

Warrington UKSPF Local Partnership

31st Aug 2023

In Attendance:

Eleanor Blackburn (EB)	(Chair) Warrington Borough Council (Officer)
Stephen Fitzsimons (SF)	Warrington Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Nichola Newton (NN)	Warrington and Vale Royal College
Rebecca Anderson-Moss (RAM)	Warrington and Vale Royal College
Susan Savage (SS)	Department for Work and Pensions
Joanne Higginbottom (JH)	Department for Work and Pensions
Locklynne Hall (LH)	LiveWire
Derek Jones (DJ)	Warrington Disability Partnership
Lucy Gardner (LG)	Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Leah Biddle (LB)	Culture Warrington
Paul Chapman (PC)	Cheshire and Warrington Business Growth hub
Tim Smith (TS)	Warrington Borough Council

Apologies:

Cllr Cathy Mitchell (CM)	Warrington Borough Council (Member)
Colin Billingsley (CB)	Department for Work and Pensions
Alison Cullen (AC)	Warrington Voluntary Action
Dave Thompson (DT)	Warrington Disability Partnership
Andrea Morley (AM)	Warrington Business Improvement District (BID)
Pat Jackson (PJ)	Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Martin Wood (MW)	DLUHC – Cities and Local Growth Unit

Declarations of Interest:

Lucy Gardner (LG)	involvement in Living Well Hub
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1 [Welcome and Introductions](#)

EB welcomed everybody to the meeting and members introduced themselves.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 27th June 2023, were accepted as a true record.

A Deputy Chair for the group was still needed. It was agreed that Nichola Newton (NN) would take on that role.

TS reported that the Business Support procurement specification was currently live on The Chest, closing date 2nd October 2023.

TS had looked at a possible subregional project under Decarbonisation, but the other two Cheshire local authorities had already gone live with their own individual projects. TS would therefore now arrange for the Warrington procurement specification to be launched on The Chest.

EB confirmed that Kerry Hall, currently with Cheshire and Warrington LEP, will start in post as Senior Programme Manager at WBC on 25th September 2023.

3 Feedback from Workshop (10th July 2023)

The workshop had been well attended, with a wide range of partners and sectors represented. TS presented a summary report which showed key themes and repeated comments, noted against the information in the original Investment Plan, i.e. Challenges, Opportunities and Interventions (E numbers).

There had not been any sense that the original priorities were no longer appropriate. Comments had been much more along the lines of increasing or new priorities, or opportunities for joined-up work with other UKSPF or complementary activity.

One recurring theme was the need to coordinate digital skills activity with the opportunities for adding capacity to digital infrastructure in community venues. EB described several strands of digital activity, including some legacy from ERDF programmes, but better coordination was needed. SF recommended that we need a digital strategy for Warrington, which TS suggested could fit under a feasibility study.

4 UKSPF Financial and Outputs/Outcomes Position (Aug 2023)

TS presented a spreadsheet showing an updated financial profile, including allocations against each “activity theme” together with figures for approved projects, procurement specs written, proposals expected, and Expressions of Interest received.

New areas of interest being discussed included missing children, homeless / rough sleepers, and capacity building for local sports clubs. Proposals were also expected from Warrington Youth Zone, Warrington and Vale Royal College, and University of Chester.

TS screen-shared information on the outputs/outcomes position, showing the expected figures from approved projects and procurement specifications, mapped against the programme lifetime

targets. TS felt that of the eleven “activity themes”, three were green (i.e. projects approved will deliver the required figures), five were amber (i.e. proposals were expected and procurement specifications were live or imminent), and three were red (i.e. nothing in development at the moment). The reds were Digital Infrastructure (for community venues), SMART Digital Technology (for businesses) and Feasibility Studies).

TS was currently trying to build a less unwieldy and more presentable version, but confirmed that the source data that we need is available. EB and LG noted that the information provided was really helpful, and TS said that he would share the data after the meeting.

5 Consideration of Project Proposals

TS presented information about two proposals that had been recommended for approval by the Council’s steering group, and asked for comments.

Reach Your Potential

This project will ensure a continued service for 16-25 year-olds, maintaining systems, processes, and some staff, from the European-funded Journey First project, and is based on evaluation and lessons learned from that project.

The Torus / New Leaf project has already been commissioned to ensure continued provision for adults up to retirement age and that there is still a service after the European funding expired. However, it was felt that there would still be a gap for more specialist provision aimed at young people, and so the Reach Your Potential project would provide that.

TS had an action to arrange a “provider network” of all deliverers and stakeholders operating under the People and Skills strand to avoid duplication and strengthen working relationships, progression routes and referral processes.

Living Well Virtual Hub

A detailed business case for the project had been compiled, including alignment with UKSPF priorities, resources needed to build, develop and run it, expected costs, and possible sources of funding. A successful model in North Tyneside had been sustained for at least 3 years, including involvement from public health, primary care, voluntary and community groups. Many lessons learned had been incorporated into the Warrington proposal.

Links with WBC communications regarding running websites had been established, and also working with the hospitals and public health. The request to UKSPF is not for the development and running of the Virtual Hub, but for the more public facing aspects:

- community engagement (launch, events, promotion, community events, coproduction)
- accessibility and digital infrastructure (digital technology and infrastructure in the community and digital inclusion buddying to support access)

LG confirmed that the project is linked to the Living Well Hub Town Deal-funded facility being built in the former Contact Centre on Horsemarket Street, but will have wider reach and provide a directory of all activity to help people live healthy lives.

TS gave an update on the Employer Engagement project proposal. Agreed priorities were now:

- support for priority groups
- increase take-up of apprenticeships and entry or lower level opportunities
- wage subsidies for employers taking on priority group participants
- share unspent Apprenticeship Levy monies in the local area / supply chain
- recommendations of Warrington Skills Commission

Group members were invited to add any information to a mapping document that TS had circulated. The next working group meeting was scheduled for 7th September. LG would broker an introduction to a relevant NHS representative. SS would broker an introduction to a relevant DWP representative.

6 Next Steps

Development of ideas to form project proposals for:

- Digital Infrastructure (*currently rated as red*)
- SMART Digital Technology (*currently rated as red*)
- Feasibility Studies (*currently rated as red*)
- new ideas emerging from the July workshop

Run procurement processes for:

- Business Support (*currently rated as amber*)
- Decarbonisation (*currently rated as amber*)

Finalise project proposals for:

- Environment and Transport (*currently rated as amber*)
- Town Centre / Visitor Economy (*currently rated as amber*)
- Employer Engagement (*currently rated as amber*)

7 Any Other Business

PC and EB are both on a Cheshire digital inclusion and stakeholder group and will feed back from the next meeting (3rd October).

PC asked if we could have some more collaborative working across Cheshire and Warrington, as all the local authorities have separate programmes. RAM had raised a similar point at a Cheshire West and Chester meeting. TS had been frustrated where he felt there might have been opportunities, e.g. Decarbonisation, but hoped that some joint working might still be possible for year 3 (2024/25).

8 Schedule of Future Meetings

TS would send out invitations for dates in early October, November and December 2023.

