

**Black Country LEP**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Black Country Local  
Enterprise Partnership**

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 3.00 pm**

**Dudley College, The Broadway, Dudley DY1 4AS**

**Present:** Chris Handy in the Chair;  
Paul Brown EY;  
Prof Jackie Dunne University of Wolverhampton;  
Simon Eastwood Richardsons;  
Cllr. Judy Foster Dudley MBC;  
Cllr. Bill Gavan Sandwell MBC;  
Ninder Johal Nachural Communications;  
Jatinder Sharma Walsall College; and  
Tom Westley Westley Group.

**In Attendance:** Sarah Middleton Black Country Consortium Ltd;  
Lara Cragg Black Country Consortium Ltd;  
Delma Dwight Black Country Consortium Ltd;  
Shannon Nicklin Black Country Consortium Ltd;  
Colin Parker Black Country Consortium Ltd;  
Jaspal Sohal Head of Growth Hub;  
Aaron Toussaint BEIS;  
Gareth Wilson BEIS;  
Hywel Ruddick Black Country Consortium Ltd.

**Apologies:** Councillors Mike Bird, Roger Lawrence, Stephen Trow, Qadar Zada and, Andrew Cox, Lindsey Flynn, Prof. Geoff Layer, Stewart Towe and Deborah Williams.

Public - 0

51/19 **Declarations of Interest**

**Agreed** that the following Declarations be noted: -

Prof Jackie Dunne and Ninder Johal, employee and Governor respectively of the University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective pecuniary interests in the following minute items, left the room and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon: -

70/19 – School of Architecture and Built Environment

71/19 – Springfield Infrastructure and Remediation

72/19 - National Brownfield Centre Seed Fund

52/19 **Minutes**

The meeting was advised of two updates.

- 1) Minute No. 38/19 – 6. Aldridge Mill Lane & Aqueduct GRIP 2-3 Study

The meeting was advised that the decision referenced “project delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year.” It was noted and Agreed that the “project delivery to commence in the 2019/20 financial year”

- 2) Minute No. 40/19 – Bilston Urban Village East Site Investigation (SEPPL112) - reference was made to Wolverhampton City Council not City of Wolverhampton Council, as queried by Cllr. Peter Bilson. The meeting was advised that for legal identity, such as entering into contracts, the description had to be Wolverhampton City Council.

**Agreed** that, subject to the revision to Minute No. 38/19 – 6. Aldridge Mill Lane & Aqueduct GRIP 2-3 Study and the note in relation to Minute No. 40/19 – Bilston Urban Village East Site Investigation (SEPPL112), the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

53/19 **Policy Update**

Updates were provided on:

- Black Country Annual Performance Framework 2019

Sarah Middleton advised that BC LEP had scored good for Governance; good for delivery and good for strategy. This compared to having had an excellent for governance the previous year and the other two measures having remained the same. She advised that the LEP was seeking a meeting with the Director to discuss the outcome.

Gareth Wilson advised that he would arrange for a meeting for BC LEP to discuss the outcome of the Annual Performance Framework.

It was noted that the work on improving the gender balance on the Board was in progress and that further work was to be done, to include the asset base for BC LEP.

Paul Brown queried if there was a league table and was advised that none were published but that the bulk of LEPs did come within the “good” category.

- Annual Stakeholders – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019

The update on the event was noted.

- LEP Implementation Plans

The meeting was advised that the draft Implementation Plan would be submitted to the Cities and Local Growth Unit by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and that this would come forward to the next meeting for Members consideration.

- Stronger Towns Fund

It was noted that the funds would be administered through the local authorities.

- Brexit

The meeting was advised that the Growth Hub were supporting work around the liquidity and access to capital for companies.

**Agreed** that the Policy update be received and noted.

54/19 **Black Country Assurance Framework 2019**

Sarah Middleton advised the LEP had refreshed the Assurance Framework in line with the National Assurance Framework requirements under the delegation provided at the previous meeting.

She advised of the new quorum for the meeting, being 2 local Leaders, or their nominated substitute and 6 private sector members.

In regard to Urgent business to be considered in between meetings, whilst the LEP, through the Chair or Vice-Chair would call an urgent the meeting, the National Assurance Framework required a process for where an urgent meeting could not be convened. She stated that work was being undertaken with the Accountable Body's Legal Team to agree an acceptable process to be followed.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board:

- 1) Note the contents of the report;
- 2) Confirm the revised Black Country Assurance Framework v12 March 2019; and
- 3) Note that in regard to the process for considering Urgent Business for which a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the Board, this remained outstanding, as a form of words was required to be agreed with the Accountable Body's Legal Team.

55/19 **Black Country Annual Economic Review**

Delma Dwight advised that Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC and City of Wolverhampton had all shown an increase in GVA over the year. The Chair noted that one of the strongest sectors was Advanced Manufacturing and this was acknowledged but noted that all sectors were important. The Chair commented that the growth in business start-ups was to be welcomed.

Reference was made to where the highest concentration of businesses was and it was noted that 19% retail, 12% Advanced Manufacturing and 17% business. It was agreed to provide more structural analysis to the meeting.

With reference to those residents with no qualifications it was noted that this was 17% compared to 24% in 2007. However, it was below the current national average of 15%.

Paul Brown referenced the export figures and highlighted that the Department for International Trade's statistics for the Black Country did not always appear to accurately reflect the true figure. Delma Dwight agreed to circulate these figures to Members.

Reference was made the Board composition of the Board and comments made at the Annual Stakeholders event. Councillor Judy Foster commented that her impression had been that the issue raised had been less to do with the business community but more directed to the local authority representation.

Sarah Middleton advised that the document would be scoped out more for the Board, to capture the comments made.

Simon Eastwood welcomed the document and stated that it indicated the BC were moving in the right direction.

Prof Jackie Dunne stated that the document provided a good narrative and kept the profile of BC in the wider West Midlands.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board:

- 1) Note the key messages contained in the Annual Economic Review 2019; and the local summary reports and approve the dissemination of the positive messages.
- 2) Agree to receive a report back on the further research been undertaken on global opportunities and international benchmarking.
- 3) Agree to the utilisation of the EIU to seek opportunities that widen our reach nationally and internationally to ensure the Black Country is represented on a national and global platform.
- 4) Agree to receive a report back on gender and ethnic representation and approve the enhancement of our monitoring and reporting on Board composition.
- 5) Note the utilisation of our evidence base approach to continue to develop the Black Country Local Implementation Plan to ensure the current and pipeline activity is aligned to resources and

propositions that will impact on the ambitions as set out in the Black Country Performance Management Framework.

56/19 **Black Country Energy Steering Group**

Tom Westley referenced the report and highlighted that in Germany the manufacturing sector paid 50% less for their energy than British counterparts. The WMCA were also engaged with Energy Capital and the proposition was being put forward to Treasury.

Jatinder Sharma queried if there was scope to work more widely than the business sector and was advised that the project included residential solutions, linked to smart city and garden city.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board:

- 1) Approve continued funding for the Black Country Energy Steering Group at for 2019-20, to the value of £36,000;
- 2) Note that the proposed budget for 2019-20 had been reduced to £36,000.
- 3) Note that this would cover the ongoing executive support to the Black Country Steering Group only, at a similar level to 2018-19; and
- 4) Note that the BC LEP would no longer contribute to the regional Energy Capital budget, which would now be funded directly by the WMCA.

57/19 **Careers and Enterprise Update**

Colin Parker provided an updated on the work undertaken on behalf of the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC). He advised that all but one senior school was signed up to the Enterpriser Adviser scheme; the success in receiving funding for Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools and stated that work was being undertaken with Dudley and Sandwell Schools.

Ofsted were now using the CEC Enterpriser Adviser as part of their school assessment. It was noted that there was a good gender balance of adviser, being equally split female and male.

Colin Parker advised that the existing Hub was 20 schools and there was a further bid for a second careers hub.

In relation to Primary Schools, Colin advised that a bid had been submitted for a primary pilot in Black pilot I the lack Country and asked that the LEP Board continued to co-support the Enterprise Adviser Network programme.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board:

- 1) approves Walsall Council to receive Note the progress made across the various programmes of activities; and
- 2) continue to co-fund the Enterprise Adviser Network programme at the current level (2 Enterprise Coordinators co-funded 50%) for duration of the current CEC co-funding offer (September 2020).

58/19

**Local Growth Fund – Project Change Request – Dudley Brownfield Phase 1**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and advised that the request related to a change in outputs.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board:

- 1) Approve the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Dudley Council to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF), funded elements of the Dudley Brownfield Land Phase 1 project, with delivery to commence in the 2019/20 financial year; and
- 2) Note that this request relates to a change in outputs.

59/19

**Growing Places Fund – Daisy Bank**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board approve the Daisy Bank Site Investigation to the value of £13,107.50 from within the Growing Places Programme, with delivery to commence in 2019/20 financial year.

60/19

**Wolverhampton Environment Centre Site Investigation**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board approve the Wolverhampton Environment Centre Site Investigation Project to the value of £7,421.26 from within

the Growing Places Programme, with delivery to commence in 2019/20 financial year.

61/19 **Local Programmes – Dashboard**

Lara Cragg presented the dashboards.

It was noted that the 2018/19 financial year was now closed. The spend target was £19m of which £6m had been claimed and noted that there would be significant change in May, as more claims came through. She advised that currently the outcomes looked ow on housing.

With reference to LPIF, the additional £97m currently remained with the WMCA. However there had been a positive outcome of the initial allocation of £53m and the LEP could evidence that the conditionality had been delivered.

The Chair queried the timescale for the release of the second tranche of funding, that is the £97m and Sarah Middleton advised that work was being undertaken with WMCA Director of Housing and the Black Country Chief Executives to seek maximum flexibility.

**Agreed** that the updates on the following dashboards be noted: -

- In flight Current Financial Year
- Future Years
- Pipeline
- LPIF (Public)
- Growing Priority Sectors
- Growing Places
- Enterprise Zones
- Transport

62/19 **Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019**

**Agreed** that the LEP Board to confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019.

63/19 **Minutes of the Active Black Country Partnership Board – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Agreed** that the LEP Board receive and note the minutes of the Active Black Country Partnership Board held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

64/19 **PR and Communications Report**

Ninder Johal presented the report and highlighted the success of the Annual Stakeholders Conference and the BC Business Festival.

**Agreed** that the update on the PR and Communications be noted.

65/19 **Date of Next meeting**

**Agreed** that the LEP Board note that the next meeting will be held on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – NMC, 70 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich.

66/19 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Agreed** that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

67/19 **Black Country Growth Hub Update**

Jaspal Sohal presented his report and highlighted the refresh of the Black Country Growth Hub. It was noted that the CRM system was now in the ownership of the LEP.

The meeting was informed that £2.5 m was available over 4 years to provide support to businesses post-Brexit to include currency fluctuation, provide short term loans and the potential loss of overseas staff.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Reboot and relaunch the Black Country Growth Hub in 2019 as the one-stop solution for impartial Business Support; and

- 2) Update BCGH Website and setup non-geographical enquiries line to encourage more engagement. Partners to promote the BCGH website and non-geo enquiries line.

68/19 **Transport Underspend**

Reference was made to the historic transport underspend detailed in the report and that the intention was to utilise it as an “opportunity fund”.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board approve the transfer and utilisation of historic transport underspend.

69/19 **Growth Deal Programme Proposals**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board approve and note the proposed conclusions for the Growth Deal Programme in regard to the following projects being moved from Land and Property Investment Fund into other Black Country LEP funding streams, including any associated changes to funding periods: -

- a) School of Architecture and Built Environment;
- b) Springfield Infrastructure and Remediation;
- c) National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding;
- d) Black Country Living Museum; and
- e) Growth Deal - Very Light Rail Programme Changes.

70/19 **School of Architecture and Built Environment**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Approve the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £3,520,000, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF), funded elements of the School of Architecture and Built Environment project – with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year; and

- 2) Note the withdrawal of the School of Architecture and Built Environment project, to the value of £3,520,000, from within the Land and Property Investment Fund.

(Prof Jackie Dunne and Ninder Johal, employee and Governor respectively of the University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective pecuniary interests and left the room and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon.)

71/19 **Springfield Infrastructure and Remediation**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Approves the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £4,420,000, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF), funded elements of the Springfield Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation project – with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year.
- 2) Notes the withdrawal of the Springfield Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation project, to the value of £4,420,000, from within the Land and Property Investment Fund.

(Prof Jackie Dunne and Ninder Johal, employee and Governor respectively of the University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective pecuniary interests and left the room and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon.)

72/19 **National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Approve the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £500,000, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF), funded elements of the National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding project – with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year.

- 2) Note the withdrawal of the National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding project, to the value of £500,000, from within the Land and Property Investment Fund.

(Prof Jackie Dunne and Ninder Johal, employee and Governor respectively of the University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective pecuniary interests and left the room and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon.)

73/19 **Black Country Living Museum**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Approves the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Black Country Living Museum, to the value of £9,000,000, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF), funded elements of the Black Country Living Museum: Forging Ahead project – with delivery to commence in the 2019/20 financial year.
- 2) Notes the withdrawal of the Black Country Living Museum: Forging Ahead project, to the value of £9,000,000, from within the Land and Property Investment Fund programme.

74/19 **Growth Deal - Very Light Rail Programme Changes**

Simon Eastwood presented the report.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Approves the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amend the Grant Agreement with Dudley Council to deliver the Local Growth Deal (LGF) funded elements of the Very Light Rail Hub to Home project by removing the Development Phase from the Main Scheme.
- 2) Approve the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Dudley Council to deliver the Local Growth Deal (LGF) funded elements of the Very Light Rail Hub to Home project - Development Phase.

75/19 **Local Programme Dashboard**

- **Land and Property Investment Fund (Private)**

Ian Cribbes provided an update on the LPIF dashboard.

**Agreed** that the update on the Land and Property Investment Fund (Private) be noted.

76/19 **West Midlands Combined Authority – Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)**

Sarah Middleton presented the latest version of the emerging WMCA LIS. She advised that the launch had not yet taken place and that as a Government sponsored document would not be made public until signed off by Ministers. She asked for comments which would be shared with the WMCA.

- Mobility should include rail as well as aerospace;
- The Mayor wanted a post C4 bid action plan for Creative industries;
- Energy should not only link in with business engagement but should be included under infrastructure.

**Agreed: -**

- 1) that the update on the emerging final version of the WMCA Local Industrial Strategy be noted; and
- 2) that any comments on the document, other than those captured above, be submitted to the Secretariat to enable them to be fed into the ongoing consultation.

77/19 **LEP Review Update**

Sarah Middleton stated that the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP had received a letter regarding their overlapping boundaries but that BCLEP had not had any formal correspondence.

In relation to the three Growth Hubs across the West Midlands reference was made to the financial allocations changing and Sarah Middleton advised that there was a formula to work to and agreed to check.

**Agreed** that the update be noted.

(The meeting closed at 4.45pm)