

**STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

**Note of a Board Meeting held on  
10 May 2012  
The Committee Room, Lichfield District Council**

**Present**

Maitland Hyslop	(Internet Central) Chair
Mark Kerrigan	(Alton Towers)
Ron Dougan	(Trent and Dove Housing)
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)
Cllr Philip Atkins	(Leader, Staffordshire County Council)
Nick Bell	(Chief Executive, Staffordshire County Council)

**University/Further Education Observers**

Steve Willis	(Stafford College)
Jenny Tucker	(Keele University)

**Observers / In attendance**

Cllr Mark Meredith	(Cabinet Member, Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
Cllr Ben Adams	(Cabinet Member, Staffordshire County Council)
Nick Foskett	(Vice Chancellor, Keele University)
David Hope	(HCL)
Paul Masterman	(Communications - Staffordshire County Council)
Kevin Postones	(BIS)
Jeff Marlow	(Southern Staffordshire Partnership)
Cllr Alcott	(Cabinet Member, Cannock Chase Council)
Cllr White	(Cabinet Member, Lichfield District Council)
Dai Larner	(Staffordshire Moorlands District Council)
Richard King	(Lichfield District Council)
Bob Philips	(Cannock Chase Council)
Neale Clifton	(Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council)

**Advisory/Secretariat**

Sara Williams	(NSCCI)
Alison Knight	(Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
Peter Davenport	(Staffordshire County Council)
Darryl Eyers	(Staffordshire County Council)

**1. Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Lichfield District Council for their hospitality. The recent meeting with Lord Heseltine had been successful and the discussions had supported a number of initiatives the LEP was pursuing. The LEP Network Conference had further supported the adoption of a strategic approach. The Chair emphasised the importance of a consensus in taking matters forward.

## 2. **Apologies**

Ken Stepney, Kerry Diamond, Paul Richards, Cllr Stephen Sweeney, Hardial Bhogal, Catherine Raines, Steve Burrows

## 3. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Alcott sought clarification on the declaration of interests.

These should be declared where a board member or speaker had a conflict of interest in the matter being discussed.

## 4. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The transport and economic documents in support of a HS2 station had been submitted. Abbreviated documents had been agreed by the Cheshire and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP. A press campaign would begin next week.

**Action: Sara Williams to circulate press materials and the report. PD to forward to Board.**

Cllr Alcott expressed his concerns about the degree of involvement the District Council had in the Growing Places Fund decisions on Gallan Park and Mill Green. The Chair and Secretariat responded that the matter had been dealt with electronically and a chronology would be supplied.

## 5(a) **Key Performance Indicators**

A paper had been prepared by the County and City Council's research teams setting out data sources. It was agreed that LEPs need to use comparable data for consistency.

**Action: Headline KPI to be produced for the next board meeting**

## 6(a) **LEP Strategy**

A copy of the draft business plan/strategy had been circulated to board members who were all asked to provide any comments as soon as possible. The aim of the document was to be aspirational and game changing. A copy of the document will be given to Mark Prisk on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

The intention is to include targets and support the document with sub group business plans which would also include performance measures.

**Action: All Board Members to provide and comments by next Tuesday at the latest.**

## 6(b) **LEP Communications Strategy**

The interim recommendation were presented by HCL for discussion. The presentation covered the following areas;

- **Public Affairs**; an approach which involved meetings and events with Government, MP's, newsletters and positive communications supported by a share of a dedicated professional was suggested.
- **Press and Public Relations**; an approach which had as its objective the creation of greater awareness and the support of the inward investment team was suggested. This would need to be supported by a dedicated

consultancy. A press and PR campaign plan which took a proactive approach in working with the print, broadcast, and electronic media with target messages was recommended. This could be supported by greater use of social media.

- **Intelligence gathering;** In structuring the approach it was recommended that the impact needed to be measured and linked to areas where improvements were needed as well as changes in attitudes over time. An online survey and six monthly tracking survey were proposed.
- **Private Sector Engagement;** The engagement of the private sector business community is at the heart of what the LEP is seeking to achieve. The creation of local sector specific business networks and the greater use of newsletters, social media etc. coupled with the development of an Ambassador programme and prospectus would support this.
- **Corporate identity;** The adoption of a consistent branding was proposed drawing on the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire approach across all web sites and initiatives. It was also suggested that the LEP was simply known as the "Enterprise Partnership".

The next steps would be for the board to feedback on the approach and for the development of final recommendations supported by an indicative work programme and a budget.

The Board discussed then proposals. The overall approach was generally agreed with debate focussing on how it would be delivered and by whom. There was clear agreement that "Public Affairs" was a priority. Whilst there was a need for resources this needed to be considered against the funding available and the potential for contributions from the private sector as well as the public sector. Concluding the Wall of Influence work was an important element in the work. To make early progress the County Council was prepared to make a contribution.

**Action:**

- 1. Members to consider the "how" between this Board meeting and the next. This needs to consider the capacity needed.**
- 2. Mark Kerrigan and Paul Masterman to consider the "How" in the light of the discussion. Public Affairs to be considered a priority.**

**7(a) Education Trust**

Professor Nick Foskett introduced the paper which was a collective effort. The Education Trust was intended to be a strategic overview vehicle. It would bring the Education and Training element of the LEP together with the broader skills and education agenda. A further meeting had been arranged for the 24<sup>th</sup> May. This would take forward the outcome of tonight's discussion.

The Board were keen to ensure that the key role of business in the trust continued to be recognised. The trust had captured the imagination of Government and the emerging proposals needed to link to business plans, and the deal.

It was agreed that;

1. The LEP supports the aims and aspirations of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Education Trust (SSET);
2. The alignment with the LEP's aim and vision is recognised;

3. The LEP supports the proposal that the SSET be aligned with the ESG to form a single partnership group;
4. Approve the review of the existing LEP Enterprise and Skills Group's Terms of Reference to ensure the remit is extended to cover the schools agenda and the membership is revised to ensure senior representation;
5. Approve the inclusion in the Terms of Reference for the Group to take on a strategic overview across the LEP area for skills, education and employment delivery
6. Approve that the name of the new group be reviewed.
7. That a small Task and Finish group is formed to take a lead on the formation of the new trust. The T+F group will consist of LEP, Further Education and Higher Education representatives and will be led by the LEP Board member with responsibility for Enterprise and Skills.

### **7(b) Equity Growth Fund**

The board reviewed the report and agreed the recommendations to;

1. authorise the Funding Sub-Group to select, by appropriate tender process for recommendation to the LEP Board, a fund manager to raise £15-20m from private and public investors. The appointed fund manager will then be the preferred supplier to manage the fund.
2. authorise the ongoing engagement of Gage Consultancy to manage the above process.

### **8(a) Sub Groups**

The Future Economy work which supports the priorities should also be included in future reports.

#### **(1) Supporting Existing Businesses to Grow (Business Development)**

The Business helpline had been promoted across the whole area and all present were asked to make businesses aware of the service. The trial was now halfway through and a longer term decision would be needed in six weeks in the light of the independent monitoring work.

All Local Planning Authorities had been approached regarding the Planning Charter Mark. Cllr Edwards would research the SSDC position.

#### **(2) Increasing Inward Investment**

The update was welcomed. It was noted that an Inward Investment strategy consultation meeting had been arranged for the 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The agenda and summary were to be circulated shortly. A relative measure of performance before and after was requested.

The importance of linking inward investment promotion to sites and infrastructure was highlighted. The overall approach was seen as being a key component of the "Red Carpet"

***Action – Report to next board meeting.***

#### **(4) Improving Access to Finance and Funding**

The progress on the Access to Finance events and Regional Growth Fund Round 3 was noted.

(5) **Providing the Right Sites and Infrastructure**

Transport was an area of discussion at the recent LEP Chairs meeting and S&S would be working with other LEP on this. Strategic Transport is of considerable importance to S&S.

The timescale for a response on the DfT consultation on major scheme funding was queried. It was noted that the LEP responses had generally supported an option where the LEP was a member of the Local Transport Body apart from Greater Birmingham, and Coventry and Warwickshire where the option led by the LEP had been advocated.

The approval of the local broadband plan was welcomed. The progress in procuring the provider was noted. All members and observers were asked to encourage residents and businesses to register their desire to see an improved service.

(6) **Skills**

A positive meeting had been held with the with Skills Funding Agency. Number of LEP had raised similar concerns about the need for a greater ability for LEP to influence strategy.

The Work Foundation report had been circulated. The next step will be for the LEP to agree which sectors to prioritise and which recommendations to progress. For instance the Ceramics sector also has concerns about STEM skills.

A submission had been made to the Select Committee and the forthcoming Skills show was to be used as a showcase.

8(b) **Update on Work with Government**

The work was progressing rapidly. An email had been circulated setting out the thinking that was emerging coupled with the offers and asks. KPMG had been retained to support the development of the submission. A series of discussions were being held next week to explore strands in more detail.

Further sessions for board members had been arranged on the 21st and 28nd May. There was general agreement that the LEP needed to be ambitious and make the most of the opportunity. Housing represented an issue for many areas of Staffordshire as well as Stoke on Trent.

The Chair thanked the City and County Councils for their positive approach and the hard work of the supporting teams.

8(c) **HA Pinch Point Programme**

The response was noted and the Board was advised that the housing numbers included related to Tamworth.

8(d) **Growing Places Fund - Confidential**

Not for publication.

8(e) **Eco Environmental Tool Kit**

The work to develop the tool kit was noted and it should be used to inform the Deal.

9. **Any Other Business**

1. A series of housing association led events had been held covering the links to apprenticeships and skills, and retro-fitting of housing sites. The Housing Associations have agreed to develop a shared approach to these issues. They have also agreed to develop a LEP wide housing and regeneration strategy. .
2. Board Member Recruitment. 19 applications had been received and will be considered by the appointments group next week. The Chair proposed that alternates for the private sector board members should also be recruited. This was agreed. The Local Authority Chief Executives would compare thinking prior to the interview process.
3. RGF Round 3 – Members were agreeable to supporting programme bids in partnership with other LEP.
4. It was noted that the representative of the northern Districts and Boroughs would need to change following the local elections. PD to contact relevant LA.
5. Cllr Atkins thanked the private sector members for their efforts in taking the LEP forwards.