

West London Economic Prosperity Board

Thursday 19 September 2018 at 10am

Notes of inquorate meeting

PRESENT:

Councillors: Bell (Chair, London Borough of Ealing) and Sharma Tatler (London Borough of Brent)

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ALSO PRESENT: John Hooton (Chief Executive Barnet), Amar Dave (Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment – Brent), Tony Clements (Executive Director Regeneration and Housing -Ealing), Paul Najsarek (Chief Executive – Ealing), Keith Fraser and Linda Zimmerman (Democratic Services – Ealing), Clive Palfreyman (Hounslow), David Lillicrap, Bernadette Marjoram, Rachel Ormerod and Luke Ward (West London Alliance)

Presentations by: Colin Stanbridge (London Chamber of Commerce Industry (LCCI)); Max Clifton and Theo Blackwell (GLA)

John Cox, a member of the public, addressed the Board in relation to agenda item 9 – WLO Update.

Also in attendance – Andrew Dakers – West London Business.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cornelius (Barnet), Councillor Butt (Brent) and Councillor Cowan (Hammersmith and Fulham), Councillor Fennimore (Hammersmith and Fulham)

Officers: Carolyn Downs (Brent), Tom Whiting (Harrow) and Alan Adams (Hounslow)

2. Urgent Matters

There were none.

3. Matters to be considered in private

There were none.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

5. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board held on 21 June 2018 be agreed and signed as a true and correct record.

6. Strategic Investment Pool Update

Paul Najsarek introduced this item informing the Board that there had been three distinct proposals and London Councils were recommending that two of these proposals be fully funded (Broadband network rollout to not spots, and skills and employment upscaling).

The West London Orbital complementary and enabling measures proposal did not get support at this stage but there would be a further bidding round later in the year. The reason given for declining the WLO bid was that it was not yet a funded project. The team at TfL were working on this and looking at a funding strategy

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This one-year pilot was an opportunity for the West London Economic Prosperity Board to show that when monies are devolved then these could be invested in the Board's shared priorities.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) notes that the City of London Corporation is recommending that West London boroughs be awarded £11.13m from the Strategic Investment Pool (SIP), for investment in digital infrastructure and investment in skills.
- ii) notes that the SIP process reflects a flow of genuinely new resource to West London boroughs to invest in growth-promoting measures in a joined-up way.
- iii) notes that there is an opportunity to make this one-year pilot programme into a more regular flow of resource, if boroughs can demonstrate that they are able to invest this new resource more effectively than central government is able to.
- iv) notes that officers are currently developing detailed delivery plans for the recommended bids, and that decisions relating to these will return to the WLEPB on a case-by-case basis.
- v) notes that there may be a further opportunity to bid for further SIP monies towards the end of this financial year, once the annual business rates outturn has been settled, and that London Councils will advise on this in due course.

7. London Chamber of Commerce

Colin Stanbridge (LCCI) gave a presentation on the key strategic issues for businesses in London.

He informed the Board of the success in bids resulting in more devolution and more money flowing to the Mayor or boroughs. He feared the enthusiasm for devolution had reduced and wanted to re-energise this campaign, however Brexit overwhelmed all decisions to government. Mr Stanbridge explained that the LCCI was a lobbying group but spent most time lobbying government when Mr Stanbridge's view was that they should be lobbying Leaders of Councils or the Mayor. Skills were top of the agenda along with infrastructure and policing. The LCCI had worked with London Councils to gauge the needs of businesses. Sub regions had different needs and West London was doing better in relative terms than other parts of London. However, 45% of West London Businesses cited a lack of skills as a difficulty and 45% of West London Businesses were concerned about Brexit. 27% businesses in West London employed apprentices compared with 8% in Central London. The LCCI would like the apprentice levy to be devolved to London, as much of this goes unused and returns to the Treasury. Technical and digital skills could be invested in.

The ability to change business rates according to how much money the business was making would be beneficial. There was concern that business rates were being set and then not reviewed for a number of years. 31% of businesses cited business rates as being a concern for their business. 9% of businesses had considered moving due to business rates.

members noted that the issues raised by Mr Stanbridge were issues which the Board had discussed and debated and it was reassuring to know that they were aligned on these

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points. The Board and LCCI was not always aligned, for example on the Heathrow expansion, but the group could focus on jobs and apprenticeships.

Members noted the LCCI concern re business rates and added that the affordability of development and also rents was another factor. The LCCI had been working on this and also on a business case for housing, as this affected businesses. In terms of difficulties in recruiting staff due to the high cost of housing in the area. The increase in business rates had also led to businesses considering relocating.

Members noted the synergies with the LCCI and welcomed comments on future rounds of strategic investment. Mr Stanbridge explained that the LCCI was a small organisation but could lobby and agreed that the more sub regional partnerships that were formed, the better. The LCCI was happy to work on a sub-regional basis but would have difficulties on a borough by borough basis.

Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report on migrant workers was an area the board felt could be built upon. The report did not discuss the regional variations on MAC. An area which could be built on was the skills of European workers and if these skills were lost then alternative options would need to be considered.

Members agreed that the support of the Chamber of Commerce would be important in the spending review.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) notes the issues raised by the Chief Executive of the LCCI in relation to business support, investment, and longer-term economic growth, and:
- ii) Identified the following specific areas arising from the discussion that they would like to be incorporated into the work plan of the Committee: devolution, skills, apprenticeships, business rates, Heathrow expansion and business infrastructure.

8. GLA Chief Digital Officer Discussion

Theo Blackwell, GLA, gave a presentation on digital infrastructure across London. There was a shared digital vision across the Mayor's strategies with City Hall being a leading open data store. However, progress in "Smart Cities" was uneven across London. There were 40 key developments set out for growth but if these were fragmented and not co-ordinated then there would be missed opportunities.

Five foundations had been set out for a road map: More user design services, new deal for city data, world class connectivity, digital leadership and skills, and improved city-wide collaboration.

Not spots were being considered with a major project using the London underground system for extending fibre cables out to areas of the city. The long-term proposal was for full fibre to be a strong consideration for connectivity. The aim was also for full connectivity to be a planning condition. Lampposts were largely owned by the state and provided opportunities for hosting 5G and a host of other possibilities. The GLA had worked with 19 boroughs and the potential rental income from this infrastructure would be beneficial to councils. It was noted that the 32 boroughs could secure benefits of scale with collaboration.

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The presentation also showed actions under the Smart London Plan, members could see how these policies were developed and updated on line.

Matt Clifton, GLA, spoke on digital connectivity explaining that his team's role was to deliver the key components of connectivity; they had been working with employers to ensure connectivity and promote services. Concessionaire had the ability to whole sale to outside providers.

Newer entrants to the market were looking for London Boroughs to invest in.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) notes the issues raised by the Chief Digital Officer in relation to the digital agenda and economic growth
- ii) notes that many boroughs were working towards installing electric charging points into lampposts.
- iii) notes the recommendation that boroughs should look at their full assets to consider the existing assets that could be used to make the city more connected, this also applied to the private sector.
- iv) welcomes the SIP funding and the prospect of working with the Chief Digital Officer on this project.

9. West London Orbital Update

Luke Ward, WLA, introduced this item explaining that TfL were building an outline business case. TfL were looking at the demands for the line and also the areas that it would serve in terms of housing and jobs. An Outline Business Case and Funding Options study was expected by Christmas 2018 and a further report would be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Mr Cox, member of the public, was satisfied that the minutes of the meeting held in June 2018 contained all of the considerations that he had wanted to put forward with the addition of opposing the "short termism" proposal for the line terminating at Hounslow and requested that this be reconsidered and be extended to Twickenham.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) notes the timeline and approach set out in sections two and three of this report.
- ii) notes the analysis contained within section 2.1 of this report containing some further detail relating to the possible WLO station platforms at the Brent Cross West Station, as requested by the Committee at its previous meeting.
- iii) notes that TfL's first phase of work on the WLO is nearing completion, and that the outcome of this work will define the way the WLO programme develops in the coming year.
- iv) notes that there would be a more detailed report to the Board later in the year.

10. Health and Employment

David Lillicrap, WLA, introduced this report, informing members that although the West London boroughs had the lowest referral rates to the West London Work and Health Programme in London, they had a greater proportion of starts as the higher rate of referrals in other London sub regions have resulted in a drop in quality of referrals.

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Members suggested that it was important to assist people in being ready for work before putting them forward; Ealing had a pre-apprenticeship pathways programme which had been very successful.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) notes the update report on the programmes that make up the WLA Health and Employment Board.
- ii) commits to pledge to refer one person from early access groups, per borough, each week to the West London Work and Health Programme.
- iii) commits to explore the guaranteed interview scheme for people in the early access groups.

11. External Speakers

Resolved:

That the Board:

- i) requests that David Blunkett be invited to a future meeting to speak on the Heathrow Skills Task Force and that Heide Alexander be invited to speak on the West London Orbital.
- ii) requests that any further suggestions for speakers be passed to the WLA team

12. Economic Prosperity Board Work Programme September 2018

Resolved:

That the Board:

- i) notes the West London Economic Prosperity Board (WLEPB) work programme.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board will be held on 20 November 2018 at 10am in Westminster University Boardroom, 309 Regent Street, London W1B 2HW

Councillor Julian Bell, Chair (London Borough of Ealing)

Date

The meeting concluded at 11:55am.

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