

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

**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 at 3.00 pm**  
**Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Tom Westley	Chair;
Cllr. Adrian Andrew	Walsall MBC;
Cllr. Ian Brookfield	City of Wolverhampton;
Paul Brown	EY;
Cllr. Yvonne Davies	Sandwell MBC;
Kevin Davis	The Vine Trust;
Rachel Eade	Red Limited;
Simon Eastwood	Eastwood Consulting;
Cherry Elliott	Higgs & Sons;
Lindsey Flynn	Well Associates;
Chris Handy	Accord Group;
Ninder Johal	Nachural Communications;
Prof Nazira Karodia	University of Wolverhampton;
Prof Geoff Layer	University of Wolverhampton;
Jatinder Sharma	Walsall College; and
Amanda Tomlinson	Black Country Housing Group.

**In Attendance:**

Cllr. Brian Edwards	South Staffordshire BC;
Kevin O'Keefe	Dudley MBC;
Sarah Middleton	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
David Stevens	Sandwell MBC;
Aaron Toussaint	BEIS;
Richard Lawrence	City of Wolverhampton;
Katherine Birch	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Lara Cragg	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Prof Delma Dwight	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Jaspal Sohal	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Alison Guerra	Walsall MBC;
Kelly Valente	Walsall MBC; and
Hywel Ruddick	Black Country Consortium Ltd.

**Apologies:** Councillor Mike Bird.

82/20

**Declarations of Interest**

Tom Westley DL, declared his interest insofar as any matter related to Dudley College.

Gift Register – no receipt of gifts exceeding the value of £50 were notified.

83/20

**Public Minutes of the LEP Board held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

The Chair advised that at the last meeting the Year End changes were submitted in the list that was appended to these minutes.

Whilst these were approved, the BC Executive Joint Committee Secretariat had asked that the following ten be specifically approved as individual projects, as they related to the projects that exceeded the 10% variation and to ensure clarity needed to be recorded as individual decisions.

**Agreed**

- 1) That the Board confirm and approve the public minutes of the BC LEP Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- 2) That in Minute No. 68/20 be amended to read (amendments in bold) –  
**“Agreed that the LEP Board**
  - 1) approves Walsall Council **as the Single Accountable Body for the LEP**, to receive £328,000 from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to fund the Black Country Growth Hub from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021; and
  - 2) approves the **Walsall Council, as the Single** Accountable Body for the Growth Deal to proceed to a Grant Agreement to the value of £328,000, with the Black Country Consortium Ltd to deliver the Black Country Growth Hub Funding for 2020/2021.”
- 3) That the following Year End Changes that exceed the 10% variation, as outlined in the Assurance Framework be approved: -

i. i9 Wolverhampton Interchange

<u>Grant allocation</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£936,214</u>	<u>£3,061,453</u>	<u>£3,997,667</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£755,280</u>	<u>£3,242,387</u>	<u>£3,997,667</u>

ii. Halesowen College – Business and Management Construction Centre

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£176,565</u>	<u>£3,535,535</u>	<u>£2,220,000</u>	<u>£5,932,100</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£176,565</u>	<u>£2,895,209</u>	<u>£2,860,326</u>	<u>£5,932,100</u>

iii. Hatherton Street Phase 2

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£799,819</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£799,819</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£384,611</u>	<u>£239,967</u>	<u>£624,578</u>

iv. National Brownfield Institute SEED Funding

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£500,000</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£500,000</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£500,000</u>	<u>£500,000</u>

v. Springfield Campus Phase 1 Remediation & Infrastructure

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£3,056,044</u>	<u>£1,363,956</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£4,420,000</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£3,056,044</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£1,363,956</u>	<u>£4,420,000</u>

vi. Black Country Living Museum: Forging Ahead

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£2,630,000</u>	<u>£6,370,000</u>	<u>£9,000,000</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£1,075,586</u>	<u>£7,924,414</u>	<u>£9,000,000</u>

vii. Very Light Rail Test Track 1

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£4,379,534</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£4,379,534</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£3,900,114</u>	<u>£3,900,114</u>

viii. Mill Lane Bridge GRIP 3 Study & Aldridge Line Aqueduct

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£120,000</u>	<u>£95,750</u>	<u>£81,750</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£297,500</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£120,000</u>	<u>£95,750</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£81,750</u>	<u>£297,500</u>

ix. Phoenix 10

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£1,222,042</u>	<u>£722,680</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£1,944,722</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£1,222,042</u>	<u>£122,963</u>	<u>£599,717</u>	<u>£1,944,722</u>

x. MRN Development Funding

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£250,000</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£250,000</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£80,600</u>	<u>£169,400</u>	<u>£250,000</u>

xi. Ultra-Low EV Transport Development

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£130,000</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£130,000</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£25,320</u>	<u>£104,680</u>	<u>£130,000</u>

xii. Wolverhampton Civic Halls

<u>Output</u>	<u>Jobs</u>	<u>Apprenticeships</u>	<u>Business Assists</u>	<u>Learner Assists</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>2,730</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>1,500</u>

xiii. Growing Priority Sectors

<u>Output</u>	<u>Jobs</u>	<u>Apprenticeships</u>	<u>Business Assists</u>	<u>Learner Assists</u>	<u>Commercial Floorspace (sqm)</u>
<u>Current Profile</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13041</u>
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>5796</u>
<u>Grant allocation</u>		<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>Total</u>	
<u>Current Profile</u>		<u>£3,155,352</u>	<u>574,771</u>	<u>8,228,265</u>	
<u>Requested Re-Profile</u>		<u>3,155,352</u>	<u>530,163</u>	<u>8,183,656</u>	

84/20

**Revision to Growth Hub Governance**

Jaspal Sohal advised that following the Cities and Local Growth Unit creation of 10 new regional Growth Hub clusters, with Coventry and Warwickshire’s LEP’s Growth Hub being the regional lead, a review had been undertaken into the governance of the BC Growth Hub, as the work of Growth Hubs had evolved to include a clear lead for local businesses on Brexit.

The review was in order to better reflect the more streamlined governance of the C&W LEP’s Growth Hub and to further align the BC Growth Hub towards best practice, which had received national recognition from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, in that C&W LEP’s Growth Hub was selected as the regional lead.

Thus, the proposal was that the BC Growth Hub report directly to the Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board, with two additional groups be established – the Economic Development Group and Business Voice Advisory Group to report direct into the Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board. He advised that work would be undertaken on the Terms of Reference of these two groups, should approval be given.

**Agreed that the LEP Board: -**

- 1) Approve the streamlining approach with the BC Growth Hub reporting directly to the Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board;
- 2) Note that there will no longer be a requirement for the Strategic Growth Hub Board; and
- 3) Approve that Economic Development Group and Business Voice Advisory Group be established, each of which will report directly through to the Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board; and
- 4) Note that Full Terms of Reference for each group are currently under development and will be agreed at a future point), which will sit under the Competitiveness Theme Advisory Board.

85/20

### **LEP Core and Strategic Funding Report**

Sarah Middleton advised that the report detailed the expenditure allocated against the LEP Core and Strategic funding budget, and the LEP Implementation Review Budget.

Furthermore, report asked the Board to consider the delegation and approval levels of LEP Funding expenditure as required by the Single Accountable Body, Walsall MBC in their compliance review, undertaken in October and November 2018. The company procurement policy required any contract with a value of £35,000 or more to be authorized by the Guarantee Members. It was suggested that this may be the threshold for LEP transactions, so that any transaction up to £35,000 could be authorized by BCC CEO (to be ratified at the next LEP board meeting), but that anything above this level would need electronic approval by the LEP board. This would ensure that the procurement policy could be applied to all transactions entered into by BCC

**Agreed that the LEP Board**

- 1) Approve the LEP funding and expenditure position as at 31st March 2020.
- 2) Approve the balances on the LEP Core funding and Strategic Core funding that are available to carry forwards into 2020/21.
- 3) Approve the delegation and approval level of LEP Funding expenditure to sit with BCC CEO and to mirror the procurement policy of BCC Limited, that is £35,000.

86/20

### **Land and Property Investment Fund - LPIF Narrowboat Way**

Simon Eastwood highlighted that the Funding Sub Group had received a change request for the LPIF project Narrowboat for a change request because of an underspend.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board

- 1) Approves the Accountable Body for the Black Country Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Blackacres Properties Ltd to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF) funded elements of the Narrowboat Way Site Investigation Project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year; and
- 2) Notes that there was a project underspend of £6,402.18.

87/20

### **Draft Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board – 11th February 2020**

Chris Handy advised that subsequent to the February meeting a meeting of the Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board had been held the week prior to LEP Board, on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and provided an overview of the discussions at that meeting to include an update on the UNESCO BC Geo park; micro-generation hubs; the PowerBi mapping tool and the Brownfield Research and Innovation Centre.

**Agreed** that the draft minutes of the meeting noted the Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Board held on 11th February 2020.

88/20

### **Black Country Executive Joint Committee Decisions – 20th May 2020 (Information)**

The meeting received the decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Decisions, held on 20th May 2020.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board receive and note the decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Decisions, held on 20th May 2020, to include confirmation of the following grant approvals: -

- a) YMCA Cleveland Road;
- b) Hub to Home Transport Innovation Centre and Test Track Project: Very Light Rail and Autonomous Technologies – Test Track – Project Change Request;

- c) Birchley Island Development Phase – Project Change Request;  
and
- d) i54 Western Extension.

89/20 **PR and Communications Report**

Ninder Johal presented the PR and Communications Report and asked that when Members received the Newsletter and other communications from the LEP that they share with their respective networks, in order to promote the work of the LEP.

Lindsey Flynn noted that the BC LEP was providing more information and updates on the Covid-19 pandemic than other LEPs.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board note the PR and Communications Report.

90/20 **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.

**Exempt Information**

**Paragraph 3**  
**Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

91/20 **Minutes**

**Agreed** that the private minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

92/20 **LEP Policy Away Day Note – 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020**

**Agreed** that the LEP Board confirm and approve the notes of the LEP Policy Away Day held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.



## **Covid19 – BC LEP Activity – Policy Update – National and Regional Activity**

Sarah Middleton advised that on 22nd May 2020 a Ministerial Round Table with Simon Clarke MP, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government and with Nadhim Zahawi MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Industry, to include representatives from the 9 Midland Engine LEPs was convened, chaired by Elizabeth Fagan CBE, Chair of D2N2 LEP. Attendees on behalf of the Black Country were Kevin Davis, Lindsey Flynn and Tom Westley.

There were questions on financial support and economic growth, barriers to local growth and on safety and PPE.

Recent Economic Recovery Working Group sessions, had focused on getting people back to work and with a focus on retail and the high street, together with commuting. There was also a discussion on the practicalities and the newly launched Reopening the High Streets Safely Fund.

It was noted that Robert Jenrick MP, Minister for MHCLG wrote to LEPs and CAs on 10th June inviting to submit projects which could be used to support the delivery of capital projects in order to stimulate the economy over the next 18 months and to generate new activity within 18 months, to help create jobs and raise overall demand in the economy.

Delma Dwight provided an overview of the furlough data and the youth claimant data. Jatinder Sharma advised that there were forthcoming announcements to provide funding for re-skilling adults.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board receive and steer next steps whilst also noting the following updates provided via this report: -

- a) Ministerial Round Table – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020
- b) The LEP Network – WM LEP Chairs Meetings
- c) Secretary of State MHCLG – Letter and Response
- d) BC Covid19 – Economic Impact
- e) BC Furlough Data
- f) BC Claimant data – 16th June 2020.

94/20 **Black Country Recovery Prospectus**

Sarah Middleton presented the report and highlighted that the Recovery Prospectus, as drafted, had arisen as bold and ambitious prospectus following the feedback received at the Policy Away Day. It was a blend of Revenue and Capital support as well as requesting policy changes.

She advised of the submission to BEIS of a list of projects for consideration which had been worked through in the preceding week, with 50 projects that could be accelerated to provide for jobs and green growth in the BC.

Cllr. Patrick Harley welcomed the inclusion of the VLR project in the list, highlighting that the retaining wall had been completed and thus the project was “shovel-ready” for the next phase. Sarah Middleton added that she would be presenting to the WM MPs group and would be seeking support from Leaders and local MPs to champion projects in their constituencies.

**Agreed** that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Note the Draft Black Country Recovery Prospectus; and
- 2) Note the list of projects by theme, submitted through to BEIS for consideration following receipt of the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government request.

95/20 **Risk Register – Covid19 Programme Risk update**

Lara Smith advised that currently 2/3 of the Growth Deal allocation had been paid to the Accountable Body by Government.

**Agreed** that the Risk Register verbal update be noted.

96/20 **Black Country Local Programme Dashboards**

The suite of Dashboards was presented: -

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

Lara Smith provided an update on the Dashboards. In respect of Growing Places, it was noted that the Gainshare funding had been confirmed.

**Agreed** that the update be noted.

97/20 **Local Growth Fund – Sandwell Aquatic Centre**

Simon Eastwood presented the report and, it was

**Agreed** that the LEP Board:

- 1) Approves the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Sandwell Council to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Sandwell Aquatic Centre Infrastructure Phase 1 project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year; and
- 2) Note that the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), request was detailed in the private report of Grant Funding from the Black Country LEP to assist in the delivery of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

98/20 **Date of Next meeting**

**Agreed** that the LEP Board note the following date of the next meeting, 13th July 2020.

(The meeting closed at 4.05pm)