

Minutes of a Meeting of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership

18th July 2016 at 3.00p.m. at University of Wolverhampton, Wulfruna Building, Wulfruna Street, City Campus, Wolverhampton

Present: Simon Eastwood Carillion (In the Chair);
Paul Brown Ernst & Young
Chris Handy Accord Group (In the Chair);
Cllr Sean Coughlan Walsall MBC;
Cllr Roger Lawrence Wolverhampton CC;
Cllr Paul Moore Sandwell MBC;
Cllr David Sparks Dudley MBC;
Prof Geoff Layer Wolverhampton Uni;
Tom Westley Westley Group.

In Attendance: Sarah Middleton Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Rachel Goodwin Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Katherine Haynes BIS;
Kim Rowlands BIS;
Paul Mellon Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Angie Took Black Country Consortium Ltd;

Apologies: Stewart Towe, Councillors Bird, Lawrence and Lowe and Simon Eastwood.

92/16 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2016 were circulated.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2016, be received and confirmed as a correct record.

93/16 **Policy Update**

The Board received an update on the following policy items: -

- a) Local Government Leadership
It was noted that the following Leadership appointments had been made: - Dudley MBC – Councillor Pete Lowe; Sandwell MBC – Councillor Steve Eling; Walsall MBC – Councillor Sean Coughlan; and Wolverhampton MBC – Councillor Roger Lawrence.
- b) European Union Referendum – National and Black Country Results
The National and Black Country referendum results were noted. The meeting was advised that comments had been made at the recent meetings of the Advisory Boards.
- c) British Gas Support 2016 – update
The meeting was advised of the work undertaken by Sandwell MBC and partners following the announcement by British Gas that 684 staff, principally call centre employees, were to be made redundant. Kim Rowlands added that work had been done with local large companies who had similar employee profiles, with the submission of British Gas employees' CV's. She advised that a partner meeting would be held on 25th July 2016, facilitated by the Chair of the BCLEP.
- d) Consultation on the government's proposal to allow local government to retain 100% of the business rates they raise locally
The meeting was advised that the consultation ended on 26th September, thus a response would be shared prior to the 19th September LEP Board meeting for Members to consider. It was highlighted that there were implications for the WMCA and the "devo deal".
- e) Midlands Engine Summit looks at maximising benefits of HS2
The meeting was advised delegates discussed how HS2 could be utilised to maximise benefits for the region.
- f) Midlands Connect welcomes Network Rail proposals for region's railways
The meeting was advised that the proposal was for a Midlands Rail Hub to address the bottleneck in central Birmingham.

Agreed that the contents of the Policy Update report be noted.

94/16 **Policy Planning Session – 13th June 2016 – Notes and feedback**

Sarah Middleton provided an update and highlighted that the action now was to develop the propositions further, with a focus from the strategic centre, in relation to the Local Growth Fund - Round 3 allocations.

Agreed that the Policy Planning Session update be noted.

95/16 **West Midlands Combined Authority Update – Portfolios and Appointments**

The meeting was advised of the following Portfolio appointments to the WMCA: -

- Chair of West Midlands Combined Authority – Councillor Bob Sleigh
- Vice-Chair Health and Wellbeing – Councillor Peter Lowe (Dudley MBC)
- Economic Growth – Councillor John Clancy
- Public Service Reform – Councillor Steve Eling (Sandwell MBC)
- Skills and Productivity – Councillor George Duggins
- Housing and Land – Councillor Sean Coughlan (Walsall MBA)
- Transport – Councillor Roger Lawrence (Wolverhampton CC)
- Finance & Investments – Warwickshire County Council - Non – Constituent Council Lead Member
- Midlands Engine – LEP's lead

The meeting was also advised that Tom Westley had been appointed to the Audit Committee of the WMCA and that Paul Brown and Chris Handy had been appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as member and substitute member, respectively.

Councillor Roger Lawrence stated that the Black Country Leaders were content with the assigned portfolios and advised that negotiations were ongoing in relation to the portfolio assigned to a non-constituent member, that is the Finance and Investments Portfolio.

Sarah Middleton advised that at the AGM, the LEP Board had put forward a “private sector buddy” as a model to support the portfolio holder.

Agreed that the West Midland Combined Authority Portfolio and Committee appointments, as detailed above, be noted.

96/16 **Ministerial Challenge Session – 13th July 2016**

The Chair advised that the meeting with the Minister had gone well and that the Minister viewed the Black Country LEP's performance as excellent. However there three points to consider: - the Minister's concern that it had not been a combined LEP bid; the need to increase private sector leverage for projects; and in regard to housing, how the BC LEP would support SME's back into delivery of small site projects.

Agreed that the update be noted.

97/16 **Black Country Strategic Economic Plan – Local Growth Fund**

The Board received the Local Growth Fund (LGF) Programme update, submitted to the Funding Sub-Board on 18th July 2016, including the regular dashboards on the progress of projects.

Agreed: -

That the LEP Board: -

- 1) note that 100% of the 2015/16 Competitive LGF awarded had now been claimed;
- 2) note the latest Forecast slippage in the 2016/17 LGF Programme;
- 3) approve the following the following projects for LGF funding support in 2016/17: -
 - a) Brownfield Land and Housing Scheme, Dudley MBC - £2,846,000 total bid, with £440,000;
 - b) Pensnett Estate extension, LCP Properties - £1,611,000;
 - c) Dudley College, Specialist equipment for High Value Manufacturing Sector skills - £104,400;
 - d) Halesowen College, Creation for Access Centre - £700,000;
- 4) approve LGF support for the following Site Investigations bids in 2016/17: -
 - a) Bourne Street, Coseley - £63,600; and
 - b) Wharf Approach, Aldridge, Walsall - £16,300;
- 5) approve of Access Growth funding to complete the A459 Dudley Road/Coombs Road, Halesowen road scheme - £180,000 from the 2017/18 allocation
- 6) note that £100,000 approved from the 2015/16 development funding for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Tranche 1 would be

- claimed against the 2016/17 programme due to delays with back to back contracts being in place;
- 7) Approve the change request form the Woods Lane Site Assembly, subject to: -
 - a) Receipt of the formal statement of reassurance as now set out;
 - b) Commitment to complete the spend of the remainder £5.14m (LGF Grant awarded) by 2020/21;
 - c) Sandwell MBC agreeing to underwrite any shortfall in business assists (number of enterprises receiving grant support) costs resulting from alternate use of the (00k Funds; and
 - d) That the Council be recommended to employ additional consultancy expertise to evaluate the developer's proposal as the scheme develops.
 - 8) note the continued development of the Black Country wide pipeline;
 - 9) note that the actions taken in relation to Bonner Studs Ltd., in respect of LGF support on 2016/17.

(Note: Tom Westley declared an indirect, non-pecuniary interest in the Dudley College application and reserved his right to speak and vote on the matter should he decide to do so.)

98/16 **Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group dated 13th June 2016**

The Chair of the Funding Applications Sub-Group reported that the Sub-Board had met on 13th June 2016 and considered a number of applications for Local Growth Funding, an application for Growing Priority Sectors funding and the use of surplus Growing Places funds.

Agreed that the minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 13th June 2016, to include all recommendations and associated conditions, be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

99/16 **Area Based Review – Update**

Sarah Middleton provided the update of the Area Based Review and advised that the Board had been invited to comment on the Recommendations of the review. She highlighted that the colleges wished to remain independent but undertake collaborative work and advised that Wolverhampton College had been given an extension of 6 months to consider options around historic debt.

She advised that the FE Commissioner had stated that this had been the easiest area to review, as all Colleges were rated “good” by Ofsted

and, with the exception of Wolverhampton, all colleges had good financial health. She stated that this was an excellent outcome for the Black Country.

It was queried whether Walsall College being rated as “outstanding” by Ofsted had helped the process and Sarah advised that the key metric had been financial viability.

Agreed that the update be noted.

(Note: Tom Westley declared an indirect, non-pecuniary interest and reserved his right to speak and vote on the matter should he decide to do so.)

100/16 **LEP Funding Report**

The Board received the report detailing LEP Government Funding for the Local Enterprise Partnership as at 31st March 2016, paid to the accountable body under section 31.

Agreed: -

That the Board: -

- 1) Approve the expenditure of the LEP Core and Strategic funds;
- 2) Note the Programme Office and SEP Proposition fund expenditure to 31st March 2016.

101/16 **Decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee**

The Board received a record of decisions undertaken by the Black Country Executive Joint Committee, 30th June 2016.

102/16 **PR and Communications Update**

The Board received the regular update on PR activity since the last meeting and updates on work to improve response rates to e-communications from the LEP.

The following points were raised: -

- Query why the extracts of press articles ended mid-sentence – meeting advised that they were taken for a “Press Cutting House” in that format. If Members wanted to see the full article they were advised to contact the Communications Team.

- Suggested that the Communications Team work with how to link in with Small to Medium Enterprise builders and businesses. Sarah advised that work was being undertaken to have a variety of different approaches to builders to link into small sites.
- A request was made for the press office leads for WMCA and Midlands Engine and the meeting was advised that it was Jan Jennings and Claire Baker, respectively. Sarah Middleton noted that there would be ways to work collaboratively and it was noted that work was being done to share press releases and social media.

103/16 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following items were considered, following the exclusion of the Press and Public under Exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

104/16 **Growing Priority Sectors – Recommendation of the Funding Sub-Board held on 18th July 2016**

As Simon Eastwood was Chairing the LEP Board, Tom Westley of the Funding Applications Sub-Board reported that the Sub-Board had met on 18th July 2016 and considered an application for Growing Priority Sectors funding: -

Growing Priority Sectors –Application for Funding – Simco Ltd.

The Sub-Group received an overview of the status of the applications for Growing Priority Sector funding and noted that it was expected that expenditure in 2015/16 would broadly meet the Programme targets.

The Sub-Group also considered an application for funding by Simco Ltd., Walsall. The Company was a fabrication manufacturing company and was applying for £161,000 for a £809,143 project to refurbish their new premises so that a new production line could be installed and it could expand its current activities.

The Sub-Group had recommended that the application from Simco Ltd Walsall be not approved for reasons including the low return on investment being offered and the current financial position of the applicant being financially secure.

Intralox Ltd.

The meeting was advised that Intralox Ltd (Minute No. 66/16 – Funding Sub-Group Minute No. 08/16) were withdrawing their application.

Agreed that the recommendations of the Sub-Group held on 18th July 2016 be approved.

105/16 **Items of Business for Black Country Directors Audit Committee – Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 5th July 2016**

Items of Business for Black Country Consortium Ltd. Directors -

(Councillor Roger Lawrence took the Chair during the consideration of these items of business, as a Director of the Black Country Consortium Ltd.)

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

- a) Audit Committee – Minutes of Meeting Held on 5th July 2016;
- b) Company Banking Arrangements; and
- c) Staff Handbook Review and Corporate Policy Development.

a) **Audit Committee – Minutes of Meeting held on 5th July 2016**

Agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2016 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

b) **Company Banking Arrangements**

Agreed that the Board of Directors authorise the opening of a Bank of Scotland deposit Account.

c) **Staff Handbook Review and Corporate Policy Development**

Agreed that the Board of Directors adopt and implement the new Corporate Contract Management Procedures.

106/16 **Date of Next Meeting**

19th September 2016 at 3.00 pm at Midland Metro Centre.

The meeting was reminded of the potential to hold a LEP Board meeting at the Olympic site in London, linked into an energy presentation, but given the limited dates available it was suggested that a separate event be organised.

(The meeting closed at 3.50 p.m.)