

West London Economic Prosperity Board Minutes

Wednesday 17 February 2021

PRESENT

Members

Councillor Stephen Cowan – Chair (Hammersmith & Fulham)
Councillor Dan Thomas (Barnet)
Councillor Muhammed Butt (Brent)
Councillor Graham Henson (Harrow)

Other Attendees

Tony Clements (Hammersmith & Fulham), Niall Bolger (Hounslow), Cath Shaw (Barnet), Paul Walker (Harrow), David Francis, Andrew Barry-Purssell, David Pack (West London Alliance), and Andrew Dakers (West London Business)

NOTE: This meeting was held remotely – youtu.be/kvH6osbo00U

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell (Ealing), Curran (Hounslow), and Rajawat (Hounslow).

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2020 were approved.

3. DATA TO INFORM ECONOMIC RECOVERY

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) presented the item that outlined work to develop a data dashboard of economic indicators at the sub-

regional level to inform delivery of the Build and Recover plan and understand key areas of focus as the economic impact of the pandemic evolves.

The dashboard presented both data which can be collected from published sources - sub-regionally and at borough level - and includes opportunities to draw on new work undertaken at London level by GLA Economics to analyse and present relevant data previously unavailable to or not readily accessible to boroughs.

The Chair highlighted the worrying unemployment numbers and the need for an effective economic plan to tackle the crisis.

Councillor Henson added that there was also a mental health crisis as a result of the pandemic which would impact the employment situation and needed to be addressed. David Francis noted that, prior to the pandemic, work had been done on barriers to employment with health and care partners. Inequalities was a big focus of the recovery.

Councillor Tatler supported the work and said the region needed to press the Government on the levelling up agenda – London shouldn't lose out. The Chair agreed and said the city needed to make it clear to Government that London would play a key role in leading the country out of recession. Levelling down London would level down the rest of the country.

RESOLVED

The report was noted.

4. APPROACH TO INFLUENCING AND COMMUNICATIONS

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) presented the item that outlined a proposed approach to influencing and communicating to support delivery of the Build and Recover plan.

He added that there was a need for a distinct strategy for West London, but it should be joined up with the wider London strategy. There would be a review of the approach in mid-March after the Government's budget announcement, and more was known about the future of the furlough scheme.

Councillor Henson said councils should be seeking out more major employers to work with them. The Chair agreed and noted that was a key part of the recovery task force – they were keen to amplify the voices of businesses. He said there needed to be an alliance across West London.

Members supported the proposed approach to influencing and communications associated with the Build and Recover plan.

RESOLVED

The report was noted.

5. UPDATE ON APPROACH TO GREEN RECOVERY

Paul Walker (Corporate Director – Community, London Borough of Harrow) presented the item that set out progress on elements of the green recovery strand of the Build and Recover plan.

Councillor Henson asked how West London could make better use of available Government funds. There were lots of good ideas out there, but they needed funding.

Paul Walker agreed that the opportunities were there. London Councils coordinated funding applications and it was a very complicated system – so more could be done to improve that. The issue had been raised at London Recovery Board.

Niall Bolger (Chief Executive of Hounslow Council) said the ‘Green New Deal’ mission was one of most advanced in terms of detail. A positive working relationship had been secured with Eco-Cities for carbon mitigation plans, with the proposal being presented at COP26 (the UN Climate Change Conference). The intention was to work with London boroughs and other cities to put together a business case for large scale investment. West London was in a strong position with a number of investable projects.

The Chair said everyone was passionate about a green recovery, but the challenge was how to shift unemployed people to green economy jobs. There needed to be practical measures that provided people losing work with clear routes into good jobs in the green economy after the recession, to include details of the employment journey and opportunities to bid for Government funding. Niall Bolger noted that this topic was a live debate at the skills and employment board and the work should be joined up. A report on progress with this work would be provided at this board’s next meeting.

ACTION: David Francis / Niall Bolger

RESOLVED

The report was noted.

6. WEST LONDON INNOVATION DISTRICT CONCEPT

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) presented the item that set out a proposed way forward to establish a shared definition of the innovation district concept for West London. West London had a number of world leading clusters – officers had identified White City, the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, and Heathrow. The proposal was to bring together stakeholders to get funding and support for these areas.

Andrew Dakers (CEO of West London Business) gave a short presentation on the ‘London West’ innovation district.

Councillor Henson raised the importance of good transportation links to these sites. The Chair said HS2 was supposed to include a superfast train link from

White City to Heathrow. Andrew Dakers added that there were also new considerations with the rise of remote working. Niall Bolger agreed and said it highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure. In the sector – with global talent – there was a huge opportunity to connect digitally as well as physically.

Councillor Tatler also felt there should be a priority on investment in public transport infrastructure and digital infrastructure.

The Chair said there were lessons to be learned from other parts of the world like the San Francisco Bay Area and the ‘Brainpower Triangle’ (the area between Harvard University, Tufts University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

The Chair said he would like to see more on the White City experience and link this work with the White City innovation district.

RESOLVED

The report was noted.

7. BUILD AND RECOVER PLAN UPDATE

David Pack (interim Head of Economy & Skills, West London Alliance) introduced the item which presented the first update on the Build and Recover plan since its approval in July.

RESOLVED

The Board noted the progress update.

8. WEST LONDON ORBITAL UPDATE

Niall Bolger (Chief Executive of Hounslow Council) introduced the report which provided an update on work with Transport for London (TfL) and Network Rail to develop the business case for the West London Orbital.

The report sought approval for proposed arrangements for providing funding for the project from the resources secured from the Strategic Investment Pot and for governance arrangements reflecting the fact that the project was being jointly funded and delivered.

Andrew Barry-Purssell (West London Planning Policy and Infrastructure Delivery Manager, West London Alliance) noted that work was continuing despite TfL challenges. A lot of technical work had already been completed and the project would have significant economic benefits. Progress would be regularly reported to the Board.

Cath Shaw (Deputy Chief Executive, Barnet Council) informed the Board that there was an opportunity to invest in infrastructure at the new station at Brent Cross West to prepare for West London Orbital. Barnet had identified Section

106 funding and requested that the Board recognised that funding as Barnet's commitment. The Board agreed.

RESOLVED

1. The Board noted the progress in development of the business case for the WLO.
2. The Board agreed the proposed arrangements for funding the project from Strategic Investment Pot resources held by the West London Alliance.
3. The Board agreed the arrangements for governance of the project, including establishment of a Partners Oversight Group.

Meeting started: 2.00 pm

Meeting ended: 3.08 pm

Chair

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