

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee**
held on Friday, 29th November, 2024 in the Ellesmere Port Library, Civic
Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG

PRESENT

Councillor Louise Gittins (Chair), Leader, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Councillor Nick Mannion (Vice-Chair), Leader, Cheshire East Council

Councillor Hans Mundry, Leader, Warrington Borough Council

Councillor Karen Shore, Deputy Leader, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Councillor Michael Gorman, Deputy Leader, Cheshire East Council

Councillor Jean Flaherty, Deputy Leader, Warrington Borough Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire East Council

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director – Place, Cheshire East Council

Julie Gregory, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Cheshire East Council

Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer, Cheshire East Council

Delyth Curtis, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Cathy McCardle, Executive Director of Place and Growth, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Gemma Davies, Director of Economy and Housing, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Steve Broomhead, Chief Executive Officer, Warrington Borough Council

Peter Jones, Programme Director, Cheshire and Warrington Sub-Regional Programme Office

Philip Cox, Chief Executive, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington

Steve Purdham, Chair of Business Advisory Board

Steve Park, Director of Growth, Warrington Borough Council

Damon Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire Police and Crime

Dan Price, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Police and Crime

Trevor Brocklebank, Chair, Marketing Cheshire

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

17 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

The public speaking procedure was noted. There were no public speakers.

18 CONNECT TO WORK PROGRAMME (UNIVERSAL SUPPORT)

Members consider a report which outlined a programme of work which would support economic development across Cheshire and Warrington. The programme would be co-ordinated and delivered as one, in line with and in preparation for devolution for the sub-region, from Councillor Karen Shore, Deputy Leader, Cheshire West and Chester Council.

It was noted that the scheme would result in the receipt of £4.5 million funding from Central Government and would support up to 1300 residents within the sub-region (400 in Cheshire East, 700 in Cheshire West and Chester and 200 in Warrington) to take on training and gain long term employment, and nationally would support up to 93,000 people. It was noted that local authorities were in the best position to support local people directly where they live.

The scheme would work in a complementary way with other support programmes, including the NHS Individual Placement Support and the Office for Health Improvement. It was anticipated that 85% of the budget would be used to support adults who were currently out of work, and 15% would be used to help adults retain work or employment.

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Dan Price, extended an invitation to the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee to join a meeting with the Prison's Minister in January 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Acknowledge the information in this report.
2. Acknowledge and confirm that Cheshire West and Chester Council (as recommended by Growth Directors) will:
 - a. Accept the £4.5m funding per year on behalf of Cheshire and Warrington.
 - b. Lead on the development and submission of a sub-regional delivery plan for the Connect to Work Programme.

c. Act as Lead and Accountable Body for the new Connect to Work Programme for Cheshire and Warrington, a programme that would directly respond to an identified economic priority of the sub-region.

19 AMENDMENTS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members considered a report which requested amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee to extend the statutory leadership role around devolution and expenditure for government funding coming into sub-region, from Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader, Cheshire West and Chester Council.

It was noted that the final decision on devolution would be made by each individual Council at their Council meetings:

- Cheshire East Council – December 2024
- Cheshire West and Chester Council – December 2024
- Warrington Borough Council – January 2025

It was noted that there were several small grammatical changes to the report, which did not change the context, in points A – H which were not shown in red on the published Term Of Reference, but would be included in the final version.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Agree to ask that each of the Councils of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington amend Part 2 of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Terms of Reference as set out in red at Appendix A.
2. Agree that the final decisions related to the establishment of a Combined Authority and a devolution agreement are matters that will be brought back to the three Councils in Cheshire and Warrington.

20 MARKETING CHESHIRE ADVISORY BOARD

Members received a report which updated the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee on steps being taken by Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW) to simplify the governance of Marketing Cheshire, from Councillor Jean Flaherty, Deputy Leader, Warrington Borough Council.

The importance of noting the safety and relatively low level of crime in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington was noted as an importance piece of marketing the area.

The significance of the visitor economy to the area was noted (£1 billion+ annually), the range of visitor hotspots in the area, and the rate at which visitor numbers had recovered following the pandemic were noted.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Note the steps being taken by ECW, namely:
 - a. The reconfiguration of Marketing Cheshire's board to mirror the ECW board.
 - b. The creation of a Marketing Cheshire Advisory board.

21 ENTERPRISE CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON FINANCE REPORT

Members received a report which summarised the financial statements, for the Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington Group for the year ended 31 March 2024, from Philip Cox, Chief Executive, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW).

It was noted that the accounts for the last two years show a loss of around £1 million; this was due to a grant received in 2014 from the Local Growth Fund which was used to set up a Life Sciences Equity Fund for Alderley Park, which was explicitly required to be listed as an asset on the Local Enterprise Partnership's accounts at the time. Over the last few years venture capital funds such as this had struggled, and the value of the fund had been reduced.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee:

1. Note the accounts as approved by ECW Board of Directors.

22 JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

Members received an update and sought direction on the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the reports on the Forward Plan be adopted and approved.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 11.35 am

Councillor Louise Gittins (Chair)