



21st October 2019 at 3.00 pm
PB019, Business Solutions Centre,
Wolverhampton Science Park, Glaisher Drive, Wolverhampton

Present:

Stewart Towe	Hadleys;
Cllr. Adrian Andrew	Walsall MBC;
Paul Brown	EY;
Cllr. Yvonne Davies	Sandwell MBC;
Prof Jackie Dunne	University of Wolverhampton;
Simon Eastwood	Eastwood Consulting;
Lindsey Flynn	Well Associates;
Chris Handy	Accord Group;
Jatinder Sharma	Walsall College; and
Tom Westley	Westley Group.

In Attendance:

Tim Johnson	City of Wolverhampton;
Sarah Middleton	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
David Stevens	Sandwell MBC;
Aaron Toussaint	BEIS;
Stuart Everton	City of Wolverhampton;
Katherine Birch	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Lara Cragg	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Delma Dwight	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Rebecca Hill	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Shannon Nicklin	Black Country Consortium Ltd;
Kelly Valente	Walsall MBC; and
Hywel Ruddick	Black Country Consortium Ltd.

Apologies: Councillors Mike Bird and Patrick Harley and Kevin Davis, Ninder Johal, and Deborah Williams.

Public – 0

162/19 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of Interest were received.

There was nothing to add to the Gift Register.

163/19 **Minutes**

The public minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2019 were submitted.

Agreed that the public minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2019 were received and confirmed as correct.

164/19 **LEP Board Membership – Recruitment Update**

Sarah Middleton provided an update on the LEP Board Membership recruitment. She advised that the mid-year review with BEIS had highlighted a “red line” for achieving the gender balance with a minimum of one third of the Board being female by the end of March 2020, but that all LEPs had been advised that the minimum figure of 26% was required by the Annual Performance Review. However, she highlighted that currently the Board was 25% female and if the Board were minded to approve the recommendations, then the LEP would meet the requirement of one third of the Board female.

Agreed that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Note and confirm the appointment of the following to the LEP Board, to commence in November 2019 Cherry Elliott, Amanda Tomlinson and Rachel Eade MBE;
- 2) Note that the appointments would ensure the Board met the required gender balance of 26% female members by the Annual Performance Review and one third female members by the end of March 2020; and
- 3) Note the following appointment to the Employment & Skills (People) Theme Advisory Board, Kacey Akpoteni.

Strategy

165/19 **Policy Update**

Sarah Middleton provided the Policy Update on the following items: -

- LEP Mid-Year Review

It was noted that the issue of gender balance and the requirement of 26% female Board by the Annual Performance Review had been communicated. Kelly Valente had been in attendance, along with 2 other representatives of the accountable body.

There had been a discussion on the Local Industrial Strategy and the sector actions plans being led by the three WM LEPs.

- Annual General Meeting

It was noted that it was a formal requirement to hold the AGM in a public session and that it would take place after the Board meeting on 18th November 2019.

- Brexit and Growth Hubs Update

In line with 38 LEPs there were 38 Growth Hubs . These Growth Hubs had now been clustered by BEIS and would be used to support the advice given to companies by Government post-Brexit. For the West Midlands the cluster was 6 LEPs' Growth Hubs, with Coventry & Warwickshire appointed as the lead Growth Hub.

There would be additional resources to support the work, as detailed in the report. In relation to seeking 1000 responses from companies in a mass telemarketing exercise Chris Handy asked if this was for the 6 in total or each LEP area. It was confirmed that it was per LEP area.

- High Streets Task Force

Councillor Yvonne Davies commented that this was a fund for local authorities and that she would not wish it to be included in a LEP "fund of funds".

Sarah Middleton advised that the LEP was collating information across all Black Country public funds, so that the potential impact of these funds could be measured.

The Chair added that it was acknowledged that the Stronger Towns Fund would flow through the local authorities and not be held by the LEP.

Chris Handy stated that it was useful information to align programmes and align potential investment but acknowledged that these funds were for each local authority.

Aaron Toussaint stated that the funds and prospectus were due to be published imminently.

- **European Regional Development Fund Update**
The Board were advised that the Government were pooling uncommitted EDRF monies into a Reserve Fund, with guidance that the uncommitted funds could be accessed by cross-LEP proposals, thus would need to cover a cross-LEP geography.
- **LEP Network – Futures paper**
It was noted that the LEP Network were reviewing how they operated and had identified groupings of LEPs to work with. Members noted that the LEP had worked with the five other WM LEPs since 2012 and now had a wider grouping with the Midland Engine LEPs.

Delma Dwight presented the following EIU statistics to the Board:

- **Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) –**
It was noted that that across the Black Country there had been an overall reduction in employees by 2.6%, however the City of Wolverhampton had seen a growth of 1000 jobs.
- **UK Business Counts** – it was noted that there were 970 companies with a turnover above £5m. Sarah Middleton noted that in the context of Brexit the smaller companies were more vulnerable.

Paul Brown observed that the previous year's data would be useful to see, as he recalled that there 940 companies with a £5m turnover in 2018.

It was noted that 11 companies had a turnover of £100m plus and it was noted that larger international companies could relocate more easily.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the following Policy Updates: -

- LEP Mid-Year Review
- Annual General Meeting
- Brexit and Growth Hubs Update
- High Streets Task Force
- ERDF update
- LEP Network – Futures paper
- EIU Statistics - Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)
- EIU Statistics - UK Business Counts

166/19 **Full Indices of Multiple Deprivation Barometer**

Delma Dwight presented the report and advised that the information was from four years previously, although it represented the most up to date data available.

Councillor Yvonne Davies stated that it would be beneficial to see comparisons with neighbouring areas in the region.

Lindsey Flynn queried the statistic regarding Health Deprivation and Disability and the Living Environment Deprivation and asked why the Black Country had gone from 15th to 28th. Delma Dwight advised that her team would undertake a deeper dive into these statistics. The Chair noted that a deeper dive may provide information on other factors that could be undertaken by LEP to improve these areas.

Agreed

- 1) that the LEP Board receive and note the data contained in the Full Indices of Multiple Deprivation Barometer; and
- 2) that the EIU undertake further research into Health Deprivation and Disability and the Living Environment Deprivation.

167/19 **Black Country Strategic Companies Barometer**

Delma Dwight presented the report and advised that the information provided detailed the BC business base and the BC economy by sector performance.

Councillor Yvonne Davies welcomed the analysis of BC companies and investment and asked that it be presented to senior officers.

Agreed that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Note the Strategic Companies Barometer data; and
- 2) Confirms that the BC LEP Economic Intelligence Unit would present the data to the relevant senior officers of the four local authorities.

168/19 **LEP Core and Strategic Funding**

Sarah Middleton presented the LEP Core and Strategic Funding report.

Councillor Yvonne Davies commented that it would be useful to have an overview of funds by each area and stated that she felt there was confusion with the figures. She highlighted that she had concerns regarding Sandwell projects.

It was noted that the LEP Core and Strategic funds represented the LEP operational funding and expenditure for the six-month period, to 30th September 2019 and that the report detailed the expenditure allocated against LEP Core and Strategic funding budget and the LEP Implementation Review Budget.

The tables provided the detail of the Core Funding (£250,000 grant and £112,640 unallocated from previous years and carried forward), Strategic Funding (core funding for 2019-20 consists of £250,000 grant and the additional £94,609, unallocated funding from previous years) and LEP Review Implementation and LIS Development Funding (2018-19 - £250,000 from Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government).

On a further question regarding Birchley Island, it was noted that the LEP Core Funding did not relate to the capital programme. It was noted that the LEP had to pay a number of organisations from the strategic fund, to include the WMCA subscription and Midlands Engine subscription.

Agreed that the LEP Board: -

- 1) Note and approve the LEP funding and expenditure position as at 30th September 2019.
- 2) Approve an adjusted final balance brought forward figure on the Strategic Fund as set in Table B of £94,609.
- 3) Approve the allocation to the Walsall MBC Technical Assistance post of £46,045.

Delivery169/19 **Local Programmes – Dashboard**

Lara Cragg presented the dashboards.

Growth Deal – the focus had moved to output monitoring for the PMO and Accountable Body with the funding ending on 31 March 2021. In regard to the BC Pipeline it was noted that some private sector organisations were taking some of the projects forward.

Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF) – this related to the first tranche of £53m funding. There was no update on the £97m and as previously reported the WMCA and BC LEP were undertaking a review. It had been agreed that the scope of the review would be limited to project outcomes. An update would be provided at the next LEP Board.

Enterprise Zones – the meeting was advised that work was being undertaken to identify what potential business rate surpluses were available and when they would be available. The aim was to complete all the work before the next EZ Implementation Group meeting.

Councillor Yvonne Davies asked if any revenue generated would be shared across all local authorities?

Kelly Valente advised that if identified the business rates surplus would be presented as a revenue and it was noted that the work needed to be undertaken first.

It was asked when decisions would be made regarding the allocating of resources and noted that work was continuing to identify any potential resource. Thus, at present the exercise being undertaken into any potential EZ business rates surplus was information gathering.

Tim Johnson advised that there would be a need for partners to review the investment criteria, as there had been no business rate surplus generated by the EZ previously. At present he stated that there was no commitment to invest in anything.

Councillor Adrian Andrew recalled that originally there had been discussions regarding reinvestment as different EZ sites had required

different levels of remediation. Here was also the potential for other EZ sites to follow from re-investment.

Sarah Middleton advised that a policy across the Black Country could be developed for the EZ sites.

Councillor Yvonne Davies referenced Inclusive Growth and stated that this should apply to all areas of the BC.

Councillor Adrian Andrew highlighted that the BC EZ sites would create employment opportunities for residents in other boroughs to include Sandwell. He highlighted that the sites were vital to the BC economy and wider supply chain and commented that, in his view, the original vision should be retained.

Tim Johnson stated there needed to be a strategic view undertaken on all the sites but highlighted that without the final EZ report they were not currently in a position to do.

Councillor Yvonne Davies asked that there be an “in principle meeting” to consider future funding priorities.

Growing Places – an update was provided.

Agreed

- 1) that the updates on the following dashboards be noted: -
 - In flight Current Financial Year
 - Future Years
 - Pipeline
 - LPIF (Public)
 - Growing Priority Sectors
 - Growing Places
 - Enterprise Zones
 - Transport
- 2) that an “in principle” session on future funding priorities be scheduled.

170/19

Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 2nd October 2019

Simon Eastwood presented the Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 2nd October 2019.

Agreed that the LEP Board to confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2019.

171/19 **Draft Minutes of the Active Black Country Partnership Board Held on 24th September 2019**

Sarah Middleton presented the Active Black Country Partnership Board Held on 24th September 2019.

Agreed that the LEP Board note the contents of the draft minutes of the meeting of the Active Black Country Partnership Board Held on 24th September 2019.

172/19 **Black Country Executive Joint Committee – 25th September 2019**

Sarah Middleton presented the decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee held on 25th September 2019.

Agreed that the LEP Board receive and note the decisions of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee held on 25th September 2019.

173/19 **PR and Communications**

Katherine Birch provided the update and highlighted the communications on the skills factory, the careers hub, the LEP Board recruitment campaign and local media coverage.

Agreed that the PR and Communications dashboards for September be received and noted.

174/19 **Date of Next meeting**

Agreed that the LEP Board note that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 18th November 2019 at the NMC, 47 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich B70 6PY.

175/19 **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).

Governance

176/19 **Private Minutes of the LEP Board held on 23rd September 2019**

The Chair presented the private minutes of the LEP Board held on 23rd September 2019.

Agreed that the Private Minutes of the LEP Board meeting held on 23rd September 2019, be received and confirmed as a correct record.

177/19 **Funding Sub-Group Minutes – 2nd October 2019**

The Minutes of the Funding Sub-Group held on 2nd October 2019 were discussed and, it was

Agreed that the LEP Board: -

- 1) that the LEP Board confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2019; and
- 2) that the LEP be asked to undertake a review of funding in relation Sandwell MBC projects with Sandwell MBC and report back to a future meeting; and
- 3) that the LEP be asked to review the local authority invitees to future meetings of the Funding Sub-Group.

Delivery – Local Growth Fund

178/19 **Local Growth Fund**

a) **Local Growth Fund - Black Country LEP Programme Funding Update**

b) **Local Growth Fund - Birchley Island**

There was a discussion regarding the funding for each of the projects and it was

Agreed that the LEP Board note that the items on the Black Country LEP Programme Funding and Birchley Island were withdrawn and would be submitted to a future meeting of the LEP Board.

179/19 **Local Growth Fund – City Learning Quarter**

There was a discussion regarding the funding for the project and, it was

Agreed that consideration of this item be deferred to the next meeting of the LEP Board.

180/19 **Local Growth Fund – i54**

There was a discussion regarding the funding for the project and, it was

Agreed that consideration of this item be deferred to the next meeting of the LEP Board.

181/19 **Risk Register**

Lara Cragg presented the Risk Register and advised that an updated report would be submitted to the next meeting.

Agreed

- 1) That the LEP Board receive and note the Risk Registers across the funding profiles – Local Growth Deal; Land and Property Investment Fund; Growing Places; and Enterprise Zones; and
- 2) That the LEP undertake a review of the Black Country spending priorities at the next LEP Policy Away Day to be held in December.

(The meeting closed at 4.45pm)