

Minutes of a Meeting of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership

17th November 2014 at 3.00p.m.
at Carillion plc, Birch Street, Wolverhampton

<u>Present:</u>	Stewart Towe Cllr Sean Coughlan Paul Brown Andy Cox Simon Eastwood Chris Handy Ninder Johal Cllr Roger Lawrence Prof Geoff Layer Tom Westley	Chairman; Walsall MBC; Ernst & Young; Cox & Plant; Carillion plc; Accord Group; Nachural Communications; Wolverhampton CC; Wolverhampton Uni; Westley Group.
<u>In Attendance:</u>	Sarah Middleton John Polychronakis Ian Darch Kim Rowlands Simon Neilson Wayne Langford	Black Country Consortium Ltd; Dudley MBC; Wolverhampton VSC; BIS; Walsall MBC; Black Country Consortium Ltd;
<u>Apologies:</u>	Councillors Cooper and Sparks.	

92/14 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2014 were circulated.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2014 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

93/14 **Update on Talent Match Programme Development**

Ian Darch, Chief Executive, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council attended the meeting and updated on the progress and developments of Talent Match Black Country. Members congratulated the project on the progress made to date and discussed the need to continue to build engagement with young people, make links to other projects/organisations and to promote the work to other businesses who might engage with the project's work.

Agreed that the progress of Talent Match be welcomed and that Board Members and officers be requested to use existing communication channels to urge business to support its development.

94/14 **Policy Planning Session – Objectives**

The Board received a paper setting out proposed objectives for the LEP Policy session on 15th December 2014 as follows:-

- facilitated session to develop thinking on the implications of the move towards a combined authority;
- contribute to the design of and facilitate a strengthened pipeline for the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

Agreed that the proposed objectives be confirmed.

95/14 **Combined Authority – Update**

Councillor Lawrence reported on the ongoing discussions with Government and other local authorities concerning the development of a combined authority, He highlighted:-

- a) that the announcement was start of a process that would involve engagement particularly with business community;
- b) that there was a need to establish a consistent message around the development of co-operation to secure additional/make more effective use of resources in specific areas particularly economic development & transport.

Agreed that the progress of discussions with local authorities and Government be noted and the need to establish consistent message about purpose of the authority be supported.

96/14

Black Country Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Growth Deal Update

Further to Minute No. 83/14, Sarah Middleton submitted the revised schedule of projects in the Black Country pipeline with the projects' cost benefit ranking. She reported that BIS had requested that the Partnership submit further potential pipeline projects in anticipation of some scale of funding for LEPs (i.e. Growth Fund Round Two) being announced as part of the Autumn Statement. If an allocation was made on a 'fair share' scale of allocation it was estimated that, based on the 2014 announcements, c£25m per annum could be available for project starts.

Pursuant to Minute No. 59/14, she also updated the Board on LEP Government funding paid to Walsall MBC as accountable body and on proposals for the use of part of the balance of £96,366.00 of unallocated LEP Strategic Funding.

Agreed:-

- 1) that the updated outcomes of the ranking of Growth Deal project business cases be noted;
- 2) that the current status of Core Funding and Strategic Funding spend for the 2014/15 year be noted;
- 3). that the allocation of part of the balance of Strategic Funding for the following uses be approved as follows:-
 - a) employment of Genecon to develop Team Black Country and Local Growth Fund project assessments - £32,220;
 - b) employment of DTZ to provide advice on the development of Enabling Mechanisms and to assist in drafting of the SEP - £31,200;
 - c) support to West Midland European Service - £16,500;
 - d) development of ERDF Financial Engineering Instruments contribution - £8,000.

97/14 Black Country Colleges – Response to Skills Agenda

Further to Minute No. 87/14, the Board received a report on work being undertaken by Colleges to address the LEP skills agenda. The report highlighted the following:-

- Apprenticeship provision for 16-18 year olds in the transformational sectors had increased from 40.5% to 48.6%. For adults over 19 years of age the increase had been 44.4% to 50.6%;
- Whilst the percentage of people studying NVQs in the transformational sectors had stayed static, the volumes of people doing NVQs in the workplace had reduced. Mainly due to the completion of the Train to Gain initiative;
- The proportion of all A Levels delivered to Black Country residents that were linked to STEM subjects was growing slightly. Even though the total volume of A Levels had reduced by almost 1,000 learners the popularity of STEM subjects has been maintained;
- Joint college working around ESF.

Agreed:-

- 1) that the contribution of Colleges to the Partnership's skills activity be noted;
- 2) that the figures be updated if possible by inclusion of BMet Stourbridge Campus data;
- 3) that further reports to be submitted on:-
 - a) the future of the ESF Project;
 - b) the contribution to the work based skills agenda.

98/14

National College for Manufacturing Skills – Submission of Expression of Interest – Update

Further to Minute No. 74/14, the Board received an update on the progress of the development work around the elite manufacturing centre following the Growth Deal award and on the submission of an expression of interest in the establishment of a National College.

The Growth Deal announcement included funding for a feasibility study but also the commitment to fund £7.6m in 2016 – 2018 towards an Elite Centre (subject to the submission of a suitable business plan). The intention was to treat the feasibility study as a Growth Deal project in its own right and put the result of the feasibility study into the “Skills Capital pipeline” for 2016 onward. The update set out the progress that had been made in the following areas:-

Employer Demand - the main premise of the Elite Centre was that it should be employer led. The development of a detailed potential curriculum and equipment requirements was being coordinated by the Skills Factory team in consultation with employers and employer trade

bodies. Drafts were being prepared for five areas: - foundry, toolmaking, metal treatment (surface + heat), forging and forming and advanced CNC. The UKCES Management & Leadership Programme would be used to set the curriculum & demand for the management training.

Type of Establishment – a ‘hub and spoke’ model was being examined incorporating a centre providing the common core and management training with one or more spoke centres located on manufacturing company premises (where the industrial equipment was used for training). Two offers had been received from the foundry sector to base a ‘spoke’ on a foundry site. It was anticipated that parts of the curriculum would be delivered through existing colleges and providers bearing in mind, the gaps in provision, the integration of current provision and the availability of training equipment and suitably qualified trainers.

Discussions had taken place with the Elite Centre with Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) and the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC). The MTC had agreed (in principle) to a form of partnership / joint venture to operate and accredit the qualifications at the Centre. The MTC had suggested a partnership on a similar model to the AMRC in Sheffield (with buildings owned by the University with a long term operating contract with the AMRC). The University of Wolverhampton has put itself forward as the lead partner to develop the Centre.

Location – potential sites near to Wolverhampton Station had been investigated with the University and Wolverhampton Council and a preferred location had been identified that would allow the University to design the full site in a way that buildings, facilities & back office management could be shared and thereby minimise both capital building costs but also future operating costs to help with the future sustainability.

Feasibility Study Steering Group – the Board considered the establishment of a steering group needs to guide the Study, chaired by the Employment & Skills Board Chair and comprising an employer from each curriculum group, the MTC, the University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton College, the Black Country Skills Factory and the Black Country Consortium.

Agreed:-

- 1) that an Elite Centre Feasibility Steering Group be established to complete the business case (feasibility study) with a membership comprising:-
 - a) Chair of the Employment & Skills Board
 - b) an employer from each curriculum group (x five);
 - c) MTC Training Centre (Managing Director);
 - d) University of Wolverhampton (Vice Chancellor / Pro-Vice Chancellor);
 - e) Wolverhampton College (Principal or Head of Engineering);
 - f) Black Country Skills Factory (Director);
 - g) Black Country Consortium (Chief Executive);
- 2) that the Steering Group and the work on the study should be based on the following assumptions:-
 - a) that curriculum requirements will be led and set by employer groupings in each of the defined areas, coordinated by the Black Country Skills Factory;
 - b) A Partnership agreement will be sought between a lead partner and the MTC Catapult Centre training arms to operate the Elite Centre and to accredit the outputs;
 - c) the University of Wolverhampton to act as the lead partner;
 - d) that offers by industry to use their equipment as part of the Elite Centre training provision is positively encouraged and should be utilised where possible;
 - e) that various options for the composition of the Elite Centre will be considered, bearing in mind future sustainability, employer wishes, the gaps in current provision & the integration/linkage of current provision as appropriate and the Government's business case requirements;
 - f) that the Elite Centre will be a prestigious development with excellent National & regional transport connectivity;
- 3) that a meeting of the Partnership Board be held at the MTC premises to enable Members to view its facilities.

99/14 **Black Country Enterprise Zone – Phoenix 10 – Next Steps – Confidential Item**

Further to Minute No. 70/14, the Board received a report on the next steps in the Phoenix 10 project and **Agreed:-**

- 1) that the project update be noted particularly the alternative delivery partnership approach being pursued by the Council and HCA;
- 2) that the in principle agreement to fund the Phoenix 10 project costs through business rate uplift generated in the Enterprise Zone as an existing funding commitment along with i54 be reaffirmed;
- 3) that further reports be submitted:-
 - a) setting out the actual financial appraisal and confirmed project costs for the project following the procurement process;
 - b) setting out the draft Heads of Terms for the business rates funding agreement.

100/14 **UKTI -Black Country Engagement Plan**

Further to Minute No. 08/14, the Board received an update on the joint work with UKTI regarding the partnership and engagement plan (the Memorandum of Understanding), and the current situation regarding the UKTI ESIF Opt in. In particular:-

- a). UKTI had implemented changes to their services based on the Partnership' recommendations. It remained very open to innovation in export services;
- b) The LEP was working closely with UKTI on directing services for Black Country businesses over the coming five years
- c) The Partnership needed to do more to utilise UKTI work with strategic companies on supply chains for export.

Agreed:-

- 1) that the progress made in developing engagement be noted and UKTI be commended on their willingness to implement added value to their services (Wayne);
- 2) that the requirements around the ESIF opt in be noted;
- 3) that Paul Noon be invited to attend a future meeting.

101/14 **PR and Communications Update**

Members received the update on communications activity for October 2014.

102/14 **Item of Business for Black Country Consortium Ltd. Directors -**

Members considered the following items of business as Directors of Black Country Consortium Ltd. and the minutes are set out separately:-

- a) Audit Committee – Membership and Terms of Reference
- b) Black Country Consortium Ltd Auditors Report and Accounts 2014/15.

103/14 **Dates of Future Meetings**

Agreed that meetings be held on the following dates in 2015 (at 3.00pm unless otherwise indicated):-

26th January

26th February (Thursday - early am Annual Review meeting)

23rd March

20th April

18th May

22nd June (policy planning - 12-5.00)

20th July

21st September

19th October

23rd November

14th December (policy planning - 12-5.00).

(The meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.)