

Minutes of a Meeting of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership

14th March 2016 at 3.00p.m.
at the National Metalforming Centre, 47 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich

Present: Simon Eastwood Carillion plc (In the Chair);
Cllr Adrian Andrew Walsall MBC;
Paul Brown Ernst & Young;
Ninder Johal Nachural Communications;
Prof Geoff Layer Wolverhampton Uni;
Cllr Roger Lawrence Wolverhampton CC.

In Attendance: Sarah Middleton Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Paul Sheehan Walsall MBC;
Kim Rowlands BIS;
Paul Mellon Black Country Consortium Ltd.

Apologies: Stewart Towe, Councillors Bird, Cooper and Lowe, Andy Cox, Chris Handy, Tom Westley and Lowell Williams.

38/16 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2016 were circulated.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2016 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

39/16 **Current Economic Overview – GVA Figures for Local Enterprise Partnerships**

The current economic overview and gross value added figures for the Local Enterprise Partnership were submitted. Total Gross Value Added in Black Country in 2014 was £19.4bn, which ranked the Sub-Region 28th of 39 LEPs and 4th of all six West Midlands LEP areas.

40/16 **Black Country Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) – Delivery Plan**

Further to Minute No. 05/16, the Board received the draft SEP Delivery Plan building on work undertaken since the December Away Day and setting out the logic chain shaping the plan, progress to date, priorities within the Plan pillars, Plan propositions, delivery pipeline including proposals within priority locations and dashboard framework for monitoring progress. The Board discussed the role of HS2 within the Plan and the need to raise awareness, particularly with MPs, following the launch of the Garden City prospectus for MIPIM.

Agreed:-

- 1) that the draft SEP Delivery Plan be approved;
- 2) that discussions continue with partners to finalise details and align capacity and that further updates be submitted as appropriate.

41/16 **Local Growth Fund - Programme Update**

The Board received the Local Growth Fund (LGF) Programme update including the regular dashboards on the progress of projects including the City Deal.

The following key points were noted:-

- Confirmation had been received from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) confirming Local Growth Fund (LGF) funding of £45,951,957 for 2016/17. Funding for 2017/18 remained indicative. The award included Growth Hub funding for 2016/17 and 2017/18, which was confirmed at £328,000 per annum;
- An update was provided on the projects rated “amber” from the February LGF Dashboard update;
- A report would be presented to the Funding Sub Group prior to the April LEP Board on over-programming against the 2016/17 LGF allocation.

The Board also noted the position with regard to the Chances Glassworks application (see Minute No. 118/15).

Agreed that the current position of the programme be noted and that further consideration be given to the over-programming of the 2016/17 programme at the next meeting.

42/16

Draft Minutes of the Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board held on 15th February 2016

The Board received the draft minutes of the meeting of the Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board held on 15th February 2016. The Board noted the progress of the Board and the wide range of its agenda.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Board held on 15th February 2016 be received and its recommendations confirmed

43/16

FEI Initiative – Appointment of Managing Body

Further to Minute No. 12/16, the Board received reports on the discussions between Government departments on a range of options for the procurement of managing body for the Initiative. In terms of the managing entity the main options appeared to be:-

- i) British Business Bank (BBB) – a similar approach to the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund. It was recognised that this option was technically viable;
- ii) Advantage Transition Bridge Fund (ATBF) – this would be a continuation of the original West Midlands plan option but widened to include the territory of the East Midlands LEPs to establish the Midlands Engine Investment Fund. It was considered that this entity could be adapted to become compliant but not without some challenges.

The East and West Midlands X-LEP Groups had met separately during the last week in February in order to receive presentations and come to a view on the preferred option. The West Midlands Group had met on 29th February and took the majority decision to progress the BBB option to the next stage subject to the resolution of outstanding issues detailed in the report.

Agreed that, subject to the British Business Bank responding in the positive to the outstanding questions detailed in the report, the decision of the X-LEP Group to progress proposals to establish the Midlands Engine Investment Fund be approved.

44/16 **West Midlands Urban Development Fund**

Further to Minute No. 84/15, the Board received information regarding the first stage of the Ex Ante assessment for Urban Development and Energy Efficiency Fund for the West Midlands, and was asked to consider a small amount of further funding for the second stage of the assessment.

Agreed that the commitment of £2 205 for the second stage of the Ex Ante Assessment be approved subject to ensuring that in the Black Country it will only focus on low carbon projects to be funded under Priority 4 of the ESIF.

45/16 **Black Country Enterprise Zones – Memorandum of Understanding**

Further to Minute No. 34/16, the Chief Executive reported that DCLG had circulated a proposed memorandum of understanding in relation to Zones to be entered into by Government and LEPs and Zone partners. The memorandum had been designed in discussion with local partners to form a secure basis for agreements reached between the Local Enterprise Partnerships and the local authorities on which all the Zones were based.

Agreed that, subject to any feedback from partners, the adoption of the proposed DCLG Memorandum of Understanding be approved.

46/16 **Area Based Review of Post-16 Education and Training**

Further to Minute No. 18/16, the Board received an update on the continuing discussions to reach agreement on arrangements for the Area Based FE Review.

The Government had now confirmed the appointment of the FE Commissioner to Chair the Black Country Review and had outlined the process and timetable for the Review and circulated a plan showing the detailed work to be undertaken and a data sharing protocol.

The Board were also advised that ABCA had written to the Minister of State for Skills requesting that the timing of the review be adjusted so that it started after the Combined Authority was formally established.

It was noted that the Skills Funding Agency had also confirmed arrangements for the Adult Skills funding in 2016/17 and beyond.

Agreed that the details of the arrangements for the Review circulated by Government and the letter submitted by ABCA be noted.

(The Board noted the indirect interest of Ninder Johal in the Review.)

47/16 **PR and Communications Update**

The Board received the regular update on PR activity since the last meeting. Members noted the arrangements for the stakeholder event on 11th May 2016 and discussed the continuing need to reach out to those who were not already engaged. The Board also discussed the need to build engagement in relation to the Combined Authority and Midlands Engine and noted discussions and reports on the progress of the Northern Powerhouse.

48/16 **Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect - Update**

The Board received the recent updates on the progress and activity undertaken by the Engine and Connect teams. The Engine update included details of:-

- The MIPIM 'pitchbook';
- First Engine Trade Mission to the US and Canada;
- First meeting of the Economic Planning Theme Group.

Agreed that the updates be noted.

49/16 **West Midlands Combined Authority Update**

Councillor Lawrence updated on the progress of the development of the Combined Authority since the last meeting including the formal process to establish the Authority, arrangements for the establishment of the Mayor and approaches concerning Non-Constituent membership.

50/16 **Decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee**

The Board received a record of decisions undertaken by the Black Country Executive Joint Committee, 20th January 2016.

51/16 **Date of Next Meeting**

25th April 2016.

(The meeting closed at 4.10p.m.)