

Minutes of the meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board

Date: Thursday, 18 January 2024

Venue: The Atrium, ground floor, Perceval House, Ealing W5 2HL

Attendees (in person): Councillors

Councillor Peter Mason (Ealing Council), Councillor Tom Bruce, (substitute, Hounslow Council), Councillor Muhammed Butt (Brent Council), Councillor Stephen Cowan (Hammersmith & Fulham Council)

Attendees (virtual): Councillors

Councillor Barry Rawlings (Barnet Council)

Apologies: Councillors

Osborn and Rajawat

Other Attendees (in-person):

Cath Shaw (Barnet), Jonathan Pickstone (Hammersmith & Fulham), Peter O'Brian (Hounslow).

West London Alliance (WLA) officers:

Majeed Neki, Anthony McNamara.

Ealing Officers:

Amy Jenkinson (Cabinet Support) and Cornelia Harding (Democratic Services)

Other Attendees attended remotely:

WLA Director: David Francis (due to travel disruption)

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Shantanu Rajawat, Hounslow Council; Councillor Tom Bruce substituted for him.

There were also apologies from:

Cllr Paul Osborn – Leader, Harrow Council

Niall Bolger – Chief Executive, Hounslow Council

Cllr Shama Tatler – Member for Regeneration, Brent Council

Alice Lester - Corporate Director for Communities and Regeneration, Brent Council

2 Election of vice-chair

Resolved:

That this item was to be deferred to a future meeting of the board.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board held on 7 July 2023 be agreed and signed by the chair as a true and correct record.

5 West London vision, economic priorities and WLEPB forward plan

The chair introduced this report and said it stemmed from a WLA meeting in December 2023 at which a high-level vision statement for the WLA had been agreed by WLA Leaders.

Mr David Francis, Director, West London Alliance, explained that the vision was to bring together the joint work among the alliance members across economic, social and environmental priorities, and that this was broader than what the WLEPB covered.

The headline vision was *Connected communities in the world's most connected place, today and tomorrow*. The vision recognised the strengths of the west London economy which had bounced back since the pandemic; the vision also recognised that exclusion and inequality remained an issue for many residents and that there were real challenges around pollution and climate change.

The vision built on the corporate plans of the individual WLA boroughs, with a focus on what they could do better together. The content was underpinned by four strategic aims: making West London more inclusive, more productive, more resilient and more influential.

The forward plan annexed to the report for the board's consideration, was aligned to the vision and strategic aims and covered different topics in the four quarters until 2025. Also included were suggestions for invitees to future meetings.

A board member suggested that the topic of 'West London energy constraints and energy planning' might be discussed earlier in the forward plan as it was currently being raised often by a lot of stakeholders. WLA officers noted that the GLA was scheduled to publish an update report in Spring 2024.

There was some discussion of the headline vision *Connected communities in the world's most connected place, today and tomorrow*. A board member referred to the strengths and huge potential of the west London sub-region, such as the film industry in Ealing, the transport corridor running through the A4 & M4 (Brent) and the innovation district (Hammersmith & Fulham). The

board member went on to suggest that given the changes in technology, west London stood every chance of becoming the economic powerhouse of the UK by the middle of this century, even over-taking the City of London on the current trajectory, and that we should be confident to project a bold vision that would empower and inspire people.

The chair reminded the board that the current vision statement came out of the WLA board meeting in December and had been adopted at that meeting. Mr Francis informed members that alongside the vision statement, the WLA's influencing strategy would include a clear economic narrative and priorities for external engagement.

Mr Francis went on to say that in the past, the WLA had a separate economic vision and the last time that had been produced was February 2020 and it had been impacted by the pandemic. Mr Francis commended Cllr Cowan for leading the WLA's [pandemic] recovery work and noted the need to learn lessons from this for the WLA's future work. The board concurred with this view and the chair said he hoped it would form part of the discussions the WLA would have with Professor Andrew Jones from Brunel University.

Resolved that:

- i) the WLEPB note and approve the WLEPB forward plan and standing agenda (Annex A to the report on the West London vision, economic priorities and the WLEPB Forward Plan).
- i)
- ii) the WLA officers would ensure that the influencing strategy and external engagement work set out the strengths of west London and its economic clusters, in the context of London as a polycentric city; what was currently positive and what we would like to see in the region in future, as well as making the case for West London's ability and power to help level-up the rest of the UK.

6 West London Orbital: progress and context, anticipated decisions and next steps

The chair introduced this item by saying that he and Cllr Rajawat had recently had a meeting with the deputy mayor for London, about the west London Orbital (WLO) and its increasing importance for north-west London; particularly for the dispersal of people from Old Oak Common station. It was anticipated that the WLO would unlock regeneration in that area. TfL were under some financial strain in terms of their budget for capital projects and their settlement from the government. There were a growing number of competing priorities in other parts of London, so the ability for the WLA to make the case for the WLO would become increasingly important, particularly as the next phase of planning for the WLO approached.

David Francis informed the Board that the end of the GRIP 2 Stage of work was approaching and was expected to confirm that it would be technically feasible to build the scheme, much of which would be on an existing line. The

outputs from this work would include an updated cost estimate. It was expected that the work on feasibility and benefits would be completed by the end of March 2024, which would allow a decision to then be taken on the next stage of work which would be detailed design and public consultation and conclude with an application under the Transport and Works Act. There had been good collaboration with TfL so far, endorsed by the recent meeting with the deputy mayor for transport. As well as strong political support, there was a strong strategic case for the West London Orbital due to increasing passenger numbers and the connection with Old Oak Common.

Mr Francis went on to say that the scheme would be brought to boroughs for a decision in summer 2024 and the report to this meeting was to set out the current scene and to flag that a decision would need to be made. To inform that decision, officers were also commissioning updated work to look at the benefits for the affected boroughs in west London and the wider impact. Anticipated benefits included joining up disadvantaged and deprived areas to economic opportunities; connecting Brent Cross with Old Oak Common, right down to the great west corridor in Hounslow. The WLO would also be attractive to travellers from outside London and would relieve congestion on the North Circular. The WLO satisfied a range of economic, social and environmental objectives.

A board member asked whether there was a case for the WLEPB to lobby the government and set out the anticipated benefits and opportunities with respect to the funding that would be needed. He advised that it would be important to lobby now and not to lose the momentum, no matter which government was in power. WLA officers noted that this would be taken forward.

There was discussion on the benefits of the WLO and comparisons made with the extensions of the DLR and the Bakerloo line and what the WLO might unlock in terms of growth and regeneration. The chair made the point that as well as travel between Zones 1 to 5, radial networks to travel from Zone 3 to 3 were also important and would require infrastructure investment due to the new ways of working and new patterns of behaviour.

Cath Shaw (Deputy Chief Executive, Barnet) clarified that the range of jobs in Barnet would be quite broad and attractive for west Londoners generally. She concurred with the suggestion about lobbying early and getting the WLO into the thinking of the major parties. She suggested having a program to generate interest in the WLO in the summer and autumn.

David Francis agreed that there was a strong strategic case for the WLO and the WLA needed to be able to proceed once a strong funding package was in place. He said this scheme may also be able to learn lessons from other schemes that had already been delivered in London.

The Chair emphasised the importance of serious discussions on financial contributions from TfL and from the boroughs to move from the GRIP 2 Stage to GRIP 3 and beyond. Boroughs could factor in the Community Infrastructure

Levy (CIL) funding and could seek obligations from developments along that route. It was an invest to grow as well as an invest to save project.

Resolved:

That the WLEPB:

- i) note progress to date and next steps in the development of the West London Orbital rail scheme; and
- ii) reaffirm their support for the WLO prior to London and national elections.

7 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the West London Economic Prosperity Board was scheduled for Wednesday 17 April 2024.

Meeting commenced: 11.00 am

Meeting finished: 11.33 am

Signed:

Dated: Wednesday, 16 October 2024

P Mason (Chair)