

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

20th August 2020 at 3.00pm

Microsoft Teams

Present:

Tom Westley
Cllr. Adrian Andrew
Cllr. Ian Brookfield
Paul Brown
Kevin Davis
Rachel Eade
Simon Eastwood
Cherry Elliott
Lindsey Flynn
Chris Handy
Cllr. Patrick Harley
Ninder Johal
Prof Nazira Karodia
Cllr. Maria Crompton
Amanda Tomlinson

Chair;
Walsall MBC;
City of Wolverhampton;
EY;
The Vine Trust;
Red Limited;
Eastwood Consulting;
Higgs & Sons;
Well Associates
Accord Group;
Dudley MBC;
Nachural Communications;
University of Wolverhampton;
Sandwell MBC
Black Country Housing Group.

In Attendance:

Sarah Middleton
Katherine Birch
Cragg
Delma Dwight
Sohal
Everton
Guerra
Kelly Valente
Hywel Ruddick

Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Black Country Consortium Ltd; Lara
Black Country Consortium Ltd; Prof
Black Country Consortium Ltd; Jaspal
Black Country Consortium Ltd; Stuart
Black Country Transport Team; Alison
Walsall MBC;
Walsall MBC; and
Black Country Consortium Ltd.

Apologies:

Councillors Mike Bird and Jatinder Sharma

120/20 **Declarations of Interest**

Min 124/20 National Brownfield Institute Phase 1 – Development Change Request

Min 140/20 National Brownfield Institute Phase 2 – Construction and Delivery.

Prof Nazira Karodia and Ninder Johal as an employee and Governor respectively of University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective interests in the two items of business detailed above and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon.

Gifts and Hospitality

There were no declarations of any gifts or hospitality received in by members their role as a LEP Board Member.

121/20 **Public Minutes of Funding Sub-Group held on 13th July 2020**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the LEP Board, held on 13th July 2020 be confirmed and approved the public minutes.

122/20 **Policy Update**

Sarah Middleton provided the LEP Board with a general policy update and specific updates on the activity being undertaken through the BC LEPs involvement in national and regional activity in relation to the Covid-19 recovery programmes. The update included: --

- a) Local Growth Fund – confirmation
- b) Get Britain Building Fund - Local infrastructure projects to drive economic growth
- c) WMCA – Recharge the West Midlands
- d) LEP Network –
Letter – Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government
British Property Federation (BPF) – Recovery Road Map

Economic Intelligence Unit

- e) Economic Dashboard
- f) Employment Rate by Ethnicity

Confirmation had been received that the final third of the LEP's LGF

allocation, will be paid by MHCLG to Walsall Council as the Accountable Body for Black Country LEP. She advised that not all LEPs had and stated that it was understood 4 LEPs have to do further work.

She advised that the BC had been successful in securing funding for 2 projects under the Get Britain Building Fund - the Very Light Rail Innovation Centre, Dudley and the National Brownfield Land Centre, Wolverhampton.

The region had also secured a commitment from the Mayor and 7 Met Leaders that Moxley Iron Park would receive the first allocation circa £7.25m, of funding from the Brownfield Fund awarded to the CA.

In regard to the Recharge the West Midlands document, Sarah Middleton advised that this had been signed up to by the Mayor, 7 Mets and 3 LEPs in the region. It reflected approximately 32 projects. In respect of the BC Asks, there are a number of specifics these include: -
- Repowering the Black Country - £30m
- Nation Brownfield Institute - £24m now funded
- The City Learning Quarter (Wolverhampton)
In addition, there are a number of WMCA wide programmes, the BC should benefit from: - Brownfield Land Fund - £200m
- Digital Links - £145m
- Transport – to improve connectivity across the region - £247m.

In respect of the LEP Network she advised that the Chair of the LEP Network had received a letter from Simon Clarke MP, outlining his thanks for the input of LEPs to include the evidence base provided by the Local Industrial Strategies which are informing Covid recovery. She added that the LEP Chair had attended the recent national LEP Network meeting and received a presentation from the BPF which had referenced recovery initiatives to support town centres and the housing supply.

In regard to the Economic Dashboard, Prof. Delma Dwight highlighted the increases and downturns provided by the statistics, to include the Business Activity Index which had seen the highest rebound; national GDP was 22% smaller than the end of 2019, which was the impact of the labour and employment market; claimants was an increase of 65,000 overall, with 14,000 more youth claimants and approximately 20% of the workforce remained furloughed – 170,000 and companies were considering redundancies.

Arising from a question on the Careers and Enterprise Company at the last meeting, Members were advised that currently there 20% of Enterprise Advisers identified as BAME, and that the LEP were running recruitment campaign from September which included some

presentations for leaders at Homeserve and Wolverhampton NHS Trust. There was a commitment to ensure that there was a good selection of Advisers who represent the BC network and BC schools.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the following Policy updates:

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- a) Local Growth Fund – confirmation
- b) Get Britain Building Fund - Local infrastructure projects to drive economic growth
- c) WMCA – Recharge the West Midlands
- d) LEP Network –
Letter – Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government
British Property Federation – Recovery Road Map

Economic Intelligence Unit
- e) Economic Dashboard
- f) Employment Rate by Ethnicity

123/20

Exemptions to the National Local Growth Assurance Framework due to Covid-19

- a) LEP Board Recruitment**
- b) Annual Review Report**
- c) Delivery Report**

Sarah Middleton provided an update on Exemptions provided by Government in relation to elements of the Assurance Framework. She stated that one element was the ability to extend the Board tenure of members which was to be notified to LEPs in October. In relation to the four Members who were scheduled to end their terms of office on 30th September 2020, BEIS had verbally advised that it was not an issue to extend their term office for a short period, in anticipation of the notification and each Members had been approached and advised that they were willing to continue. Thus, the initial ask for the Board was to extend the term until the 31st October, by which time BEIS should have issued clarity on the process.

In respect of the Annual Review and Delivery Report which had been circulated for Members view and comments, the original publication was to have been 21st August 2020 but advice received last week had stated that the publication was extended through to 31st December 2020. Thus, given these were circulated on Friday these can now be considered more fully at a future meeting, although no later than the November Board meeting. It was asked that if Members did have any input in the interim, then they could wither notify through the Secretariat or the Comms teams.

The Chair stated that he welcomed the Board Members commitment and continuity to continue serving the LEP during the transitional period.

Agreed That the LEP Board:

- (a) Note the Exemptions to the National Local Growth Assurance Framework due to Covid-19 document;
- (b) Confirm and approve a temporary extension to the four Board Members tenures identified in the report through to 31st October, when clarity on the extensions will have been provided by MHCLG;
- (c) Note that following the resignation of the Board Member who had the role of the LEP Diversity Champion, the appointment be reviewed in line with the exemption's timescales, October 2020, following identification of interested Members.
- (d) Note that the LEP Annual Report through to 31st March 2020 and the LEP Delivery Plan be submitted to a future meeting in order to achieve revised deadline submission of 31st December 2020.

124/20

Local Growth Deal - National Brownfield Institute Phase 1 – Development Change Request

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with the University of Wolverhampton, to deliver the Local Growth Deal Fund (LGF) funded elements of the National Brownfield Institute Phase 1 – Development Project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year, to the sum of £500,000.

(**NB** - Prof Nazira Karodia and Ninder Johal as an employee and Governor respectively of University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective interests in the two items of business detailed above and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon.)

125/20

Draft Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board 18th June 2020

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the draft minutes of the Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board 18th June 2020.

126/20 **Draft Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board 23rd July 2020**

Rachel Eade advised that she had Chaired the meeting on behalf of Paul Brown and advised that a Business Voice Group was to be established to include 9 private sector representatives.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the draft minutes of the Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board 23rd July 2020.

127/20 **Black Country Executive Joint Committee Decisions – 24th July 2020**

Sarah Middleton presented the report.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Decisions, held on 24th July 2020, to include confirmation of the following grant approvals: -

- a) Black Country Local Growth Deal – Black Country Living Museum: forging ahead
- b) Black Country Local Growth Deal -Growing Priority Sectors Programme
- c) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Halesowen College – Business and Construction Management Centre
- d) Black Country Local Growth Deal –Hatherton Street Phase 2
- e) Black Country Local Growth Deal – I9 (Block 9) Wolverhampton
- f) Black Country Local Growth Deal – Mill Lane Bridge and Aldridge Line Aqueduct Grip 2-3 study
- g) Black Country Local Growth Deal -Narrowboat Way Site Investigation
- h) Black Country Local Growth Deal - National Brownfield Land Institute Seed Funding
- i) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Phoenix 10 Phase 1
- j) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Sandwell Aquatic Centre Infrastructure Phase 1
- k) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Springfield Campus Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation
- l) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Transport Major Route Network (MRN) Development Funding
- m) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Ultra Low Emission Vehicles Transport Development Funding
- n) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Hub to Home Transport Innovation Centre and Test Track Project: very light rail and autonomous technologies – test track – project change

- request
- o) Black Country Local Growth Deal - Growing the City Centre, Cultural and Business events offer
 - p) Black Country Local Growth Deal – School of Architecture and Built Environment
 - q) Delegated Authority Decision - Black Country Local Growth Deal - Hatherton Street Phase 2
 - r) Delegated Authority Decision - Black Country Local Growth Deal - Woods Lane Phase 2
 - s) Local Growth Deal Programme - Approval of the 2019/20 Year End Spend

128/20 **PR and Communications Report (Information)**

Ninder Johal advised that the report was for noting but observed that in relation to the new Business Voice Group, that if there was not a fixed membership this would provided the Group with the flexibility to have a wider sectoral approach.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the update.

129/20 **Exclusion of the 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 for the reasons stated on the agenda'

Paragraph 3

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

130/20 **Private Minutes of the LEP Board held on 13th July 2020**

Agreed that the private minutes of the meeting of the LEP Board, held on 13th July 2020 be confirmed and approved the public minutes.

131/20 **Private Minutes of the FSG held on 5th August 2020**

Agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 5th August 2020 be confirmed and approved.

132/20

Policy Update Covid19 BC LEP Activity and National and Regional Activity

Sarah Middleton provided an update through the BC LEPs involvement in national and region activity to include the Covid19 Economic Impact Group meeting held on 13th August 2020, where they had received updates on Coventry City of Culture, Business Campaign and sectors to include Construction and Manufacturing.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the Private Policy update.

133/20

WMCA – Economic Recovery Programme

Sarah Middleton provided an overview of the WMCA - Recharge the West Midlands which had provided an important opportunity to consider the BC programmes. She referenced the Productivity Factory which had started in the BC and would now run across the WM; the Pipeline Protocol work for LEPs, Local Authorities and the CA, so that future funding announcements would receive a better combined approach; she advised that there was good work undertaken by transport which could be transferred to other areas; devolution would provide further opportunities and challenges. She stated that the Recovery Prospectus provided support for the overall economy.

Chris Handy referenced the pipeline work and it was noted that it was still developing. Lara Smith advised that the catch 22 was funding, she stated that there was progress on local authority bids but that there was a need to have funding for private sector sector bids.

Councillor Ian Brookfield stated that the CA had submitted a £3.2BN ask and received £66m for the GBBF bid and £84m for brownfields land. He stated that there would be more funding made available and thus there was a need for further cases for the proposed Gigafactory and the pipeline work.

Sarah Middleton advised that the Gigafactory represented a large physical build but that there was a need for the supply chain to provide a diverse set of businesses to support and supply the Gigafactory. There was also the importance of the electrification programme for the Black Country. She advised that the Midland Aerospace Alliance were having a more proactive dialogue with the CA and industry and that transport tech was growing and was not just auto.

Ninder Johal referenced recovery and stated that manufacturing was looking good, however he referenced the visitor economy to include

theaters and race courses being hardest hit. Prof Delma Dwight acknowledged that there were large variations between sectors and stated that both the LEP and CA were looking into the visitor economy.

Agreed that the LEP Board: -

- (a) Note the evolving WMCA Economy Recovery Plan and involvement of the LEP officers and Members in the process; and
- (b) Ensure that the BC Asks are captured in the WMCA Economic Recovery Programme.

134/20

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

Sarah Middleton advised that the CSR narrative was about Levelling Up and the Green Recovery based on a Single Pot across four pillars of Infrastructure, Improving Outcomes in Public Services, Economy and Sustainable Funding. She stated that the discussions at the CA Strategic Economic Development Board had focused on the Economy Pillar and there had been a granular conversation around the challenges for innovation around supply led and demand led. She advised that the LEPs were pushing for demand led innovation and that infrastructure provided an enabler for the economy. There were challenges for the single pot approach, especially in the context of the EU exist.

Councillor Ian Brookfield stated that the CSR submission was important to get the levelling up agenda started. He advised that the Asks were evidence based, provided for a joint partnership with the public and private sectors and were sustainable over a number of years.

Lindsey Flynn advised that the local challenges included skills and that it was important that the LEP built in the local element. Sarah Middleton stated that whilst there were strong differences on skills there were good local mechanisms and that there was a need for a scale of ambition.

Councillor Ian Brookfield stated that a major part of devolution was regional focus and that the CA skills devolution could be a “double or triple devo”, in that there was a need to target where the efforts could do best and be most effective.

Chris Handy commented that social mobility seemed to be an issue going forward following Covid-19 and the Chair observed that the relatively small size of LEPs would be helpful.

Ninder Johal asked if LEPs v CAs, in practical terms were losing out? Sarah Middleton advised that critical to the white paper would be the roles of and responsibilities and stated that it was not necessary that the LEP

was losing out but that the LEP should be gaining, acknowledging that the negotiations would be on a regional level rather than a national. Ninder Johal suggested that as the landscape was changing then the local MPs should be more engaged with as stakeholders. Sarah Middleton advised that the LEP was continuing engagement with the BC MPs. The accountable point for the region was that this lay with the Mayor but the LEP Network and local LEPs were actively engaged to highlight the crucial role of the local partnerships.

Agreed that the LEP Board

- a) Note the region's approach to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the role of the WMCA SED Board in supporting; and
- b) Provide the challenge from the suggestions made by Members above, about the emerging proposals coming forward for the economy dimension of the region's CSR submission.

135/20 **Sector Actions Plans Focus Building/Construction**

It was noted that one of the Sectors the BC LEP was the lead for was the construction sector.

Simon Eastwood provided a context for the LEP leading on the Construction Sector, with 13.6% of BC businesses involved in the sector, currently 23,000 employees representing 5% of the overall workforce with an ambition to grow GVA by 6.6%. He stated that the aim was to restart, reset and reinvent in the sector but because of Covid-19 there was a significant number of jobs at risk. Output was down and clients were standing back from the big discussions thus it was important to focus on actions.

Chris Handy advised that whilst it had stalled construction activity was coming back quickly on a number of mothballed sites. The building process was slower as some jobs required 2 or more people and there had been some supply chain issues i.e. obtaining plaster. He advised of Modern Methods of Construction provided more easily for socially distancing in the factories, which might assist to accelerate the process.

Sarah Middleton advised that the LEP would look to find exemplars and show cases to highlight and develop modern methods of contraction.

Agreed that the update and presentation on sector action plans in relation to building and construction be received and noted.

136/20 **Risk Register – Covid19 Programme Risk update**

Lara Smith advised that the programme was now focusing heavily on programme closure and stated that it was believed all projects were back on site. She referenced conversations with a specific project and advised that they had been reassured that there was additional time to work through their output profiles.

Agreed that the update and presentation on sector action plans in relation to building and construction be received and noted.

137/20 **Black Country Local Programme Dashboards**

The new indexed suite of Dashboards was presented: -

- Growth Deal In Flight Current Financial Year
- Growth Deal Future Years
- Black Country Pipeline
- Land and Property Investment Fund
- Growing Places
- Enterprise Zones

Agreed that the update be noted.

138/20 **Get Britain Building Fund – Programme Approval**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) to manage the Get Britain Building Fund and all associated elements of this fund, on behalf of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

139/20 **Project Approval Request: Hub to Home Transport Innovation Centre and Test Track -Project: Very Light Rail and Autonomous Technologies – National Innovation Centre Project**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Accountable Body for the Get Britain Building Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to entering into a Grant Agreement with Dudley Council, to the value of £12.35m, to deliver the Get Britain Building Fund (GBBF) funded elements of the Hub to Home Transport Innovation Centre and Test Track Project: Very Light Rail and Autonomous Technologies – National Innovation Centre Project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year.

140/20 **National Brownfield Institute Phase 2 – Construction and Delivery**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Accountable Body for the Get Britain Building Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to entering into a Grant Agreement with the University of Wolverhampton, to deliver the Get Britain Building Fund (GBBF) funded elements of the National Brownfield Institute Phase 2 – Construction and Delivery Project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year, as detailed below: -

2020/21	2021/22	Total
£7,500,000	£7,375,000	<u>£14,875,000</u>

(**NB** - Prof Nazira Karodia and Ninder Johal as an employee and Governor respectively of University of Wolverhampton, declared their respective interests in the two items of business detailed above and took no part in the consideration or voting thereon.)

141/20 **Enterprise Zone overview paper**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the presentation.

142/20 **Revenue Funding - approval of historic costs**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed

- a) Approves that Dudley Council actual historic revenue costs of £571,207 are recovered in the year that they were incurred
- b) Approves that Single Accountable Body (SAB) actual revenue costs of £41,665 are recovered in the year that they were incurred
- c) Approves that historic revenue costs of Walsall Council (£1,470,316) and Wolverhampton Council (£967,694) are recovered over a 10-year period, from 2020/21 to 2029/30.

143/20 **Revenue Funding – approval of future costs**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

Agreed

- a) Approves that each Local Authority may claim up to a maximum of £250,000 per annum from 2020/21 to 2024/25 development funding. This is a maximum of £1,250,000 per local authority over the five years and £5,000,000 in total
- b) Approves that the SAB may claim up to a maximum of £100,000 per annum from 2020/21 to 2024/25 for programme management costs. This is a maximum of £500,000 over the five years
- c) Approves that the PMO may claim up to a maximum of £34,000 per annum from 2020/21 to 2024/25 for programme management costs. This is maximum of £170,000 over the five years
- d) Approves that from 2025/26 onwards each Local Authority, the SAB and the PMO (the “entities”) may claim a reduced maximum of £10,000 per annum to the end of the relevant EZs to cover monitoring and compliance costs. This will end at 31 March 2038 for Walsall Council, Wolverhampton Council and Sandwell Council, and end at 31 March 2042 for Dudley Council, the SAB and the PMO
- e) Approves that from 2021/22 to 2024/25, Wolverhampton Council can claim up to £125,000 per annum towards the Transport Director costs, on behalf of all Local Authorities.

144/20

Date of Next meeting

Agreed that the LEP Board note that the next meeting would be held on 21st September 2020.

(The meeting closed at 4.50pm)