

**STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
Note of a Board Meeting held on the
18 January 2012
Staffordshire Place 1, Stafford, S16 2LP**

Present

Maitland Hyslop	(Internet Central) - Chair
Ken Stepney	(JCB)
Mark Kerrigan	(Alton Towers)
Ron Dougan	(Trent and Dove Housing)
Kerry Diamond	(Zytek)
Stephen Dixon	(Johnson Tiles)
Paul Richards	(Staffs. University – representing the University Sector)
Cllr Stephen Sweeney	(Leader, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council)
Cllr Mohammed Pervez	(Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
John Van de Laarschot	(Chief Executive, Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
Cllr Brian Edwards	(Leader, South Staffordshire Council)
Philip Atkins	(Leader, Staffordshire County Council)
Nick Bell	(Chief Executive, Staffordshire County council)

University/Further Education Observers

Jenny Tucker	(Keele University)
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Observers / In attendance

Cllr Ben Adams	(Staffordshire County Council)
Cllr Mark Meredith	(Stoke City Council)
Cllr Gordon Alcott	(Cannock Chase Council)
Bob Philips	(Cannock Chase Council)
John Sellgren	(CE Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council)
Kevin Postones	(BIS)
Kay Phillips	(HCL)
David Hope	(HCL)
David Gage	(Gage Consultancy)
Jeff Marlow	(Southern Staffordshire Partnership)

Advisory/Secretariat

Peter Davenport	(Staffordshire County Council)
Darryl Eyers	(Staffordshire County Council)
Steve Burrows	(Staffordshire County Council)
John Willis	(Stoke City Council – Joint Inward Investment Team Leader)
Alison Knight	(Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
Sara Williams	(North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce)
Jonathan Phipps	(Stoke-on-Trent City Council)

1. **Introductions**

The chair welcomed all guests and visitors.

2. **Apologies**

Peter Coates	(Bet365)
Sue Prince	(Beechenhill Farm)
Steve Willis	(Stafford College)
Catherine Raines	(Staffordshire County Council)

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

4. **Notes of the meeting held on 20 October and Matters Arising**

Councillor Alcott attended the previous meeting.

Note of the Funding Group to be appended to previous minutes.

The Chair reported that the meeting with senior officers from BIS and CLG had been arranged for 10 February.

Matters Arising

The Chair reported that Sue Prince had unfortunately had to resign from the Board due to business pressures. The Board thanked Sue for her contribution.

The Chair undertook to approach Peter Coates regarding his intentions.

It was agreed that a formal recruitment process would need to be undertaken to fill any vacancies.

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5. **For Decision**

5(a) **Revised Sub-Group Arrangements**

The Chair introduced this item and thanked Members for their agreement to the principles set out in his email.

5(b) **Sub Group Reports**

Inward Investment Group (Paul Richards)

John Willis gave a presentation on the area's Inward Investment offer. This outlined the emerging strategy and target areas of activity.

The presentation was circulated at the meeting for attendees information.

Discussion

Board Members highlighted the importance of the following areas;

- Ensuring that the Inward Investment, Red Carpet and Marketing work were joined up.
- The ambition to secure 10,000 inward investment jobs in the next 10 years.
- The importance of having packages of support in place.
- Ensuring that we have a suitable supply of land and a record of what is available.

Action:

1. NB/JvdL to report back on site availability and database.
2. Progress to be reported on a monthly basis to the Board.

Branding and Communications (Mark Kerrigan)

Mark introduced the presentation by Kay Philips from HCL.

Kay's presentation to the Board outlined her agency's strengths; the brief; her thoughts on the brief, the context of the LEP, emerging critique and league tables.

She highlighted the importance of prioritising the audiences that matter taking into account resource implications. Kay then outlined a range of potential areas that could be covered and the media approaches that could be used.

As an example, a network of champions was referred to.

Discussion

The Board discussed the presentation and agreed that this piece of work was a first stage. The following points were raised;

- The focus should be on promoting Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- The RDA had a large amount of resources, whereas the LEP needed a short sharp targeted work.
- Unify, Lobby, Invest was seen as a positive expression of the ambition of the Board to do the best for the area.
- There is a need for business to take the LEP seriously but equally we need to raise profile of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- We need to understand what is practically possible within what resources we have. Who to? What we say?
- The clarity of the message is important.

It was noted that Start up fund allocations are supporting this work.

The first draft of the Wall of Influence outline was tabled.

Action:

1. All Board Members to review the Wall of Influence and supply any additions.

Funding (Kerry Diamond)

David Gage presented his report and outlined the options. He had spoken to a range of financial institutions and business support agencies in developing his conclusions. The Board welcomed the report and supported its conclusions and recommendations.

Ben Adams advised the Board that SCC were to continue to support the Small Business Loan fund for a further two years.

A number of Access to Finance events have been arranged by the LEP which would help businesses to prepare good business plans which complemented David's conclusions.

Action:

1. Further work on exploring the potential for an equity fund is commissioned.

Business Development (Stephen Dixon)

Stephen reported that the development of the single number was progressing well. Publicity had been prepared and would be circulated widely. In addition support providers and agencies were being invited to register their details on a local "wikipedia".

It was noted that the revised sub-group would need to look forwards at priorities in this area.

Land and Housing (Ron Dougan)

Ron reported that the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire had been submitted.

An initial review of the projects received following an invitation to District and Borough as well as other businesses and organisations had been completed. This review had identified four deliverable projects, and three others where further work was needed and nine other projects where more information was required or there were other issues that affected their prioritisation.

A further meeting on the 2 February was planned to review any additional data supplied and agree the outline programme which would be reviewed in more detail before seeking board approval.

The aim remains to allocate as much of the funding as possible to projects that will repay the investment. However, it would be prudent to make provision for a further round.

The Board re-affirmed its desire to secure jobs and growth as well as seeking the repayment of the funds.

The initial prioritisation based on the information presented to the group was agreed.

Action:

1. Project sponsors to be advised
2. Sub Group to review additional information and advise on priorities.
3. SCC to develop legal and contractual framework.

Enterprise and Skills Group (Ken Stepney)

Ken reported that the outcome of the Alstom event had been circulated and schools were beginning to get interested in engaging with business.

The LEP had sponsored the apprenticeship recognition awards and work was proceeding on apprenticeships across the whole area. The Chair thanked Ken and Steve Burgin for the STEM event.

The sub-group is also working to increase the number of apprenticeships available by reviewing bidding opportunities, joining an European Social Fund consortium for apprenticeship grants, and promoting the benefits. A number of colleagues were also running pre-apprenticeship courses.

Work on the Education Trust was proceeding and was to be discussed in more detail on Monday.

Discussions had also been held with the Prince's Trust on a number of initiatives. Ken sought advice on the focal point from the LEP for contact with with the Prince's Trust.

Ken concluded by encouraging members to encourage businesses take an active interest in the work of the group.

Action:

1. Further discussions to be held on the Education Trust.

Broadband

The Update paper was noted. The potential for the CIC initiative would be explored.

Planning Group

It was noted that the Charter Mark was to be launched at an engagement event on the 9th February.

6. **For Discussion**

None.

7. **For Endorsement and Information**

7(a) **Green Investment Bank: Support for a North Staffordshire Bid**

Jonathan Phipps introduced the paper. He outlined the direct benefits, 50 jobs, but equally importantly the spin-offs and prestige. The area's unique selling point as set out in the bid is the breadth of green skills and expertise coupled with good connections to London and other major centres.

The Board welcomed the bid and encouraged Jonathan to maximise the strengths of the wider area. It agreed to support the bid and board members were asked to promote it.

7(b) **Rural Growth Network**

The Board agreed to support the Business Park District Concordat and the bid for a Rural Growth network Pilot.

Action

1. Peak District partners to be advised

7(c) **High Speed Rail 2**

The Ministerial announcement was noted. Business members raised the need to lobby for a station in North Staffordshire. John van de Laarschot agreed to report back on discussions with Cheshire.

Action:

1. JvdL to report back.

Summary

The Chair summarised the discussions and welcomed the decisions. However, he also expressed his desire for the board to take a strategic view of how best the LEP could present the case for the area in the light of 12 months experience. It was important to avoid confusion and duplication wherever possible. Based on the discussions he had been involved in he believed that there is an opportunity to secure support particularly for North Staffordshire and Stoke. However, this case needs to be a strongly made and well set out.

The focus of the LEP should be on creating growth and jobs.

In support of the above Strategy an updated Business Plan needs to be developed within the next two Board meetings.

This would need to have a clear focus with key aims, objectives and ambitions for each group and a set of measurable KPIs.

The Board should lead the business plans development and agree its own approach to jobs and growth.

The board reaffirmed its view that the LEP sees LA doing operational work.

Actions

1. Draft to be discussed at the next meeting building on previous discussions and revisiting the evidence. DE to progress.
2. Input was requested from Board Members into the development of a draft.
3. A strong proposal needed to be tabled on 10 February. NB undertook to arrange a pre-meeting.

A company should be established as previously agreed.

In conclusion the Chair was pleased to report that the LEP remained well regarded and he was pleased with the examples of joint working.

8. **Any Other Non-Confidential Business**

None.

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9. **For Decision**

None.

10. **For Discussion**

None.

11. **For Endorsement and Information**

None.

12. **Any Other Confidential Business**

None.

Close of Meeting

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 22 February 2012 at 6.00 p.m.
The Octagon Boardroom, Staffordshire University,
Weston Road, Stafford.