



**23rd January 2017 at 3.00p.m. at Board Room, University of
Wolverhampton, Wulfruna Building, Wulfruna Street,
Wolverhampton**

Present: Stewart Towe Chair;
Paul Brown Ernst & Young;
Andy Cox Cox & Plant;
Cllr. Lee Jeavons Walsall MBC
Cllr Roger Lawrence City of Wolverhampton;
Prof Geoff Layer University of Wolverhampton;
Cllr David Sparks Dudley MBC.

In Attendance: Sarah Middleton Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Richard Budden Cenex
Ric Bravery City of Wolverhampton;
Rachel Goodwin Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Wayne Langford Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Nick Mallinson WMG centre HVM Catapult
Paul Mellon Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Colin Parker Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Angie Took Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Kim Rowlands BEIS;
Hywel Ruddick Black Country Consortium Ltd.

Apologies: Simon Eastwood, Chris Handy, Ninder Johal, Lowell Williams, Tom Westley and Councillors Coughlan, Eling, Lowe and Moore.

1/17 **Declarations of Interest**

Prof Geoff Layer declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 9/17 - **University of Wolverhampton Apprenticeship Hub** and took no part in the voting or consideration thereon.

2/17 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2016 were circulated.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2016, be received and confirmed as a correct record.

3/17 **Very Light Railway (VLR) Presentation**

Nick Mallison, WMG centre HVM Catapult, and Keith Budden, Cenex were in attendance and gave a presentation on the VLR Scheme.

It was noted that there was a need to link the Metro to Brierley Hill.

Agreed that Members thank Nick Mallinson and Keith Budden for the presentation.

4/17 **Governance Report**

The Board received the report and noted the following matters: -

- a) **Declarations of Interest**– Kevin O’Keefe to do training session for Members. In the absence of Kevin O’Keefe and 5 Board Members, this item was deferred.
- b) **Declarations of Interest** – Sarah Middleton advised that an Annual update of the Declarations was required and stated that all Members would receive a new Declaration of Interest Form to be completed and returned.
- c) **Freedom of Information** – Sarah reported that advice had been sought and the LEP had been advised that FOI would apply to the LEP in future, as it was primarily funded by the local authority Guarantee Members. In future, Freedom of Information requests would be reported to the next available LEP Board meeting.
- d) **Retirement of Board Members** – Sarah Middleton reported that a two of members would have completed their second period of two years at the end of March 2017. It was noted that the last two years have seen a considerable amount of change in the role and remit of the Partnership and that the

establishment of the Combined Authority and West Midlands Mayor, might lead to further development and change. In these circumstances, it was considered that it would not be appropriate to disturb the current make-up of the Board at this stage

- e) **Employment and Skills Theme Advisory Board.** A candidate had been identified and Sarah Middleton and the lead officer would meet with them.
- f) **Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board application** – An application had been received and the candidate would be meeting with Sarah Middleton and the lead officer.
- g) **Review of Articles of Association and Memorandum of Understanding** – Sarah Middleton advised that there was a need to amend these documents and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Guarantee Members.

Agreed: -

- 1) That the Governance report and associated updates, as detailed above be noted; and
- 2) that existing Board Members due to complete their second period of office be invited to serve for a further period of two years expiring 31st March 2019.

5/16

Action Between Meetings

The Board noted the following actions which had been required in order to progress the applications outside of the published meeting cycle.

In all cases Board approval was sought and a majority in each case received to confirm the applications as detailed: -

a) Growing Priority Sectors

Quality Metal Products Ltd

The Sub-Board recommended approval of this application for a grant of £300,000 to help implement a £1,500,000 project and creating 30 new jobs.

Ash & Lacy

The Sub-Board recommended approval of an increased grant to £86,500 with the creation of additional jobs to match.

Growing Places

Dudley Advance

The Sub-Board recommended approval of the extension of the funding end date for the Growing Places award for Dudley Advance from March 2016 to December 2016 to enable the final payment of £11,365 on completion of final payment processes.

Black Country YMCA – John Dando

The Sub-Board recommended approval of the extension of the funding end date for the Growing Places award for the YMCA for the John Dando project to the end of February 2017 pending submission of further financial information to support a loan payment extension to June 2017.

b) Local Growth Fund

BIMCP Ltd - Brierley Hill Music Institute

The Sub-Board recommended approval of an award of £32,000 to support site investigation works in respect of this project.

University of Wolverhampton Apprenticeship Hub

The Sub-Board recommended approval of a request from the University of Wolverhampton that £50,000 of the full £200,000 allocation to the Apprenticeship Hub be paid out against the 2016/17 grant allocation.

Parkrose Industrial Estate Site Investigation Slippage into 2016/17

The Sub-Board noted that £19,170 of the £80,000 grant award to the Parkrose Industrial Site Investigation had been paid against the 2016/17 allocations as the appropriate evidence of contractual commitment was not in place at 31st March 2016.

Agreed that the change in the timing of the payment be noted.

Additional LGF Bid - Very Light Rail Centre (VLR) - Additional LGF Support for Continuing Project Development

The Board were notified that further to Minute No. 78/16, of the Funding Sub-Board, the Funding Sub-Board had received a revised proposal to establish a range of activities that could be accelerated to enable a full business case to be prepared for consideration. In order to establish the 'critical' works, which were required in order to enable the full business case to be developed and not cause significant programme issue risk, each individually itemised cost heading had been considered by Thomas Lister and comments provided as to the nature of cost, why the cost item was required during the present financial year and the impact if the item was not procured and completed this had resulted in a revised submission of £836,778 to enable a full business case to be submitted by March/April 2017.

The Sub-Board discussed the progress of the ERDF bid for the project, demand for the technology and the future leadership and management of the project. Members were of the view that consideration of the final proposal and full business case should be accompanied by a formal presentation to the Sub-Board.

Agreed: -

- 1) that the applicants be requested to provide initial indications of arrangements for the future management and leadership of the project and of their estimates of demand for the technology prior to the commitment of further resources;
- 2) that the applicants be asked to note that, in this instance, they will be requested to make a full presentation to the Sub-Board when the full business case is submitted for consideration.

The requested additional information was received and the Funding Sub-Board approved the application, prior to circulation to the full Board.

Agreed: - that the recommendations of the Funding Sub-Board, as detailed above and having been approved by Board Members in between meetings, due to the projects needing to be progressed, be confirmed and approved.

6/17

Policy Update

The following updates were submitted: -

a) **Policy Update**

Sarah Middleton provided the Policy Update, as detailed below: -

- **University of Wolverhampton** – International Students – attached copy of letter to Home Secretary supporting University of Wolverhampton's position in regard to economic benefit international students bring
- **Response from RH Robert Halfon MP** – to letter sent by LEP Network from all LEP Chairs – re. meeting. Not proceeding at this time.
- **DWP and DoH** – LEP Leadership role on SME's;
- **LGF3 announcements** – advised announcements to be made in New Year.
- **LEP Core Funding** – Minister had confirmed that LEPs will receive same level of funding for 17/18 - £500k with LEP demonstrating match funding (£250k)
- **Transparency and Accountability** – detail of Daily Mail article and Government Support.
- **Public Accounts Committee** – linked to Governance and Transparency.
- **Business Rate Retention** – LGA Working Group response to LEPs, as many felt they should not have a role in local taxation setting. Agreeing to LEPs' view of not having a specific role.
- **New Garden Villages and Garden Towns** – funding – record of letter sent expressing disappointment.

Agreed that the updates be noted.

b) **Gross Value Added (GVA) Report**

Delma Dwight reported on the Office for National Statistics GVA in the black Country in 2015 was £20.2bn compared to 19.9bn for 2014. She advised that the Black Country accounted for 17% of the region's GVA and 1.4% of the national GVA.

Whilst growth rates had reduced the growth rate in the Black Country over the last year had been 1.7%. The Chairman welcomed that it was a positive rate.

Agreed that the Board note the Office for National Statistics estimates for GVA as at 15 December 2016.

c) **Black Country Strategic Companies Barometer**

Delma Dwight advised that the report highlighted the importance of the strategic companies with 3575 having a turnover of £1 million or greater. She advised that the report and data would be presented to the Annual Stakeholders Conference.

Agreed that the Board note and welcome the report.

7/17 **Black Country Festival – Outline Proposals**

Sarah Middleton advised that several businesses had indicated that they would support the Festival by way of sponsorship. 40 businesses would be required to commit to sponsorship. The project needed to be worked up, so that, once in place, the team could be self-financing at the project end.

Councillor David Sparks welcomed the proposal and stated that if the LEP and local authorities were serious about developing the visitor economy then the project could be used to develop links across the region.

Agreed: -

- 1) that the LEP Board note and support the proposal;
- 2) That the BC LEP work with Dudley Arts Council to develop the project, identify funding streams and report back to a future Board meeting.

8/17 **West Midlands Combined Authority Update**

Councillor Roger Lawrence provided the following update: -

- The Mental Health Commission report was being launched next week.
- Land Commission – was coming on track.

Kim Rowlands added that the Annual Conversation process, recently undertaken by with LEPs, was being developed for the Combined Authorities. Sarah advised that the CA had brought together a “family” of SEPs, which were firmly based on what was important to the Black Country.

9/17

Black Country Strategic Economic Plan – Update and Pipeline

a) Strategic Economic Plan - Progress

Sarah Middleton provided a progress of the Sep and advised that the Away Day comments had been incorporated in to the update.

Agreed

- 1) That the Board receive the Away Day Notes and Shared Intelligence' s review note;
- 2) That the Board approve the two Economic Growth Storyboards, as amended, and ask these changes be replicated across the Economic Growth – Delivering the Industrial Strategy, story boards for all areas detailed in the SEP; and
- 3) That the Board note the contents of the Physical Activity & Sport Enabling Sector Story Board and note the ambition of the Sector the £0.1bn contribution to the overall GVA of the Black Country;
- 4) That Members approved the questions being developed for the engagement process with BC businesses.

b) Local Growth Fund Report

The Board received the regular dashboards on the progress of LGF

Agreed: -

That the LEP Board: -

- 1) Note the total LGF/LTB funding allocation for 2016/17; and
- 2) Note the forecast slippage and measures being taken to progress spend.

c) Local Growth Fund Programme Dashboards

Paul Mellon provided an update on the Dashboards.

Agreed that the update be noted.

d) Draft Minutes of the Funding Applications Sub-Board 12th December 2016 and Draft Notes of the Funding Applications Sub-Board held on 19th January 2017

In the absence of the Chair of the Funding Applications Sub-Board, Paul Mellon reported that the Sub-Board had met on 12th December 2016 and considered a number of applications for Local Growth Funding, an application for Growing Priority Sectors funding and the use of surplus Growing Places funds, as detailed below.

Growing Priority Sectors – Application for Funding – Quality Metal Products Ltd

Agreed that the LEP Board be recommended to approve the application for funding by Quality Metal Products Ltd. subject to the following conditions: -

- a) a maximum grant of £300,000 to help implement a £1,500,000 project;
- b) leverage £1,200,000 of private sector funding;
- c) the creation of 30 new jobs by March 2022;
- d) confirmation of match funding to successfully deliver the project;
- e) submission of claims at each stage of the project process.

Growing Priority Sectors – Project Change Request – Ash & Lacy Ltd

The Sub-Board considered a project change request from Ash & Lacy Ltd as environmental and health and safety legislation and increased automation had increased the price for its proposed PPC facility from £550,000 to £865,000. As a consequence, the Company was now seeking an increased grant of £86,500. All other key criteria for the application (intervention rate, cost per job, average salary) remained the same as Ash & Lacy was committing to create additional jobs to match the increase in grant request.

Agreed that the Funding Applications Sub-Board approve the change to the application for funding by Ash & Lacy Ltd.

Growing Places Programme - Black Country YMCA - John Dando

The Sub-Board considered further cashflow information from Black Country YMCA in relation to its request to extend the period for the repayment of the £560,000 loan for the John Dando project from the end of January to 30th June 2017.

Agreed:-

- 1) that further information be sought from the YMCA concerning the flow of revenue to support the proposed repayment schedule and confirmation that its bank is willing to extend the borrowing facilities to the YMCA by a further £2 million in June 2017;
- 2) that the Partnership Board be recommended to approve an extension of the repayment period to the end of February 2017 pending receipt of the information requested at (1) above.

Growing Places Programme - Dudley Advance

The Sub-Board considered a request from Dudley College to further extend the period for the final claim of £11,365 for the Dudley Advance project as the final snagging process had delayed the issue of the final certificate for payment. The College had assured Sandwell MBC that it was now in a position to make the final claim.

Agreed that Partnership Board be recommended to approve the extension of the funding end date for the Growing Places award for Dudley Advance from March 2016 to December 2016.

Local Growth Fund (LGF) – 2016/17 Forecast Slippage

The Sub-Board noted the current estimates of the level of slippage against the approved programme by the end of March 2017. Programme Office has reached agreement in principle with City of Wolverhampton Council to arrange a passporting of £6m of Capital Grant between 16/17 and 17/18. The Interim Delivery Director reported on discussions with Wolverhampton CC, the Accountable Body and BEIS concerning a proposal for LGF Grant support of £6m to be provided to Wolverhampton CC as cashflow / loan support to the Interchange project in March 2017. The project would then repay the loan before the end of the third quarter of 2017/18. This would address a cashflow issue the Interchange needed to manage and also effectively passport grant capacity between the two grant years while

still spending the entire LGF award on Capital schemes in 2016/17. It was noted that the heads of terms of a formal agreement were under discussion with the various parties to the agreement.

Agreed that that proposed loan arrangement with Wolverhampton CC be approved in principle subject to the submission of a formal proposal and terms of agreement for consideration by the Sub-Board.

Additional LGF Bid - Very Light Rail Centre (VLR) - Additional LGF Support for Continuing Project Development

The Sub-Board received a revised proposal to establish a range of activities that could be accelerated to enable a full business case to be prepared for consideration. In order to establish the 'critical' works, which were required in order to enable the full business case to be developed and not cause significant programme issue risk, each individually itemised cost heading had been considered by Thomas Lister and comment provided as to the nature of cost, why the cost item was required during the present financial year and the impact if the item was not procured and completed this had resulted in a revised submission of £836,778 to enable a full business case to be submitted by March/April 2017.

The Sub-Board discussed the progress of the ERDF bid for the project, demand for the technology and the future leadership and management of the project. Members were of the view that consideration of the final proposal and full business case should be accompanied by a formal presentation to the Sub-Board.

Agreed:-

- 1) that the applicants be requested to provide initial indications of arrangements for the future management and leadership of the project and of their estimates of demand for the technology prior to the commitment of further resources;
- 2) that the applicants be asked to note that, in this instance, they will be requested to make a full presentation to the Sub-Board when the full business case is submitted for consideration.

Additional LGF Bid - BIMCP Ltd - Brierley Hill Music Institute

The Sub-Board considered an application by BIMCP Ltd for £32,000 in 2016/17 for site investigations to inform the full business case bid for

the proposed Brierley Hill Music Institute expected to be submitted in early 2017/18. The application would fund building and site surveys to conclude the detailed design process and enable the planning application to be prepared, along with estimation of detailed costings for undertaking the refurbishment and conversion works for educational use.

Agreed:-

- 1) that the LEP Board be recommended to approve the application by BIMCP Ltd for £32,000 in 2016/17 for site investigation works in respect of the proposed Brierley Hill Music Institute subject to:-
 - a) the applicant obtaining quotations for the surveys in accordance with local government tendering processes;
 - b) the applicant providing copies of all quotations prior to works being commissioned;
 - c) a programme for undertaking the surveys being provided to Thomas Lister.
 - d) the funding for the surveys not to be drawn down until terms for the acquisition of the building have been agreed with the owners;
 - e) copies of the surveys to be provided to support any future application for funding and to remain the property of the applicant and not for use by the current owners, particularly in the event that the acquisition does not proceed.

University of Wolverhampton Apprenticeship Hub

The Sub-Board considered a request from the University of Wolverhampton that £50,000 of the full £200,000 allocation to the Apprenticeship Hub be paid out against the 2016/17 grant allocation.

Agreed that the request from the University of Wolverhampton be supported.

Parkrose Industrial Estate Site Investigation Slippage into 2016/17

The Sub-Board was informed that £19,170 of the £80,000 grant award to the Parkrose Industrial Site Investigation had been paid against the 2016/17 allocations as the appropriate evidence of contractual commitment was not in place at 31st March 2016.

Agreed that the change in the timing of the payment be noted.

In addition to the recommendations of the Funding Sub-Board detailed above the meeting was advised of the outcome of a teleconference held on 19th January 2017, as detailed below: -

Black Country Growth Deal: Growing Priority Sectors Regional Growth Fund

The following two projects were submitted, contained in the report circulated to Sub-Board Members, Hawthorn Trading Company and Keytracker.

Hawthorn Trading Company

Following FSB Members concerns that the proposal could cause displacement of existing contracts, expressed at the FSB held on 12th December 2016. the meeting was advised that programme's appraisal panel had investigated further and been advised that the five companies currently contracted to Hawthorn Trading Company would continue with their current contracts. The new contract was additional capacity and those five companies were reluctant to enter a contract where they had too much reliance on one company for their business.

Sub-Board Members were satisfied with the additional information supplied.

Members Agreed: -

- 1) that the applicants be awarded the maximum grant of £300,000 for the £1.866 million project, at an intervention rate of 16%, subject to confirmation of match funding to successfully deliver the project;
- 2) noted that there would be £1,566,000 leverage of Private Sector Funding; and
- 3) noted that the project would create 39 new jobs by March 2022 at £7,292 per job and an average salary of £21.9k per annum.

Keytracker

Sub-Board Members were informed of a new application by Keytracker, which involved the manufacture and launch of a new, innovative high value product. The application was for £50,000 and

represented reasonable value for money in the short term but could represent an even better investment long term if the project was a success.

Members Agreed: -

- 1) that the applicants be awarded the maximum grant of £50,000 to help implement a £170,000 project at an intervention rate of 29.4%;
- 2) note Leverage of £120,000 of Private Sector Funding; and
- 3) note that the project would create 6 new jobs by March 2022, at £8,300 per job and an annual salary of £21,000 per annum.

Black Country LEP LGF Programme Dashboard

Members Agreed to note the LGF Programme Dashboard information.

Achieving Year End Spend Targets 2016/17

Sub-Board Members were advised that the Accountable Body had negotiated with Government representatives some year-end flexibility that allowed committed expenditure before the 31st March in any year to be paid for and claimed as part of that year's programme up to the point of submission of the later claim in July. Members noted the potential for under spend during the 2016/17 financial year based on the figures prepared by the Programme Office, and that the Accountable Bod had undertaken their own review based on spend to date, individual projections and discussions with Grantees.

In addition to supporting the Programme Office to encourage Grantees to perform, the review had considered four potential parts that hopefully would be capable of bringing the spend in on target, these included:

- i) Bringing forward all possible spend from 2017/18 for existing projects, remaining within their overall all years approval limits.
- ii) Raising where possible intervention rates up to 100% to maximise LGF spend in this 16/17 year but reducing future intervention rates so they balance out and remain within their overall all years approval limits.
- iii) Maximising commitments prior to the 31st March 2017, with payments made prior to the grant claim submission in July 2017.

- iv) The place of last resort should the above 3 fail, the arrangement negotiated by the PMO with Wolverhampton Council to take up the balance.

The finance officers within the Accountable Body had looked at the resulting potential impact the first 3 measures above could have, and advised:

- a) Elite Centre - increasing intervention rate and additional spend brought forward from their 17/18 allocation of £2,622,500 which equated to a potential total of + £4,577,408
- b) A4101 Pensnett – Increased intervention rate + £959,000
- c) Dudley Brownfield Land Programme – Additional Spend brought forward from their 17/18 allocation + £213,000
- d) Goscote Lane – bringing forward additional spend from their 17/18 and claiming as a contractual commitment + £426,000.

Sub-Board Members were advised that these had potential +£6,175,408 of additional spend that can help to mitigate any in year under spend.

Together with seeking approval for these additional spends levels, Members were asked to provide approval for the application of the loan facility, detailed at iv) above, up to an agreed level of £6 million with the City of Wolverhampton Council, so that all options could be utilised as required to the spending commitments. It was noted that the Wolverhampton deal, if to proceed, would need to be in place prior 31st March 2017.

Members were advised that the potential gap could be up to £8 million, thus it was prudent to in approving the application for the loan facility with the City of Wolverhampton that the maximum agreed level be £8 million.

Members Agreed: -

- 1) that the mitigation actions detailed be pursued; and
- 2) that in respect of the potential loan facility with the City of Wolverhampton, that this be increased to maximum of £8 million and, if required, be completed prior to 31st March 2017.

Black Country Strategic Economic Plan – Local Growth Fund

FSB Members received the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan – Local Growth Fund, report and following consideration,

Members Agreed that it be recommended to the Black Country LEP Partnership Board, that: -

- 1) LEP Board members be asked to support transfer of £850k of Transport development funding into 17/18 for the following schemes:
 - Wolves to Willenhall Metro -£400,000 into 17/18.
 - HS2 West Coast Mainline - £80,000 into 17/18.
 - A4123 Development Works - £120,000 into 17/18.
 - Dudley Bus Station Development - £100,000 into 17/18
 - Sustainable Transport Corridors - £150,000 into 17/18
- 2) LEP Board members be asked to support transfer of “Airfield Drive” 16/17 allocation of £66,823 into 17/18;
- 3) LEP Board members be asked to consider the proposal from the Accountable Body to maximise spend against 16/17 LGF Grant Award;
- 4) LEP Board members be asked to support removal of Indirect Output targets in the Contract for A4101 Pensnett Road Improvement Scheme, to include the employment of 5 apprenticeships, as it was time limited junction widening scheme.

Broadband Project Summary and Funding Request to Growing Places

Sub-Board members were advised that the LEP was well placed to become the first place in the United Kingdom to reach 100% Superfast Broadband coverage. The project started off at 91.3% Superfast Broadband Coverage and was currently poised to reach 99.4% coverage by the end of December 2017.

- The average cost per premise was approximately £900, with the worst case being £1800 per premise.
- BT believes a maximum of £5.2m will be required to take the Black Country to 100% coverage.
- The table below provides a breakdown of required funding for the worst and best case scenarios.

	Total	BT	BDUK	Growing Places Fund
Worst Case	£5.2m	£3.6m	£800k	£800k
Best Case	£2.6m	£1.8m	£400k	£400k

It was assumed that if the same conditions exist which led to BT investing nearly £1million out of their funds for the Innovation Fund modelling, then it can be assumed that some of the favourable conditions that led to them making this investment will also be present for the remaining 0.6% intervention premises across the Black Country.

Additional Funding

Sub-Board members were advised that a request for additional funding was put to BDUK, who responded positively and have offered the Black Country Project an additional £800,000, provided that it is:

- Match funded (financially)
- Any additional works are put through a change control request
- Works are completed within the existing timeframe of the project – that is all works have to be completed by 31 December 2017

The project has approached the Growing Places Funding Sub-Committee for a request to provide additional funding of £800k to match what BDUK has offered and facilitate the Black County reaching 100% superfast broadband coverage.

BDUK require confirmation that match funding will be provided by February 2017, otherwise there is a strong risk they will withdraw the offer of additional funding.

Members Agreed that it be recommended to the LEP Partnership

Board: -

- 1) that the request for additional funding, to a maximum of £800,000 as set out in the report and adopted by the Growing Places Sub-

- Committee, to help the project reach 100% superfast broadband coverage across the Black Country be approved;
- 2) that BDUK be notified that match funding will be provided.

Growing Places Programme - Black Country YMCA - John Dando

Sub-Board members were advised of Minute 58/16 of the FSB and the agreed actions below: -

- 1) that the YMCA be requested to submit full details of the reasons for its application including details of its cashflow and the implications if the request is refused;
- 2) that the discussions with DCLG concerning the future use of the fund be noted and that a further report on the future use of the Fund be submitted when a response has been received from the Department.

The YMCA had advised that the reason for the extension to repayment from January to June had been requested as they would exceed the Charity Bank overdraft limit on their account. They had advised that the Charity Bank was considering an initial loan of £2.6 million and were seeking an extension to repayment to February 2017.

Members Agreed that 1 and 2 of Minute 58/16 of FSB be re-affirmed until formal confirmation of the offer be received from the Charity Bank.

The Chair commented on Hawthorn Trading Company and Keytracker and stated that information was required on the locations of the respective companies and as to whether their applications fitted with the BC SEP propositions.

Agreed

- 1) that, with the exception of Hawthorn Trading Company and Keytracker, the minutes of the Funding Sub-Board held on 12th December 2016 and the notes to the meeting held on 19 January 2017, to include all recommendations and associated conditions, as detailed above, be approved and confirmed as a correct record; and

- 2) That, subject to the receipt of the requested information, Hawthorn Trading Company and Keytracker applications be approved.

10/17 **Employment and Skills (People) Advisory Board**

a) Area Based Review – Final Report

The final report of the Area Based Review was submitted. It was noted that the recommended collaborative working, whilst all Colleges were to remain independent. The Report also identified additional work for the City of Wolverhampton Further Education College to ensure greater financial resilience.

Agreed that the outcome of the Area Based Review be noted.

b) Black Country Skills Factory – ESF Funding

The meeting was advised of the successful bid for an ESF contract for “Improving the Labour Market Relevance of Education and Training Systems.” The proposed “Accountability” for the project would be through a “Skills Factory Board” and would report to the BC LEP Employment & Skills (People) Advisory Board and the Terms of Reference were submitted.

Agreed: -

- 1) That the Board approves the Terms of Reference for the Skills Factory Board and the reporting mechanism via the BC LEP Employment & Skills (People) Advisory Board; and
- 2) That the Board notes the establishment of a Skills Factory in all transformational sectors.

c) Careers and Enterprise Company

- Enterprise Adviser Programme
- Passport to Employment

d) CEC Investment Fund Description

The Board were advised of updates on the Projects at c) and d) above.

Agreed: -

- 1) That the Board notes the progress in establishing the Enterprise Adviser Network; and
- 2) That the Board notes the Passport to Employment Programme.

11/17 **Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board**

MIPIM 2017

Wayne Langford advised of the forthcoming MIPIM trade visit to Cannes to promote the Black Country, wider West Midlands and the Midlands Engine.

Agreed that the Board note the update.

12/17 **Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board**

- a) Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2017

The Minutes of the meeting of the Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board held on 10th January 2017, were presented and the contents noted and endorsed.

Agreed that the contents of the minutes be noted and endorsed.

- b) Electric Vehicles Strategy

Ric Bravery gave an overview of the need to develop a Black Country wide Strategy in relation to Electric Vehicles.

Agreed: -

That the Board

- 1) Endorses the BC Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy and development of the Implementation Plan;
- 2) Notes that they complement the BC Smart City Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan.

13/17 **Assurance Framework - revisions**

The Board were advised of changes that the Government required in order to ensure all LEP's were transparent and open in their decision-making structures. It was noted that the deadline for submission of the revised Assurance Framework was 28th February 2017 and that the BC LEP would meet that target.

Agreed that the amendments required be approved and noted.

14/17 **Black Country Joint Executive Committee Decisions**

The decisions of the meeting of the Black Country Joint Executive Committee were submitted.

Agreed that the decisions be noted.

15/17 **PR and Communications Update**

The Board received the regular update on PR activity since the last meeting and updates on work to improve response rates to e-communications from the LEP.

Agreed that the report be noted.

16/17 **Date of Next Meetings**

2nd March 2017 – BC LEP Stakeholder Event – 8.30 am – West Bromwich Albion Football Ground

20th March 2017 from 3.00 pm – Sandwell venue

17/17 **Withdrawn Items**

It was noted that the following items were withdrawn: -

- Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board - Membership application; and
- Audit Committee Minutes.

(The meeting closed at 4.45 p.m.)