



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY**  
**BUSINESS BOARD: VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 15th September 2020

**Time:** 2.30pm – 4:20pm

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**Present:** Andy Neely (Vice-Chairman), Tina Barsby, Mark Dorsett, Councillor John Holdich, Faye Holland, Aamir Khalid, Al Kingsley, Jason Mellad, Mayor James Palmer, Nitin Patel and Rebecca Stephens.

**165. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Vice-Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that he would be chairing the meeting in the Chairman's absence.

Apologies were received from Austen Adams and Nicki Mawby.

Rebecca Stephens made a declaration of interest, which was clarified as neither a disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-disclosable pecuniary interest, in relation to agenda item 3.3 (Business Growth Service – Full Business Case) and the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that she would not be required to leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Andy Neely made a declaration of interest in relation to agenda item 3.3 (Business Growth Service – Full Business Case) and confirmed that he would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Due to the declaration made by the Vice-Chairman in relation to the Business Growth Service, and the absence of the Chairman, Austen Adams, it was necessary to appoint a Vice-Chairman for the duration of that item. It was agreed to appoint Aamir Khalid as Vice-Chair for item 3.3 (Business Growth Service – Full Business Case).

**166. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH JULY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

The Business Spaces Manager observed that all the actions on the Minutes Action Log had been completed, except for Minute 152, which related to stakeholder mapping. The Vice-Chairman encouraged the remaining members to provide their relevant contacts.

**167. BUSINESS BOARD FINANCE UPDATE**

The Business Board received an update and overview of the revenue funding lines within the Business and Skills directorate, which included figures to 31st July 2020. The Finance Manager highlighted that the report included an update on the Medium Term

Financial Plan (MTFP), which would be presented to the Combined Authority Board on 25th November 2020.

While discussing the finance update, the Business Board:

- Observed that its budget for 2020/21 exceeded £6m, while the 2021/22 budget was less than £2m. While it was acknowledged that discussions were being held with the government about potential further funding, it was suggested that funding “cliff-edges” should be prepared for.
- Suggested that the budget line for marketing and promotion of services was notably low. The Finance Manager informed members that the 2021 budget had seen top slices from other programmes being spent on marketing, with a further £50k included within the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Skills programme costs, which increased the actual spend to £145k. The marketing-specific budget line had been introduced in 2020 in order to economise across the directorate and lead to more cost-effective spending, and it was noted that until the Business and Skills directorate received additional funding, it was not possible to commit to higher figures. The Director of Business and Skills observed that there had not previously been significant marketing costs because the Growth Hub operated in a reactive way, as opposed to a proactive way. The Business Growth Service would operate differently and contained a significant marketing allocation within its own budget, which he suggested would increase the actual marketing spend by up to ten times.
- Noted an error in Table 1.1 of Appendix 1, as the 20/21 total spent/forecast (grand total) was indicated as £1.7m while the figures in the table amounted to £2.7m. The Finance Manager agreed to circulate a corrected version of the table to the Board.

**Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the update and financial position relating to the revenue and capital funding lines within the Business & Skills Directorate.

**168. LOCAL GROWTH FUND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT REVIEW - SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Business Board received an update on the LGF’s programme performance to 14th August 2020. A summary of the lessons learned from the application process for funding of shovel ready projects by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was attached as Appendix 2 to the report, and the Strategic Funds Manager noted that while some of these were straightforward, in terms of promoting and coordinating, others were more complex, including a review of the LGF evaluation process and how to build bigger pipelines of opportunities with partners. The project that had been selected for the funding was going through the local assurance process and would be presented formally to the Business Board and Combined Authority Board in October or November 2020.

The final tranche of the LGF grant payment would be released in stages from October 2020, once the Cities and Local Growth Unit was satisfied with the evidence of projects being under contract and that the spend could be achieved within the timeframe. The Board was informed that three of the seven projects listed in section 4.2 of the report as being in contract/funding agreement negotiation had completed this process since 14th August, while an underspend on the Illumina project had increased the remaining LGF pot by £300k to £1.153m.

Attention was drawn to the project change request that had been submitted by Photocentric, as detailed in section 4.4 of the report, following an unprecedented level of growth within the business due to Covid-19. It was also clarified that although the Covid-19 Capital Grants Scheme had closed, claims were still being paid to businesses. While £1.8m had been paid out as of 14th August 2020, members were informed that claims levels had increased significantly in the subsequent three weeks and it was expected that the remaining resources would be distributed quickly.

Having commissioned Metro Dynamics to perform an evaluation of Phase One completed projects, a summary of each project, as well as the whole programme, would be presented to the Board when completed. A proposed monitoring report format for spending of LGF project awards was attached at Appendix E. An audit of the Board's compliance with the National Assurance Framework and governance was carried out by the Audit and Governance Committee, with all 9 recommendations having been judged to have been acted upon, and an overall opinion of 'substantial'. The process and scope of the review of the LGF application process had been established at a meeting on 18th August 2020, with an outline provided at Appendix F of the report.

While discussing the report, the Business Board:

- Welcomed the proposed monitoring report on spending of LGF project awards as providing a summary of the ongoing situation. It was suggested that it would also be helpful to include a project timeline for each of the projects included in the dashboard to provide greater context. The Strategic Fund Manager acknowledged the suggestion and agreed to include timelines in future iterations. **Action required**
- Noted a report from the Mayor that he had visited three companies that had each received a grant close to £50k from the Covid-19 Capital Grants Scheme. The Mayor noted the diversity of businesses that were receiving such grants and welcomed the ability to provide financial assistance to overcome the impacts of Covid-19. Paying tribute to all those involved in the grants, as well as the effectiveness of the support, he informed the Board that recipients had indicated the need for further grants. The Vice-Chairman welcomed the feedback and suggested that such success stories should be promoted within the business community. The Mayor noted that there would be press releases and that he would continue to visit such businesses and promote the Business Board's work on strengthening the economy. The Director of Business and Skills informed members that all grants were recorded on a public relations grid that indicated which grants were being promoted, and he undertook to circulate the grid to Business Board members. **Action required**
- Considered whether businesses that had received a grant from the Covid-19 Capital Grants Scheme and experienced success as a result of the financial support could

return some of the funding they had received, so that other businesses could benefit from the same resources as well, particularly if such interventions were to continue in the medium term. One member suggested that there was already an indirect return on the investments, as the growth of businesses and job creation both contributed to the economy. The Director informed members that there were loans, grants and equity payments available, all of which had been used according to the circumstances of each request.

- Suggested following up on the businesses that had received support from the Covid-19 Capital Grants Scheme in a few years, in order to leverage their success and strengthen connections throughout the business community. While research produced by Metro Dynamics was useful as high-level data, individual case-level data was also of great importance. It was agreed to establish a way to follow up on such cases. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Recommend to the Combined Authority approval of the project Change Request for the Photocentric LGF project;
- b) Recommend all the programme updates outlined in this paper to the Combined Authority Board; and
- c) Note the funding position and forecast for Local Growth Fund Projects in delivery.

## **169. LOCAL GROWTH FUND PROJECT PROPOSALS – SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Business Board received a report which included two applications that had been submitted as Local Growth Fund project proposals, with a view to making recommendations to the Combined Authority Board. If both projects were to be approved, it was proposed to incorporate an additional £433k from the recycled funds pot to meet the required total of £1.586m. The Strategic Manager noted that both applications were a result of the 'Covid-19 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough City Centre Exit Strategy Group' meeting held on 7th July 2020, which had called for projects seeking short-term capital investment to support the visitor economy in the city centres and target businesses with support to aid safe adaption, thus aiming to reopen and revive the city centre economies.

The first application was for Peterborough city centre and was seeking an £800k grant for a total project cost of £983k. The project aimed to support the hospitality sector in the city centre by creating a café culture in Cathedral Square, which would generate 100 jobs within the immediate investment area and a further 200 jobs indirectly through the supply chain. The total of 300 jobs for £800k represented an investment of only £2,667 per job, which was considered to be of very good value. It was noted that the risks had been well articulated and lay within the remit of the Council that was leading the project and the Board was therefore recommended to approve funding.

The second application for Cambridge Market Place was for £700k, which represented the total cost of the initial design phase of the project, which would involve a redesign of

the market square, including new stall layout and management, underground waste management, seating and heritage features. Upon the successful completion of the design stage, further funding would be sought for the construction phase. Although it was estimated that the project would safeguard around 180 jobs upon completion, given the fact that construction funding had not been obtained, the project was assessed to generate only 34 jobs, at a cost of around £20k per job. High risks had also been identified, noticeably that construction funding may not be obtained, implying a grant investment for an abandoned project that would be difficult to reclaim. On this basis it was recommended that the Board decline funding.

While considering the applications, Board members:

- Noted the extensive planning and preparation that had gone into the Peterborough city centre application. Members who had participated in the Entrepreneur Advisory Panel that had evaluated the bids suggested that the impacts would be immediately evident and that the project was likely to deliver to the timescales put forward.
- Highlighted that while the Peterborough city centre project would lead to short term job creation, the Cambridge Market Square project was a more complex, long-term project without many short-term gains, which were part of the criteria for funding. There was concern that the applicants behind the Cambridge Market Square project had misunderstood the requirements and it was suggested that they could be encouraged to reapply with a scaled down and highly focused capital investment project that met the criteria. Members noted the importance of kick-starting town-based activity and asked the Strategic Funds Manager to encourage a resubmission, having clearly set out the requirements. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Recommend that the Combined Authority Board approve funding for the project ranked 1 (Peterborough City Centre project) in table 2.9 below based on the project scoring criteria and external evaluation recommendation; and
- b) Recommend that the Combined Authority decline approval of funding at this time for the project ranked 2 (Cambridge Market Place Project) in the table at 2.9 below based on the project not meeting the scoring criteria.

## **170. COVID-19 EVIDENCE & INSIGHT REPORT**

The Business Board received its first report from Metro Dynamics on the impacts of Covid-19 as part of the ongoing Integrated Economic, Business and Skills Insight work. Following any feedback from the Board, the report would be refined and presented to the Combined Authority Board on 30th September before being shared with partners and other stakeholders. The report would enable the Combined Authority to improve the focus of interventions and be a key part of the local economic recovery strategy and newly formed growth service. It would be refreshed in March 2021, although data would be provided through a monthly dashboard that would be produced from October 2020 to March 2021.

The Metro Dynamics Director explained that the report aimed to identify areas to be monitored over the next six months and beyond, as the longer term economic impacts became apparent. There had been a £1.4b reduction in overall economic output across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough during Quarter 2, which represented about 21% annualised. The UK as a whole had experienced 6.6% output recovery in July, but overall output had recovered by less than 50% of the initial contraction. Further recovery was expected in Quarter 3, but this would not recover the total amount lost.

There were differences in the effects on economic output across the area, with Cambridge suffering more than the other districts. All sectors had been effected, however it was notable that high value, high productivity services based in and around Cambridge that were previously considered resilient had suffered, and it was recognised that given the global nature of many such businesses, the ability of the UK or regional authorities to act was hindered. At the same time, these sectors had historically recovered fast from previous shocks. The hardest hit sector in Peterborough and Fenland, in contrast, was manufacturing, reflecting the make-up of their business base. To an extent the agricultural economy of the Fens, which has continued to thrive, had mitigated the worst of the economic impact in that part of the Combined Authority area, although it was emphasised that this should not be overstated.

Members were informed that the government's furlough scheme continued to be used widely across all sectors in the area, although given the uncertainty of what support would be available when the scheme ended, the full labour implications remained unclear. Job levels were recovering at a faster rate in some sectors, such as construction, and while national data appeared to indicate lower skilled vacancies returning at a higher rate, this trend had not yet been identified in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It was highlighted that the kind of jobs reappearing in the region was one of the indicators that the researchers would be monitoring.

Analysis of the early data compiled so far was beginning to establish how the impacts would affect the Combined Authority's priorities and strategies, and how these would need to be refreshed to ensure they were consistent with emerging economic realities. While it was too early to draw significant conclusions, the initial data appeared to indicate that rather than a complete change to the core objectives of the Combined Authority, the requirement would instead be for a refining of delivery and the focus of interventions. For example, to strengthen support for issues such as business closures, retraining and new job losses.

Emphasising that the overall picture of the situation remained incomplete, given the lack of Quarter 3 data and the unreliability of forecasting in the current climate, the Metro Dynamics Director highlighted the difference between Universal Credit levels and actual unemployment numbers, which had become less clear and more difficult to predict as a result of the furlough scheme. He emphasised the importance of monitoring indicators that linked economic recovery, as demonstrated by the GDP, to labour market issues, as demonstrated by unemployment and Universal Credit claimants.

While considering the report, the Business Board:

- Clarified that around 20,000 businesses in across the region continued to use the furlough scheme, involving around 115,000 jobs. It was noted that these figures were as of the end of July 2020.
- Argued that professional and technical services had historically proved resilient during previous recessions, whereas jobs in these sectors were currently disappearing and not re-emerging. The Metro Dynamics Director agreed with the observation and further noted that a consequence of this trend would be an increase in highly experienced workers returning to the labour market and competing with young, inexperienced people.
- Recognised the importance of being provided with consistent and robust evidence on the local economy, and welcomed the proposed dashboard as a form of achieving this.
- Acknowledged the importance of monitoring the manufacturing sector on a tactical and strategic level, with one member noting that over the previous few months the Board had become aware of the need to increase local production and improve supply chains.
- Queried whether key learning points had been drawn from the past few months that could benefit the approach taken to any further lockdown. Noting that global pandemics historically consisted of an initial spike followed by a period of volatility, it was suggested that the government would seek to avoid enforcing a similarly restrictive lockdown as the previous one. If there was a further national lockdown, it was argued that large scale government schemes would be needed to deal with the economic impact. A more localised lockdown, whether on a geographical or sectorial level, would likely see the government encourage a more locally managed response. One member suggested that it would be useful to learn from the experiences of local businesses that had suffered significantly but managed to survive, such as the retail sector which had shown creativity to overcome many of its challenges, and the information widely. **Action required**
- Expressed concerns that the winding down of the furlough scheme at the end of October 2020 would result in widespread redundancies, and queried whether there were predicted figures for November. It was acknowledged that there was an expectation for an uptick in unemployment once the furlough scheme came to an end, but the Metro Dynamics Director expressed the view that with further government intervention likely it would not be as severe as originally feared. He suggested that targeted restrictions for geographical areas or specific sectors could be accompanied by similarly targeted adaptations of the furlough scheme, although the government was yet to announce how it would respond from November onwards. It was acknowledged, however, that even targeted extensions to the furlough scheme would be unable to prevent many redundancies.
- Clarified that the dashboard would be produced by Metro Dynamics on a monthly basis and that the Business Board would be able to select items to include where the data was available. The Senior Interim Programme Manager informed members that the technical ability of the dashboard, as well as its content, were still under

discussion, although regular updates would be provided at Business Board meetings.

**Action required**

- Noted the importance of ensuring that the projects supported by the Board were aligned to the dashboard's data and that focus was on the right areas of the economy and area.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Recommend the Combined Authority approve the Metro Dynamics Report, subject to final revisions, following input from the Business Board.

## **171. COVID-19 LOCAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The Business Board received a report which detailed the development of the Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS), and which included the first draft of the strategy itself. The Director of Business and Skills emphasised that it was only the first draft and had not benefited from significant exposure to the robust evidence base that was emerging from the research being carried out by Metro Dynamics. He proposed that an independent body would assess how it should be adapted in light of the findings from the research and that a second draft be presented at the Board meeting on 10th November. He noted issues that had already been identified and would need specific attention, such as levelling up across the area and the importance of accelerating the recovery of professional services and scientific areas of Cambridge, which reflected the sectors that could potentially lead Cambridge, the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, and indeed the nation into a faster recovery. Notwithstanding, he emphasised that the initial draft still provided a good blueprint for a portfolio of interventions that could be mobilised in November and be active in the spring.

The LERS had been co-created by the Covid-19 Local Economic Recovery Sub-Group, which consisted of economic development officers from all seven constituent local authorities, business representatives, business organisations, Greater Cambridge Partnership, Public Health England, along with other key stakeholders. A Business Board sub-group had participated through a workshop, while 100 local businesses had also been consulted. The Director of Business and Skills noted that whilst the pandemic and subsequent economic impacts had raised many challenges, the LERS represented a bold and optimistic mission to lead the nation out of recession by accelerating the recovery, rebound and renewal of the economy in a new and more digitally enabled, greener, healthier and more inclusive way than ever before. The strategy was based on the established pillars of the Local Industrial Strategy, and the interventions within each pillar, most of which were funded, practical and implementable immediately, were detailed in Appendix 1 of the LERS. The more strategic, underlying issues and interventions that were affecting the economy prior to Covid-19 would be dealt with through the Combined Authority's Investment Prospectus

While considering the report, Board members:



- Acknowledged the speed at which the document had been drafted despite significant challenges and the multiple inputs from which it had benefitted, while paying tribute to officers working in conjunction with the constituent local authorities.
- Noted that the Skills Committee had considered the same document on 14th September 2020.
- Observed that the LERS would be a continuously evolving strategy, given the nature of the problem that it was tasked with overcoming.
- Supported the proposal for an independent body to progress the next stage of the strategy's development, although highlighted the importance of local economic development specialists carrying out its subsequent implementation.
- Clarified that the Investment Prospectus would be presented to the Board at the meeting on 10th November, although the Director of Business and Skills informed members that it would be circulated prior to the agenda publication. He noted that when the government was assessing the Investment Prospectus, it would be keen to establish what lay behind it in terms of evidence and a recovery strategy, which emphasised the importance of developing a second draft of the LERS.
- Observed that the area benefitted from residents of its two biggest cities having complete access to full fibre connectivity and queried whether such digital connectivity and infrastructure was being sufficiently leveraged, given that other Local Enterprise Partnerships had promoted the benefits of their digital capabilities. The Director acknowledged the observation and agreed that more specific information should be included on how digital technology and connectivity were intended to be used and how that would be of benefit.
- Suggested that Appendix 1 to the strategy was misleading in that it identified the University of Peterborough as creating over 21,000 jobs. Given that the majority of those jobs were actually potential employee candidates for future provision, it did not fit well alongside the other jobs created because of the funding. The Director of Business and Skills agreed with the suggestion and identified a need to reflect on how such projects were represented in the document.

Noting that the second draft of the strategy would be developed by an independent body, it was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the first draft of the Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS) for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough; and
- b) Note that the final draft of the Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS) for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough will be brought back in November 2020 for final approval.

## **172. BUSINESS GROWTH SERVICE - FULL BUSINESS CASE**

*[Andy Neely left the meeting following his declaration of interest and Aamir Khalid assumed the position of Vice-Chairman]*

The Business Board received a report which provided the information required to make recommendations to the Combined Authority Board to approve and agree the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Business Growth Service, including a delegation to award the contract to deliver it. The Director of Business and Skills emphasised that the Business Growth Service was one of the core integrated interventions that the Local Industrial Strategy would deliver, incorporating a growth coaching service, an inward investment service, a skills brokerage service and a capital growth investment fund under one roof.

Evidence suggested that 6% of small and medium-sized enterprises were responsible for economic growth and the aim was therefore to identify and target those businesses so that they could become more successful, while also attracting more high-value and fast-growing companies. It was noted that different areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough required different focuses according to the local economy, workforce and sectorial focus.

A Delivery Consortium Programme Management Office would feed in to a Programme Management Committee on a monthly basis, and a Business Board member would sit on the Programme Management Committee. The Chairman of the Programme Management Committee would report to the Business Board and Skills Committee three times per year and to the CA Board two times per year. The granular and layered oversight included connections to local authorities to ensure that delivery made sense to the people, local authority, businesses and business groups in each area.

A set of conditions had been established as part of the approval process for the Outline Business Case, all of which were required to be fulfilled within the Full Business Case, and section 4 of the report detailed how this had been achieved. The Board was also informed that the Business Growth Service had been appropriately adapted to support the Covid-19 Local Economic Recovery Strategy, as laid out in section 5 of the report.

While considering the report, the Business Board:

- Welcomed the thorough process that had been followed in the development of the Business Growth Service. One member queried the extent to which other partners and local authorities had been involved in its development. The Director confirmed that they had been involved extensively and that the Combined Authority had worked with economic development officers in each of the constituent councils to draw up an intervention plan for all the measures that was tailored to their specific area. Offers had been made to provide office space for staff within the service to directly deliver services to customers in their area.
- Observed that the financial implications only considered the next three years and sought clarification on more long-term projections. The Director acknowledged that similar programmes developed over the last fifteen years tended to predicate themselves upon completely solving the market failure problems within three years and thus no longer being required, but he argued that this was unrealistic. He noted that the Combined Authority would have received its allocation of the Shared

Prosperity Fund within three years and further funding for the service would be considered for the service if considered appropriate and of benefit.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve and adopt the Full Business Case to mobilise the delivery of the Business Growth Service, including;
- b) Agree that the conditions for FBC approval set at OBC have been met, specifically:
  - 1) Confirmation of EU funding, and the conditions set out in item 4.2 for contracting only upon further correspondence from MHCLG.
  - 2) Appointment of delivery partner
  - 3) Submission of 3-year cash flow forecast; monthly for year 1 and annual thereafter.
  - 4) Contact / Involvement of HMRC to upskill Growth Hub staff
  - 5) Discussions with local authority partners on availability of in-kind support via use of L/A office space, provisional of secretariat, and officer time
  - 6) Submission of an independent state aid report covering:
    - i. ESF and ERDF application and utilisation;
    - ii. allocation of £2.335m of the authority's revenue budget to Growth Service Management Company Ltd;
    - iii. Management of Capital Growth Fund
  - 7) Submission of Sustainability and Environmental policy for the Growth Service Management Company Ltd
  - 8) Submission of evidence to support the claim of delivering 2.8 new jobs per firm receiving supported in-depth coaching
- c) Agree that additional conditions, to be considered post-COVID 19, have been met, specifically:
  - 1) That the Service has been appropriately adapted to support the Local COVID 19 Economic Recovery Strategy
  - 2) That the impacts of COVID 19 on contributing funding from Enterprise Zone, business rates receipts, have been appropriately considered.

## **173. GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE**

*[Andy Neely rejoined the meeting and resumed the position of Vice-Chairman]*

The Business Board received a report that provided an update on progress that had been achieved towards the recommendations that had emerged from its governance review, which had been presented on 23rd March 2020. The Business Spaces Manager informed members that most of the recommendations had been completed or were in

the process of being completed, with details on the individual actions included in Appendix 2 to the report.

While considering the update report, the Business Board:

- Recognised that the recent recruitment of a Business and Market Engagement Officer would assist in efforts to promote the work of the Business Board and encourage external interest as part of the wider creation of a communication plan for both internal and external purposes.
- Welcomed the increased interactions with other Local Enterprise Partnerships in order to establish best practices.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the progress made on the preliminary recommendations and next steps outlined within the Governance Review.

#### **174. NOMINATION TO THE GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Vice-Chairman informed the Business Board that consideration of agenda item 3.5 (Nomination to the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board), had been deferred to a future meeting. He noted that discussions were ongoing with the Greater Cambridge Partnership to identify a suitable nomination.

#### **175. BUSINESS BOARD HEADLINES FOR THE COMBINED AUTHORITY**

Acknowledging the decisions that had been reached during the meeting, the Business Board noted the headlines that the Chairman would convey at the Combined Authority Board on 30th September 2020.

#### **176. BUSINESS BOARD FORWARD PLAN**

While considering the Forward Plan, the Director of Business and Skills confirmed that a report on the Agri-Tech Sector Strategy would be presented at the next meeting on 10th November 2020. It was noted that the process had been stalled to review how expectations were affected by Covid-19 but one member argued that the agricultural sector had not been too negatively affected and therefore it should be possible to progress.

The Director noted that it would need to be established how to incorporate the public relations grid (see Minute 168) and Business Board dashboard (see Minute 170) into future agendas. **Action Required**

He also informed the Board that an extraordinary meeting might need to be called in October to consider Phase 2 of the University of Peterborough LGF application. The

Business Spaces undertook to circulate potential dates for this potential meeting, to increase members' likelihood of being able to attend. **Action required**

Observing that the next meeting would be the annual meeting and would therefore be held in public, albeit in a virtual setting, the Business Board noted its Forward Plan.