

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

21st May 2018 at 3.00pm

NMC, 47 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, B70 6PY

- Present:** Chris Handy in the Chair;
Paul Brown Ernst & Young;
Andy Cox Cox & Plant;
Simon Eastwood Carillion Developments Ltd;
Cllr. Bill Gavan Sandwell MBC;
Ninder Johal Nachural Communications;
Cllr. Ian Kettle Dudley MBC;
Cllr. Roger Lawrence City of Wolverhampton;
Cllr. Aftab Nawaz Walsall MBC;
Jatinder Sharma Walsall College; and
Tom Westley Westley Group.
- Adviser:** Jackie Dunne Chair of Employment and
Skills Advisory Board
- In Attendance:** Jan Britton Sandwell MBC;
Sarah Middleton Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Matthew Rhodes Camirus;
Katherine Birch Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Ian Carey Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Mark Lavender Walsall MBC;
Peter Smith BEIS; and
Hywel Ruddick Black Country Consortium Ltd.
- Apologies:** Councillors Eling, Harley, Jeavons and Moore and
Stewart Towe.

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58/18 **Declarations of Interest**

Jackie Dunne declared her pecuniary interest in Minute 60/18 - Notes of the meeting held on 16th April 2018, in so far as they related to the following items and took no part in the voting or consideration thereon.
60/18 - Notes of the meeting held on 16th April 2018

- a) (Note 10) LPIF Springfields Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation (SEPPL114)
- b) (Note 11) LPIF National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding (SEPPL)

Jackie Dunne and Ninder Johal declared their respective pecuniary interests in the following minutes, took no part in the voting or consideration and left the room during the consideration of these items.

81/18 Project Removal Recommendation – School of Architecture and Built Environment (SOABE) (SEPP26)

82/18 Project Approval Recommendation – National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding (SEPPL60)

83/18 Project Approval Recommendation: Springfield Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation (SEPPL114)

59/18 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2018 were circulated.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2018, be received and confirmed as a correct record.

60/18 **Notes**

The Notes of the meeting held on 16th April 2018, were circulated.

Agreed that the LEP Board confirms and approves notes 1 – 22 of the inquorate meeting held on 16th April 2018 and all recommendations contained therein to include: -

8. LGF - Managing Short Trips Tranche 2 (SEPPL45) – Change Request

That the LEP Board approve the Change Request for the Managing Short Trips Tranche 2 project within the Growth Deal programme. Grant funding of £195,000 be transferred from 2017/18 to 2018/19.

9. Growing Priority Sectors – Repose Furniture Ltd (SEPB1)

That the LEP Board approve: -

- i) the removal of the Repose Furniture Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme; and
- ii) Noted the removal of the scheme would create capacity of £73,000 for future Growing Priority Sectors project bids.

10. LPIF Springfields Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation (SEPPL114)

That the LEP Board approve the Accountable Body for the Land Fund (Wolverhampton City Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £4,420,000 to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the Springfields Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation project - with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year, to include the conditions detailed at 3.5 in the report

11. LPIF National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding (SEPPL)

That the LEP Board approve the Accountable Body for the Land Fund (Wolverhampton City Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £500,000 to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding project - with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year, to include the conditions detailed at in the report and the additional condition that the Programme Director offer of remuneration be linked to market rates.

12. Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 4th April 2018

That the LEP Board confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2018, to include all the project recommendations and associated conditions contained therein.

13. LEP Expenditure and Growth Hub Expenditure

That the LEP Board:

- 1) Approves the allocation of £23,849 from Core bought forward funds for the purpose of expenditure on laptops.
- 2) Approves the allocation of £30,000 from the Strategic bought forward funds for the purpose of expenditure on the Channel 4 consultancy.

61/18 Policy Update

The meeting received an update on the following matters: -

- i. Local Election results
- ii. Section 151 Officer – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Consultation
- iii. LEP Review Update
- iv. MHCLG – Senior Sponsorship Programme
- v. Prime Minister LEP Council
- vi. Black Country Skills Profile
- vii. Black Country Employment Rates

There was a discussion on the Skills agenda and the impact of the Apprenticeship levy. It was noted that whilst 289 companies were levy payers across the Black Country, only 126 had utilised the levy.

Jat Sharma advised that Black Country colleges were working together on apprenticeship delivery.

Jackie Dunne advised that the University had noted that there was increased demand for higher level apprenticeships.

Ninder Johal commented on the improvement in Level 2 and 3 qualifications and he was advised that the £10 million programme being delivered by Calderdale College and increased in delivery. With regard to a further question of whether delivery would fall once the Calderdale

contract ceased in 2019, the meeting was advised that this would be the year the UK Prosperity Fund would commence.

Agreed that the LEP Board note the Policy Updates.

62/18 **Brexit**

The meeting was informed of the work being undertaken in relation to Brexit by Black Country businesses and the following “Asks” that had been made of Government.

“The Black Country’s Key Asks of Government on Brexit

1. Clarify your expectations of future trading relationships and trading conditions, allowing businesses the ability to plan for a successful future.
2. Give greater practical support from government resources (e.g. BEIS personnel) to the Black Country, supercharging business support for opportunities post-Brexit. Strong, powerful guidance is needed at sufficient scale to steer us to success, ensuring we produce a significant return on investment and can fulfil our ambitious targets locally.
3. Minimise the impact of non-tariff barriers and logistical delays via a smooth customs arrangement with the EU, making resources available to clarify and demonstrate any enforced change to the current state.
4. Revamp and expand the role of DIT within local economies to reverse a lack of confidence in exporting worldwide. Through modernisation, the bulking up of resources, and quality improvements, DIT should assist all efforts by businesses to export their goods and services.
5. Provide guarantees on the equal rights of EU labour in the UK, both assuring EU citizens of their valuable place in our society and satisfying employers of continued access to workers.
6. For when the supply of a permanent vacancy clearly meets the demand of a non-UK worker, develop a more seamless system for employers to recruit from overseas. In particular:
 - Improve the ease and efficiency of application processes
 - Improve the connection between UKVI and employers (e.g. through an online portal)

- Re-visit the need of the Shortage Occupation List, ensuring it reflects the needs of industry

7. Announce further detail on the replacement of EU funds post-Brexit, taking this opportunity to create a more flexible and less bureaucratic system which is easy for firms to access.

8. Develop a strategic focus on building a stronger domestic workforce and on driving the growth of re-shoring, helping the Black Country combat against the threats, and embrace the opportunities, of Brexit.”

It was asked that the Brexit group be opened to a wider group, to allow greater input from a variety of businesses.

Agreed

- 1) That the LEP Board approve the “Asks” 1 -8 detailed in the report; and
- 2) That the LEP Board acknowledge the work being undertaken by the Brexit Group.

63/18 **Assurance Framework – Governance Revisions and an Appointment under the Recruitment and Selection Policy**

The report was presented and the Governance revisions were noted.

Members commented on the revised tenure and the Chair advised when terms of office ended there would be other opportunities to support the LEP, through the Advisory Boards, Growth Hub etc.

Agreed: -

That the LEP Board approve and endorse that the Assurance Framework be amended as follows: -

- 1) The LEP Board is recommended to endorse that the Assurance Framework is amended as follows: -
 - a) That quorum for a LEP Board meeting is 3 private sector members and 3 local authority leaders or their named alternate, to be a Leader nominated elected representative;
 - b) That Board membership is increased from 13 to 15 members with private sector Membership on the Board increasing from 7 members to 9;
 - c) That Board Members serve a 2-year tenure, renewable for 3 further terms; and
 - d) That the Board Chair be able to hold office for a further term to assist with succession planning.

2) That, subject to confirmation of Recommendation 1(b) above by the Black Country Joint Committee, the applicant recommended by the Interview Panel, be appointed as a new Member of the Board effective from 5th July 2018.

64/18 **LEP - Policy Away Day – 11th June 2018**

The proposed draft programme for the Away Day was shared with members which included a focus on the health and care sector, the BC Skills Challenge and the project pipeline.

The views of the Board were requested and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board confirm the draft programme for the Away Day subject to the inclusion of the items detailed below: -

- a) highlight was originally identified as barriers to growth and revisit as to where LEP was now;
- b) provide private sector members with the view of the health economy over the next ten years and invite Prof Simon Brake to present to the meeting; and
- c) Working Together Pilot and the Careers & Enterprise Partnership

65/18 **Regional Energy Strategy – Next Steps**

Tom Westley provided an overview of the work undertaken thus far and the background to why it was needed.

He highlighted advantages provided by other countries to their key manufacturers with lower power tariffs provided.

He advised that Taking energy forward collaboratively at a regional level made sense for the Black Country because of the potential for the WMCA to secure devolved powers and funding. These could benefit Black Country industry and citizens by enabling the re-allocation of elements of energy costs and enabling accelerated investment in infrastructure. Specialist input and coherent engagement with national and global partners was also required, and this was facilitated by a joint approach with the other LEPs.

Energy Capital would be governed by a Board consisting of two representatives from each of the three LEPs plus one each from a range of private sector partners and universities. The WMCA were

providing a full-time support officer and the private sector partners, universities and LEPs were contributing to a central budget which would be managed by the Black Country.

In order to maximise the benefits for the Black Country, it is additionally proposed that the Black Country LEP establish a Black Country Energy Steering Group. The draft terms of reference for this group are attached. The LEP will provide executive support to this Steering Group by paying Matthew Rhodes for one day a week of his time.

Agreed

- 1) That the LEP Board note the leading role played to date by the Black Country in shaping the regional energy strategy;
- 2) That the LEP continue to support Energy Capital as the regional delivery body for the energy strategy within the WMCA, providing a financial contribution of £20,000 per year and managing the budget on behalf of the three West Midlands LEPs;
- 3) That the LEP nominate two members to sit on the Energy Capital Board; one from the private sector and one to represent the four local authorities; and
- 4) That the LEP additionally establish a Black Country Energy Steering Group to maximise the economic and social benefits of this work for the Black Country and develop appropriate local strategic partnerships. The LEP will provide executive support to this Steering Group by employing Matthew Rhodes one day per week.

66/18

Commonwealth Games

The meeting was advised of the update and Paul Brown asked why BC LEP was an observer rather than a Board Member. He was advised that the 3 LEPs were working collaboratively and that GBSLEP were leading with the Commonwealth Games.

It was noted that there were early stage discussions in relation to Walsall and British Judo and the potential for beach volley ball.

Agreed: -

- 1) That the Board acknowledge the work completed to date and the opportunities provided by the Games;
- 2) That the Board establish a Black Country Commonwealth Games Steering Group to maximise the economic and social benefits of

this work for the Black Country and develop relevant strategic partnerships; and

- 3) That the Black Country Commonwealth Games Champion be identified in due course.

67/18 **West Midlands Combined Authority**

Cllr Roger Lawrence advised that given the election period and purdah there had been no formal meetings. However, he advised that work continued to develop the Wolverhampton/Walsall Corridor and there had been Ministerial visits on housing.

Agreed that the Board noted the update on the WMCA, to include the forthcoming meeting WMCA Board meeting agenda on 25th May 2018.

68/18 **Local Industrial Strategy**

The meeting received a presentation on the Local Industrial Strategy being developed across the 3 LEP geography through the WMCA, to include the reporting timeline. In relation to the Black Country work was being undertaken with sector bodies to include the Metals Council and there was a need to focus on specialisms and strengths.

Tom Westley commented that it fed into the Energy debate.

Peter Smith commented that the Government's aspiration was to receive an initial statement before the summer recess.

Agreed that the Board noted the update on the LIS.

69/18 **Local Programme Dashboards**

The meeting received the following dashboards: -

- In Flight Current Financial Year
- Future Years
- Pipeline
- Land and Property Investment Fund
- Growing Priority Sectors
- Enterprise Zones

The meeting was advised that the PMO were confident that they would achieve the year end spend in relation to Local Growth Fund.

Agreed

- 1) that the Board noted the updates; and
- 2) That the Board welcomed the Growing Priority Sectors and Enterprise Zone dashboards.

70/18

City Deal Release of Individual Local Authority Funding Allocations

Agreed

That the LEP Board:

- 1) Approves for each of the four Black Country Local Authorities to remove the obligation on each Authority to provide £2.5m of investment through the Black Country Investment Fund – part of the City Deal; and
- 2) That the Board note the revised arrangements proposed by BEIS for the provision of Local Authority match funding:
 - a. That local authorities can operate on a loan by loan basis consistent with the terms of the ‘deal’.
 - b. When a loan under the scheme is approved, access to the Black Country Investment Fund / PWLB loan facility will be dependent upon a matching local authority capital contribution of at 30% of the value of the PWLB loan requested.
 - c. That local authority capital contributions can be in-kind resources, in the form of a matching loan or grant, or a direct capital contribution to the capital works (rather than awarding funding to a 3rd party).

71/18

Changes to the Growth Deal Programme – Approval of the Projected 17/18 Year End Position

Agreed that the LEP Board approves of the current position of the Growth Deal Projects, reflecting all changes to the Programme (Funding and Outputs) throughout the year and, to maximise the 2017/18 Growth Deal allocation expenditure, requests approval for various changes detailed in attachment 1 of the report.

72/18

BC Growth Hub

Agreed That the LEP Board: -

- 1) Approves Walsall Council to receive £328,000 from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to fund the Black Country Growth Hub from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019; and
- 2) Approves the Black Country Consortium Ltd to manage the funding on behalf of Walsall Council.

73/18 **Growing Priority Sectors: Advanced Direct Mail Ltd – Netherton, Dudley (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Advanced Direct Mail Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant funding is to be awarded to the value of £205,000 with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year.

74/18 **Growing Priority Sectors: AIB Food Ltd – Wolverhampton (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the AIB Food Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant funding is to be awarded to the value of £150,000 with delivery to commence in the 18/19 financial year.

75/18 **Growing Priority Sectors – Allen’s Crankshafts Ltd, Wolverhampton (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Allen’s Crankshafts Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant funding is to be awarded to the value of £60,000 with delivery to commence in the 18/19 financial year.

76/18 **Growing Priority Sectors – Energy Saving Glass Ltd – Kingswinford, Dudley (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Energy Saving Glass Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant Funding is to be awarded to the value of £200,000 with delivery to commence in the 18/19 financial year.

77/18 **Growing Priority Sectors – Frameclad Ltd – Kingswinford, Dudley (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Framelad Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant Funding is to be awarded to the value of £100,000 with delivery to commence in the 18/19 financial year.

78/18 **Growing Priority Sectors – Somers Forge Ltd – Halesowen, Sandwell (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Somers Forge Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant funding is to be awarded to the value of £58,000 with delivery to commence in the 18/19 financial year.

79/18 **Growing Priority Sectors: Total Power Group Ltd – Brierley Hill, Dudley (SEPB1)**

Agreed that the LEP Board approves the Total Power Group Ltd project, part of Growing Priority Sectors, from within the Growth Deal programme. Grant funding is to be awarded to the value of £50,000 with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year.

80/18 **Project Change Request – Woods Lane (SEPPL30)**

Agreed That the LEP Board:

- 1) approves the Change Request for the Woods Lane project from within the Growth Deal Programme. Grant funding of £371,000 is to be removed from future years of the programme; and
- 2) notes that the Change Request relates to a reduction in scope.

81/18 **Project Removal Recommendation – School of Architecture and Built Environment (SOABE) (SEPP26)**

Agreed That the LEP Board:

- 1) approves the removal of the School of Architecture and Built Environment project, from within the Growth Deal programme; and
- 2) Notes that the removal of the scheme will create capacity of £3,520,000 within Growth Deal.

82/18 **Project Approval Recommendation – National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding (SEPPL60)**

Agreed That the LEP Board:

- 1) approves the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Wolverhampton City Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £500,000 to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF), funded elements of the National Brownfield Institute Seed Funding project - with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year; and
- 2) Notes that the University have agreed to cashflow the costs of the resource related, design and development costs, up to a maximum of £500,000 until an LPIF Grant Award is secured or any alternate source of financial support is secured that will fund these upfront costs.

83/18 **Project Approval Recommendation: Springfield Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation (SEPPL114)**

Agreed That the LEP Board approves the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Wolverhampton City Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with University of Wolverhampton, to the value of £4,420,000 to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF), funded elements of the Springfield Phase 1 Infrastructure and Remediation Project - with delivery to commence in the 2018/19 financial year.

84/18 **Funding Sub-Group – 2nd May 2018**

The Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 2nd May 2018 were submitted.

Agreed that the minutes of the Funding Sub-Group, to include all recommendations and conditions contained therein be confirmed and approved.

85/18 **M6 J10 (Compliance with BC LEP Assurance Framework)**

Mark Lavender submitted the report and highlighted that it was to provide confidence to the Board that the scheme was progressing in line with the requirements of the Assurance Framework.

Agreed: -

- 1) That the Black Country LEP Board note the contents of this report and based on these details accept that through the processes, procedures and work outlined, that the requirements of the Black Country LEP Assurance Framework have been and will continue to be met.
- 2) That the Black Country LEP ask that the Accountable Body to report as required on the progress and continued compliance against the Assurance Framework for this project.

86/18

Draft Minutes of the Employment & Skills Theme Advisory Board – 17th April 2018

Jackie Dunne presented the Employment & Skills Theme Advisory Board minutes and highlighted: -

- Schools attainment figures;
- Apprenticeship campaign – to be considered at the Policy Away Day.
- Careers – oversight was required as there were many different organisations offering careers advice.
- Skills agenda – Health and Care sector would be considered at the LEP Away Day. Jackie Dunne added there was a need to consider the role of Artificial Intelligence to support this sector.
- Consideration was required for the LIS Grand Challenges and Industry 4.0.

Agreed that the draft minutes of the Employment & Skills Theme Advisory Board held on 17th April 2018 be noted.

87/18

PR and Communications Report – April 2018 – including Annual Stakeholders Conference

Agreed that the report be noted.

88/18

Date of Next Meetings – 11th June 2018 Away Day and 23rd July 2018 – Wolverhampton

Agreed that the dates of future meetings be noted.

89/18 **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).

90/18 **M6 J10 (Compliance with BC LEP Assurance Framework)**

Agreed

- 1) That the Black Country LEP Board note the contents of this report and based on these details accept that through the processes, procedures and work outlined, that the requirements of the Black Country LEP Assurance Framework have been and will continue to be met; and
- 2) That the Black Country LEP ask that the Accountable Body to report as required on the progress and continued compliance against the Assurance Framework for this project

(The meeting closed at 4.40pm)