

PRESENT: Councillor Karen Shore (Chairman)

Councillors Carol Gahan, Lynn Gibbon, Sam Naylor, Bob Rudd,
Michael Baynham and Neil Sullivan

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Dawson and
Mark Stocks

Officers in attendance:	Charlie Seward	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
	Laurence Ainsworth	Director of Public Services Reform
	Rob Butler	Strategy and Innovation Manager
	Matthew Dodd	Strategy and Innovation Manager
	Deborah Ridgeley	Democracy Business Manager
	James O'Sullivan	Democracy and Elections Officer

Invited Speakers:	John Adlen	Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
	Matthew Hodgson	West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce

1 MEMBERSHIP, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Policy Commission and introductions round the table were made.

Members declared the following interests:-

Councillor Karen Shore – declared an Outside Body Interest as a Member of Ellesmere Port Development Board.

Councillor Michael Baynham – declared they were employed by an organisation that imported from and exported to Europe.

Councillor Neil Sullivan – declared they were employed by an organisation that imported from and exported to Europe.

2 INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman referred to the report considered by Cabinet on 12 September 2018 which established the Policy Commission: Planning for a Post Brexit Future.

- **Terms of Reference:** It was noted that the Policy Commission would focus the development of practical recommendations in relation to Brexit, and the potential implications for Cheshire West and Chester, reporting to Cabinet in the spring of 2019.
- **Focus of the group:** It was noted that the focus of the group would be future local challenges and opportunities, as opposed to a discussion on the wider issues, or commentary on national developments.
- **Work Plan:** Approval of a high-level work programme to discuss areas including; the Local Economy, Workforce Planning, EU Funding, State Aid,

Procurement, Legislation and Regulation; and Citizenship. The Commission may also consider other areas of potential impact identified through the course of its work. As part of the Work Plan, Members agreed to convene a Public Evidence session in January 2019, before approval a Final Draft Report to Cabinet in February 2019.

3 PRESENTATION - POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BREXIT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Charlie Seward, Deputy Chief Executive (Places) Cheshire West and Chester Council, presented an overview of the national and local picture in relation to potential Brexit implications. This included guidance issued by government and other national bodies, such as the Technical Guidance Documents which have been produced by Government for in the event of there being a No Deal Brexit Scenario. These areas included all of those listed within the Work Plan Approval section above.

Items raised by Members:-

- Need to consider the impact of Brexit on tourism locally. This may have a particularly significant impact on Chester, due to the number of people employed in the sector, the number visitors to the city and the level of income that this brings.
- Need to consider the potentially significant impact on the University of Chester, including the classification and ease of movement associated with students (Erasmus student exchange programme), as well as researchers and lecturers.
- Consideration of the Council's Pension investments and any additional risks which may emerge as a result
- Welcome the presentation's focus on opportunities as well as challenges, including (for example) the potential for Cheshire West and Chester to develop stronger links with the Liverpool City Region and take advantage of any future trade deals.

4 PRESENTATION - POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BREXIT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Charlie Seward, Deputy Chief Executive (Places) for Cheshire West and Chester Council, presented an overview of the national and local picture in relation to potential Brexit implications on the Economy. This included; Imports and Exports, Employment, Business Supply Chains and Inward Investment, and the Rural Economy.

John Adlen, Growth Director for the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), presented further analysis from a regional perspective, with consideration of the areas highlighted above, along with a focus on three of the key sectors strongly represented across Cheshire and Warrington: Automotive, Nuclear and Financial and Business Services.

Matthew Hodgson, Policy and Communication Manager for the West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce, provided a final presentation on the views and opinions shared by businesses and their reported preparedness for the potential impact of Brexit.

Items raised by Members:-

- Need to ensure that future levels of local productivity are considered as part of Policy Commission conversations regarding Businesses and Workforce.
- Specific consideration may again need to be given to the potential impact of Brexit on local tourism, in relation to employment, visitor numbers and income.
- Need to consider the structure of businesses operating within Cheshire West and Chester; for example, with decision-making often taking place globally in relation to multi-national organisations.
- Opportunities noted as regards the potential relocation of supply chains into the UK, or even into the borough. Also noted that job losses for bigger companies are an area of risk, but that this risk already existed prior to the EU Referendum result. Broad acknowledgement that Cheshire West and Chester needs to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure, workforce and skills exist to react quickly and effectively to any deal or impact scenario. This should be accounted for within, and mitigated by, a high quality Local Industrial Strategy over the coming months.
- A further opportunity was noted in relation to the decrease in the value of Pound Sterling and the added value already being recognised by exporters of goods.
- The importance of effectively marketing the local area was raised as significant area of opportunity - not only in relation to attracting tourism, but attracting inward investment into the borough. Closer links are already being made between the Cheshire & Warrington LEP and Marketing Cheshire, and local representation has already been increased at international trade events and engagement with the Department for Trade and Industry. A new LEP post has also been created to effectively co-ordinate the range of inward investment offer proposals being received.

5 WORK PLAN AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman referred to the Work Plan, circulated with the report, which was noted by all Members. It was noted that the Work Plan would need to retain an element of flexibility to react to future events and information as they emerge.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman thanked officers and the invited speakers for attending and their contribution to the debate.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 19 November 2018 at 6pm.

Chairman

Date

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