

**Notes of a meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014  
At Staffordshire University, Octagon Building, Weston Road, Stafford**

**Present**

**Group Members**

David Frost (Chair)  
Kerry Diamond  
John van de Laarschott  
Ken Stepney  
John Tradewell  
Cllr Philip Atkins  
Jonathan Dale  
Prof. Michael Gunn  
Cllr Mohammed Pervez  
Mark Kerrigan

Zytek  
Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
JCB  
Staffordshire County Council  
Leader, Staffordshire County Council  
Longton Avia  
Staffordshire University  
Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
Alton Towers Resort

**Advisory/Secretariat**

John Betty  
Peter Davenport  
Kevin Postones  
Alexander Greatholder  
James Green

Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP  
BIS  
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP  
Staffordshire County Council

**Observer**

John Henderson

New CEO Staffordshire County Council

**Apologies**

Cllr George Adamson  
Richard Cotterell  
Cllr Mike Heenan  
Ron Dougan

Leader, Cannock Chase Council  
Perkins Engines  
Leader, Stafford Borough Council  
Trent and Dove Housing

**1. Introductions**

John Henderson was introduced as the recently recruited chief executive officer of Staffordshire County Council, whose employment was due to begin in May.

Professor Michael Gunn was introduced as the Vice Chancellor of Staffordshire University who after the Partnership Board in November was appointed to the Executive Group.

**2. Apologies**

The apologies noted above were received.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Professor Gunn would provide a completed form.

### **4. Notes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and it was deemed that all matters arising would be discussed during the meeting.

A brief summary of the Annual Conference was given which highlighted the positive feedback we had received from the attendees. Also the group was informed that critical feedback had been given to the venue's conference team and that as a result the LEP had been granted a reduced rate for a future conference.

### **5. Chairs Delegated Decisions and Actions**

The following is a list of the delegated decisions and actions put in place by the chair since the preceding meeting.

- 1) The LEP agreed that the County Council would be supported in entering into a contract with Galliford Try to ensure that the necessary improvements to the railway bridge at Lichfield Park could be completed over Christmas 2014.
- 2) Richard Cotterell was appointed to chair the City Deal and Growth Deal Programme Management board.
- 3) Jonathan Dale was appointed to chair the EU Area ESIF Committee board.
- 4) Minor changes to governance were also noted.

### **6. Key Performance Indicators**

KPIs were circulated and summarised.

The following points were made:

- Changes to the manner in which apprenticeships are funded and the minimum standard for proper accreditation had meant that the apprenticeship numbers had decreased over the year. On this point, it was said that there is a need to make sure that employers are recruiting apprentices to match rising aspirations from employees.
- The KPIs demonstrated that there was still a need to improve productivity by increasing the number of jobs requiring higher skills in the area. It was believed that there were significant challenges in encouraging that kind of change due to the lower levels of skills in certain areas. Specifically there were new challenges presenting themselves in the way that GCSEs are assessed, with more exam based assessment presenting a risk of declining grades.

Some board members felt that the LEPs should be lobbying Government to improve the rate at which data is published. It was highlighted that part of the conversation with BIS around monitoring the Growth Deal would include discussion about receiving more real time data from Cabinet Office analysts.

The KPI report was welcomed. The next stage will be to report on progress outcomes from the interventions i.e. Advanced Manufacturing Hub Spokes

## **7. Implementation of new Governance Arrangements**

It was reported that the LEP was currently looking to share space in the new Chambers of Commerce office in Stafford. Also there were to be future conversations between the LEP chair and the council chief executive officers regarding staffing contributions from the respective local authorities.

The Strategic Funding Group had developed an implementation plan but was seeking nominations for a number of positions including S151 officers, City Deal & Growth Deal representation and EU Area ESIF Committee representation.

**Action:**

- 1.** SOTCC and other groups to provide names.
- 2.** Vice Chair to be approached

BIS had published the LEP Assurance Framework on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. There were concerns that our new Governance might not meet the requirements of this document. It was highlighted though that our current Governance arrangements had been approved already by BIS and Cabinet Office, so any changes in structure or process needed should be minimal.

**Action:** Growth Deal Board to be consulted on Assurance Framework by purpose led working group. Secretariat

## **8. Autumn Statement Implications - Including Growth Deals and M54/M6/M6 Toll Consultation**

There was an aspiration that through Growth Deal 2 the LEP could potentially access £19m of funding for projects in 2016/17 onwards. The point was raised that if there is enough confidence after Growth Deal 2 has been announced the LAs could fund any projects of immediate concern and recover the costs when Growth Deal 2 funding is provided in 2016/17. BIS was due to discuss profiles with the LEP over the following week to allow Ministers to review over Christmas.

The LEP had been invited to respond to a consultation on the M54-M6 link with a deadline in January. It was determined that the LEP should support the project in principle rather than giving preference or opinions on specific routes.

**Action:** Response to be written by January. DF/PD

## **9. City and Growth Deal Programme Report**

James Green gave an introduction and explanation of what the board members had been presented with.

Richard Cotterell was now leading the programme management board and whilst there had already been a preliminary meeting of the programme management board the first full meeting would be in early February 2015. Richard Cotterell had stated his intent to meet all leads on the board beforehand. The programme board would meet every 2 months for the first year of delivery and then on a quarterly basis thereafter.

Whilst the content of the programme report in general was welcomed and the headlines noted there was a debate about when a red value should be included and the consequences thereof. James Green agreed to amend the approach in the light of the discussion. At future meetings there would be a need to undertake a similar exercise for the Growth Deal schemes based upon the Implementation Plan.

**Action:**

1. Programme reporting format to be amended. JG
2. Programme reporting format to be developed for Growth Deal reporting. SCC/SoTCC

## **10. Cross Boundary Working with other LEP**

The LEP had engaged in discussions with Cheshire and Warrington LEP as well as D2N2 LEP in order to develop a memorandum of understanding with the other LEPs similar to the one that had been created with GBSLEP.

## **11. EU Funding Update**

The EU Area ESIF Committee was being established and bodies had been asked to nominate representatives to comply with EU commission requirements. The Shadow Board was due to meet for the first time on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

**Action:** LEP secretariat to arrange the first shadow board committee.

The LGA and LEP Network had been debating whether LEPs could achieve Limited Intermediary Body status in order to aid discussions between the EU Commission and the UK Government on the funding agreement for ESIF.

**Recommendation:** The LEP approved the recommendations in the submitted report which suggested that the LEP should support a “partnership body approach” under current Government proposals but be open to becoming an intermediate body should it be necessitated.

There was a discussion about whether the EU Area ESIF Committee group and the LEP should consider applying for other EU funding sources.

**Action:** EU Area ESIF Committee board chair to discuss potential additional sources of EU funding. JS/MG

## **12. Advanced Manufacturing Hub Phase 2**

A brief summary of progress on the development of the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hub was given.

The funding which the LEP was hoping to gain from Growth Deal 2 is unlikely to be enough to cover the full costs of phase 2. For this reason recommendations were made to challenge the three remaining phase 2 spokes to produce business cases for a model of phase 2 which could operate using the Growth Deal 2 expected allocation.

**Action:**

1. Requests to be made for business cases for remaining spokes. DP/AB
2. Business representation to be resolved. DP

### **13. Policy and Task & Finish Group Updates**

Policy and Task & Finish group summaries were given.

### **14. Any Other Business**

The Chief Executive Officers were asked to ensure stronger LA support for the Regulation for Growth Work being led by John Sellgren.

The proposal by the Universities to establish an Innovation Council was welcomed.

### **Close of Meeting**

Date of next meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015

### **Circulation**

For Information: Association of Colleges; Staffordshire University, Secretariat Members, SEP CXO Lead, Facilitators, Finance Officers