

West London Economic Prosperity Board

Tuesday 20 November 2018 at 10am
Minutes

PRESENT:

Councillors: Bell (Chair, London Borough of Ealing), Thomas (London Borough of Barnet), Tatler (London Borough of Brent) Henson (London Borough of Harrow) and Fennimore (London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham).⁵

ALSO PRESENT: Amar Dave (Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment – Brent), Paul Najsarek (Chief Executive – Ealing), Linda Zimmerman and Paula Portas (Democratic Services – Ealing), Richard Griffin (Buckinghamshire New University), Clive Palfreyman (Hounslow), Paul Walker (Harrow), Rob Gray (Heathrow), Poorvi Patel (Heathrow Skills Taskforce), Bernadette Marjoram and Luke Ward (West London Alliance).

Presentations by: The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett (Heathrow Skills Taskforce); Ross Sturley (Capital West London)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cornelius (Barnet), Councillor Butt (Brent) Councillor Cowan (Hammersmith and Fulham), Councillor Curran (Hounslow) and Councillor Rajawat (Hounslow).

Officers: Tony Clements (Ealing).

Dr Peter Bonfield, Vice Chancellor of Westminster University, welcomed WLEPB members. He said that the University had one of the more diverse student bodies in the country and a focus on innovation and technology that fitted with the aims of the WLEPB.

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

In item 9, 'West London Orbital Update', pg. 6, the second paragraph referring to Mr Cox's intervention should be replaced by the following paragraph:

"Mr Cox, member of the public, criticised planning "short termism". For example, the WLO team could not even consider extending the WLO to Twickenham because vital 'unwanted' railway land there has just been sold. To avoid short-termism, he said that WLEPB minutes back to 2017 document his remarks about designing the WLO to allow future extra stations and services, and only choosing station sites that allow longer platforms. The WLO team must act fairly under common law because of the Supreme Court ruling to "consider alternatives at a formative stage"; he wanted to see evidence of that, to avoid legal challenge."

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Councillor Henson noted that he had sent his apologies to the meeting.

Resolved:

That, with the amendments mentioned above, the notes of the inquorate meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board held on 19 September 2018 be agreed and signed as a true and correct record.

6. Heathrow Skills Taskforce

The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett , (Chair, Heathrow Skills Taskforce) gave a presentation on the work and recommendations of the Heathrow Skills Taskforce.

The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett said that, whilst there were different views about the development of Heathrow airport, the Taskforce focus was on the key issue of skills and employment. This issue would have a clear impact on West London Boroughs. The Taskforce aimed to draw partners from diverse backgrounds together to achieve a collective view of what the future of employment and skills opportunities for Heathrow could bring. The country was living through two contradictory crises, one brought about by the need for a more skilled labour force, another brought about by the exiting from the European Union. These two crises exercised a pull in opposing directions.

The Heathrow Skills Taskforce proposed a programme to provide skills and opportunities, supporting people through schooling, college training and, if appropriate, higher education. It aimed for “a step change” in reaching people in the immediate locality who had not thought of accessing careers at Heathrow. It sought engagement from Heathrow and its business supply chain from London and beyond, as this issue could have a nation-wide impact.

The background to the work of the Taskforce was that Britain was at a key moment of implementation of major infrastructure programmes. Yet, at the same time, there was a danger for people who were training and gaining skills of not being appropriately employed at the right programme. The Taskforce sought dialogue with senior staff in HS2, TfL, Crossrail, and other similar organisations and projects for them to collaborate in working out how to provide the right jobs for those in training. Heathrow would be responding to the Taskforce’s recommendations in detail in early 2019. They had already taken steps in the right direction, such as adopting the London Living Wage (LLW). The Taskforce was keen to stress the social value of people obtaining skilled jobs and progressing in them.

There was an opportunity for the development of apprenticeships on and off-site. Hence, there was a need to strike a real partnership with schools and colleges and gaining their support. The Taskforce was trying to build on existing capabilities and excellence. They were working with the Institute of Education to achieve this goal. The Taskforce had also set up a monitoring group to check that Heathrow implemented their agreements. There had been some scepticism about the initiative in some of the neighbouring Boroughs and this group had been set up to address those concerns. There was a reputational cost for Britain if these initiatives were to fail. The Taskforce wanted to draw organisations to work in partnership and to be critical friends. Not only in relation to employment needs, but also on housing and transport needs.

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Questions and comments:

Board members:

- Noted that the Taskforce report was timely, interesting and positive on balance, yet it needed careful implementation to make the most of employment opportunities and of the social inclusion agenda. It would require the monitoring not only of Heathrow but of its suppliers.
- Noted that apprenticeships were often focused on providing opportunities to a younger workforce and asked whether there had been any thought about the provision of opportunities for an older workforce to be retrained.
Heard that apprenticeships could include older workers. There was an emphasis in getting 'returners' back in (i.e. women after maternity leave, carers, etc.), focusing on groups which were more difficult to reach.
- Asked about the provision of affordable transport to allow the mobility of workers employed in low pay positions (i.e. bus routes rather than trains).
The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett said that collaboration from West London boroughs and Transport for London was key in ensuring the provision of affordable transport. Part of the Taskforce thinking had included the securing of express services rather than relying on regular transport routes.
- Noted the difficulties for smaller business to cope with the requirements of apprenticeships schemes.
Heard that the Taskforce was keen to create new mini-hubs for small businesses where they could collaborate in offering apprenticeship opportunities whilst experiencing back office and logistical support. There was a need to map where small companies were located and what services they offered to reach them and pull them together.
- Mentioned that teachers and schools had limited capacity to deliver work experience and to encourage students to seek alternative pathways.
Heard that Taskforce members were mindful of the fact that traditionally there had been insufficient understanding of the opportunities for work in education. Schools tended to promote traditional academic pathways. The new technical qualifications, T levels, could potentially contribute to remedy this situation. The Heathrow careers programme should be funding coordinators, a network of Enterprise Advisors, to visit and support schools and colleges to show students the practical use of their education and skills and implement their careers strategy.
- Queried whether apprenticeships would pay the London Living Wage (LLW).
Heard that the Taskforce was holding meetings to reach smaller supply chain companies to help them achieve this objective. Paying the LLW would be a contractual requirement for companies bidding in the schemes. In addition, it was key to convince employers that it was in their own interest to pay the LLW, due to its benefits in terms of the retention of valued skilled employees.
- Noted that key points to be taken forward included social inclusion, the apprenticeship levy and using third sector in relation to apprenticeships, directing internships for hard to reach groups, the Living Wage and sustainable access to the airport – including cycling.

Bernadette Marjoram, West London Alliance Interim Director, said that she would feed back the points made in the discussion to the West London Skills and Employment Board.

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The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett asked for the close collaboration of the Board and its members with the Taskforce to make the recommendations work.

Resolved:

That the Board:

- i) noted the presentation of Heathrow Skills taskforce.
- ii) identified the following issues of shared interest to be incorporated onto the forward plan of the WLEPB:
 - a. the social inclusion agenda and the need to positively affect ‘hard to reach’ groups via apprenticeships and with the help of the third sector.
 - b. the need for the provision of the LLW.
 - c. the provision of affordable and sustainable means of transport (via bus, express services and cycling infrastructure).
- iii) agreed that the delivery of any actions relating to the item be delegated to the West London Skills & Employment Board, led by the Leader of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- iv) The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett be invited to return to the WLEPB in a year time to present an update.

7. West London Priorities Refresh

Paul Najsarek, Chief Executive Ealing Council, introduced this item noting the significant achievements in delivering the WLEPB Vision for Growth so far. However, this strategy required updating. Section four of the report identified areas to be incorporated into a refreshed work plan for the Board, yet there was capacity to produce a more comprehensive piece of work and he asked the board to agree to that, allowing officers to take a more in-depth look, and asked Board members to provide their views on the matters identified in that section of the report to guide this work.

Luke Ward said that the economic context had evolved over the last three years, and that the policy agenda that had moved on. There was a need to explore what initiatives could be pushed to a next level, i.e. the West London Orbital, and what other similar challenges could be taken on board. Reflection and work was required on what the new opportunities could be. Section four of the report made some suggestions, but those could change as consultation is undertaken.

Comments and questions:

Board members:

- Noted that it was desirable for the report to provide examples and tangible evidence of achievements.
Luke Ward noted the point to provide more evidence. There had been an effort not to duplicate what happened locally. The WLA was waiting for money awarded to be transferred from the City of London Corporation from the Strategic Investment Pool

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(SIP) to invest in digital infrastructure. The focus now was on bringing more money in.

- Suggested examining the cultural offer. This offer was strong in each of the boroughs, and it underpinned economic development and performance. It could be an emergent policy initiative to bring the boroughs' cultural offer together in a more coordinated manner.
- Mentioned high quality design housing supply, London did not fare well in terms of broadband connectivity –where private sector investment was key— compared to other world cities. The WLA had a role to play on achieving a sustainable transport network. There was a need to support business growth, via the provision of collaborative spaces to work.

Resolved:

That the Board:

- i) Noted the summary of progress to date delivering the West London Vision for growth.
- ii) Noted the comments and suggestions on sustainable transport through the West, growth opportunities via co-working spaces and connectivities for the initiatives.
- iii) Agreed that a refreshed work plan, incorporating these comments, be developed in consultation with officers and returned to a future meeting of the WLEPB.

8. West London Orbital Progress Review

The Chair noted that a considerable amount had been accomplished on the WLO rail line project. The key issue pending was that of funding for the realisation of the project.

Luke Ward said that the development of the outline Business Case was close to completion. Individual Borough Planning Services were working on respective plans. There would be a decision on the next phase of the WLO in early 2019. Efforts were being made to secure the attendance of the London Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander, at the next WLEPB meeting. She had been supportive of the project.

Board members:

- Noted that the wider context of TfL bus routes in outer London needed to be examined. Changes being brought about to these routes by London Government did not always fit well with the proposals around the WLO project. The Board had to ensure that changes fitted in with the WLO plans and infrastructure.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) noted the Outline Case for the scheme was being developed and for it to be brought to a future Board meeting.
- ii) Noted the timeline and approach set out in sections two and three of the report
- iii) The fit of TfL bus routes in outer London with the WLO project be identified as action for consideration not already included within the WLO programme.

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9. Capital West London Update

The Board heard a presentation on Capital West London's progress to date from Ross Sturley. CWL aimed to work in partnership to embed the conditions for economic growth in West London, supporting business growth and growing the tax rate base. There was a big effort in generating public-private partnerships. CWL had already generated real investment enquires which had been passed on to the individual Borough's teams.

CWL had hosted a Growth Summit in October 2018 attended by two hundred delegates. It had achieved excellent political commitment and had hosted a range of private sector speakers. The Summit included a successful Business Forum that was aimed at local businesses with potential to grow. A report would be produced on the conference and shared with the Committee at a future date.

In the future, CWL would be hosting conferences and attending external events (Expo Real, Genesis, etc.). They had developed a new website that had been launched in May 2018. CWL sought deeper engagement with local authorities.

Board members:

- Noted that WLEPB members had been present at the conference and that it had been very well organised.
Luke Ward noted that CWL had been asked to organise an event in 2019 and they had managed to deliver it in October 2018. He noted that these types of events and the publicity they generated were essential to gain interest from investors.
- Asked how many attendees at the conference had been private investors.
Heard that detailed information would be available in the forthcoming report, but it had been estimated that the private -public attendance ratio had been 50-50. Mostly, attendees had been people already involved and investing.
- Suggested that it was an appropriate time to bring together the different Borough's thinking on Brexit. There should be a provision of different scenarios and this should be brought to the fore.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) noted the presentation on Capital West London progress in delivering the programme and creating new investment opportunities for boroughs.
- ii) congratulated CWL on organising a positive event showcasing West London to investors.

10. Strategic Infrastructure Pot (Oral Update)

Paul Najsarek invited Luke Ward to present the oral update on the Strategic Infrastructure Pot.

Luke Ward said that the WLA was waiting for the £11.13m awarded from the Strategic Investment Pot for the successful bids on 'Investment in Digital' and 'Skills & Productivity' to be released. Officers in the City of London Corporation were at an advanced stage in

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the governance process for the funding pot and were working on how to get the money released to individual boroughs. In 2019 there would be a second round of SIP funding, however, this time London would retain only 75% of growth in business rates income.

The Chair noted that unfortunately that inferior retention of 75% had been confirmed. Boroughs had pushed back against this decision – as it was a 2-year pilot for the London boroughs and the City of London Corporation, with the agreement of the government, to establish the London Business Rates Pool whereby London retained 100% of any growth in business rates income over and above the business rates baseline set by central government. Fifteen per cent of the additional income available from pooling had been used to establish a collective Strategic Investment Pot. Despite efforts, it was confirmed that for 2019-2020 the retention would be of 75%, and therefore the Pot would be smaller.

Board members:

- Expressed their disappointment at the reduced retention but noted that it was key to speed up the process of investing and spending the money already allocated for projects.
- Noted that the news of lesser retention raised problematic scenarios: if costs for the implementation of the projects were to run over budget boroughs would potentially find themselves unable to bail them out.
- Noted that the projects spending had passed and been cleared by Cabinets in individual boroughs.

Resolved

That the Board:

- i) noted the oral update on the Strategic Infrastructure Pot.

11. WLEPB Work Programme, November 2018

Board members thanked Bernadette Marjoram on her contribution to the Board and the WLA for the last six months as Interim WLA Director. David Francis, the new permanent WLA Director, would join the Board for the next meeting.

Resolved:

- i) noted the West London Economic Prosperity Board (WLEPB) work programme.
- ii) requested that the London Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander, be invited to a future meeting to speak on the West London Orbital.
- iii) noted that there would be WLEPB Future Priorities report to the next meeting of the Board.
- iv) noted that there would be a report on economic trends and Brexit to the Board for the next meeting.
- v) Identified the NHS state as a specific area arising from discussion that they would like to be incorporated into the workplan of the Committee: that London Councils should request control over NHS property to be devolved to boroughs to aide increase the borough's housing building effort.

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12. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board will be held on Wednesday 27 February 2019 at 10am in Westminster University Boardroom, 309 Regent Street, London W1B 2HW

Councillor Julian Bell, Chair (London Borough of Ealing)

The meeting concluded at 11:45am.

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