

West London Economic Prosperity Board Minutes

Wednesday 9 February 2022

PRESENT

Members (attended in-person)

Councillor Stephen Cowan – Chair (Hammersmith & Fulham)
Councillor Graham Henson (Harrow)
Councillor Peter Mason (Ealing)

Members (attended remotely)

Councillor Dan Thomas (Barnet)

Other Councillors (attended remotely)

Councillor Shama Tatler (Brent)

Other Attendees (attended in-person)

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance)
David Pack (Head of Economy & Skills, West London Alliance)
Andrew Barry-Pursell (West London Planning Policy and Infrastructure Delivery Manager)
David Abbott (Head of Governance, Hammersmith and Fulham)

Other Attendees (attended remotely)

Tim McCormick (Senior Programme Manager, West London Alliance)
Ala Uddin (Senior Manager, Brent Start)
Niall Bolger (Chief Executive, Hounslow)
Cath Shaw (Deputy Chief Executive, Barnet)
John Hooton (Chief Executive, Barnet)
Jon Pickstone (Strategic Director of Economy, Hammersmith & Fulham)
Karen Galey (Assistant Director for the Economy, Hammersmith & Fulham)

NOTE: This meeting was not quorate, so an informal discussion was held

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steve Curran (Hounslow) and Councillor Muhammed Butt (Brent).

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2021 were noted.

3. PROPOSED NEXT STEPS IN SUPPORTING WEST LONDON'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY AT THE SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) introduced the report that proposed six priorities to focus future sub-regional activity to support economic recovery in West London, taking account of the evolving economic and policy context including the Economic Recovery Framework for London developed between London Councils and the Mayor of London.

Councillor Graham Henson supported the recommendations. He also suggested that the West London Alliance should further strengthen their partnership with the NHS (one of the largest employers in the region) and ensure they retained their innovation hubs in West London, through the Chair of the North West London Integrated Care System. David Pack (Head of Economy & Skills, West London Alliance) noted that there was a strand in the economic recovery paper on anchors and the NHS could be considered under that strand.

The Board noted the report.

4. UPDATE ON UPCOMING CAPITAL WEST LONDON SUMMIT AND REVIEW OF SUB-REGIONAL INWARD INVESTMENT SUPPORT

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) introduced the update on the Capital West London Summit 2022, taking place on 2 March to promote West London as a destination for inward investment. The report also set out the approach to inward investment support across West London, in light of the Build and Recover plan.

Councillor Peter Mason welcomed the report. He noted that Ealing's economic development work had moved away from speculative property development towards a focus on business incubation and bringing well paid jobs back to the borough – and felt it should be clear that that was the focus for West London as a whole.

The Chair said the work being done with STEM, arts, and media businesses will be critical to providing jobs and start-up opportunities for our residents. He also said more needed to be done to encourage innovative smaller and medium sized businesses in the sub-region. The Chair suggested a programme of networking events to meet leaders of smaller and upcoming businesses.

Councillor Shama Tatler said the WLA should look at how business resilience was supported post-pandemic and how council policies supported business growth and investment. David Francis said the WLA were looking to use the Growth Summit to look at the sub-regional approach to business support. He also noted that the WLA had been working with corporate leaders and a package of work would be launched at the Summit.

The Board noted the report.

5. WEST LONDON ORBITAL (STANDING ITEM)

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) introduced the update on work with Transport for London (TfL) and Network Rail to develop the business case for the West London Orbital and the next steps to take the project forward.

Andrew Barry-Purssell (West London Planning Policy and Infrastructure Delivery Manager) noted that work by Network Rail and others had shown the project was feasible and value for money. He also noted that analysis had shown there was still a need for the project despite the changes to working patterns caused by the pandemic with orbital travel maintaining high levels of use throughout.

Councillor Peter Mason said the Board should recognise that the Government's Levelling Up White Paper suggested there would not be as much investment in TfL or infrastructure in London generally. Given the TfL's financial situation he said it may be necessary to engage with the Department for Transport directly.

Councillor Dan Thomas noted that the Levelling Up White Paper supported the idea of boroughs and sub-regions joining up on innovative ideas and it may be that we need to get grant funding direct from Government for the project, as Barnet did for the Brent Cross West station.

The Board noted the report.

6. WLA ECONOMY & SKILLS PROGRAMME UPDATES

David Francis (Director, West London Alliance) introduced the report which provided updates on the progress of the West London Alliance's Economy & Skills Programme in line with the themes set out in the annual business plan, covering:

- Good employment and the right skills
- Infrastructure – West London Orbital and mobility

- Infrastructure – Tomorrow’s digital economy

David Francis noted that over the pandemic, unemployment had more than doubled. This was despite a high level of vacancies, showing there was a skills mismatch which the WLA was looking to address through several employment support programmes including No Wrong Door, the Work & Health Programme, and Job Entry: Targeted Support.

Councillor Graham Henson welcomed the report and said members and officers should be proud of the amount of work that had been done to get people into work.

The Chair said there had been a lot of progress in this area and commended David Francis, David Pack, and the WLA’s partners in business, academia, and health for their contributions to this agenda.

The Board noted the report.

7. FORWARD PLAN

The Chair asked for an item to consider options for engaging more business voices in the Board’s policy discussions.

The Board noted the draft forward plan.

Meeting started: 2.05 pm
Meeting ended: 2.45 pm

Chair

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