda together with the shared agendas and interests of a wider group of Sub-regional public services (inc. Blue Light services)
- Sub-regional Management Team – this provides the senior officer support to the Sub-regional Leadership Board
- Cheshire & Warrington Enterprise Partnership – this is the primary sub-regional strategic conduit and leads the economic growth agenda for the sub-region. It is a business-led partnership between the private and public sectors. It is the national government recognise lead for economic growth for C&W.
- C&W LTB
- Growth Implementation Group – this works directly to the LEP Board and is its principle workhorse – it:
 - Reviews the SEP
 - Performance manages the delivery of the LEP’s priorities as outlined in the SEP
 - Provides an investment management and programming function for the LEP Board
- Place Teams – together with the LAs these provide local delivery of the SEP and its projects and lead on local / non-SEP economic activity.

4. The C&W EPB and Assurance

- 4.1. The LEP will be very quickly become ‘responsible’ for large amounts of public money – through the Local Growth Fund, Growing Places Fund, European Programme etc. This will amount to some £250m. The 3 councils also provide financial and ‘in-kind’ support for the LEP (together with Marketing Cheshire currently). There does need to be democratic oversight, governance and assurance for this. This needs to be separate and is different to the role of the LA Leaders as LEP Board members. There is presently a vacuum in this critical activity – the C&W EPB would provide this role.

5. Operation and Administration

- 5.1. The principles of the operation of the C&W EPB are:
- It should be organised and run with the minimum of bureaucracy
 - It should be chaired by a LA Leader on a rotating basis - The chair should be the chair of the Sub-regional Leadership Board (as it rotates).
 - Board membership – the three LA Leaders, The Chair of C&W EP (LEP) supported by the three LA CEOs and the C&W EP CEO together, when appropriate / requested the Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body and the three LA ‘economy’ directors.

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- It should be supported (administration) by the Sub-regional programme office
- It will meet every two months with special meetings if required to discuss very urgent matters
- The venue should rotate, be convenient to all, be sufficient to accommodate all attendees, have the required IT facilities and sufficient time be given to the meeting to deal with the important business involved.

Appendix 1.

Cheshire & Warrington Economic Prosperity Board Terms of Reference:

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2. Operation and Administration:

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- Board membership – the three LA Leaders, The Chair of C&W EP (LEP) supported by the three LA CEOs and the C&W EP CEO together, when appropriate / requested the Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body and the three LA 'economy' directors.
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**Cheshire East Council
Cheshire West & Chester Council
Warrington Borough Council
Cheshire & Warrington Enterprise Partnership**



Cheshire & Warrington Economic Prosperity Board – a combined approach to growth