

Notes of a meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2015

At Staffordshire University, Octagon Building, Weston Road, Stafford

Present

Group Members

David Frost (Chair)	
Kerry Diamond	Zytek
John van de Laarschott	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Ken Stepney	JCB
John Tradewell	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Philip Atkins	Leader, Staffordshire County Council
Jonathan Dale	Longton Avia
Prof. Michael Gunn	Staffordshire University
Cllr George Adamson	Leader, Cannock Chase Council

Advisory/Secretariat

John Betty	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Darryl Evers	Staffordshire County Council
Peter Davenport	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Kevin Postones	BIS
Alexander Greatholder	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
James Hinton	Staffordshire County Council
Peter Hooper	Keele University
Jonathan Phipps	Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Observer

Nicola Kent	Staffordshire County Council
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Apologies

Cllr Mohammed Pervez	Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Mark Kerrigan	Alton Towers Resort
Richard Cotterell	Perkins Engines
Ron Dougan	Trent and Dove Housing

1. Introductions

James Hinton, Peter Hooper and Jonathan Phipps were introduced as being present in order to deliver a presentation on the performance and future of the Growth Hub.

Nicola Kent was introduced as the replacement for James Hinton who had played a fundamental role as a LA officer in developing the Growth Hub.

2. Apologies

The apologies noted above were received.

In addition it was noted that two board members had submitted letters of resignation.

Ron Dougan submitted his resignation because of his professional retirement from his position of CEO of Trent and Dove Housing.

Action: LEP secretariat to advertise the Partnership Board vacancy to the business community.

Cllr. Mike Heenan submitted his resignation because of his retirement from his position of Leader of Stafford Borough Council.

Action: LA Leaders to nominate a replacement

The Group wished to record their thanks for the contributions of Ron and Mike.

3. Declarations of Interest

A record of declarations of interests was present at the meeting and available for examination. No new declarations of interests were declared.

4. Notes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

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

Attention was drawn to ongoing national discussions about how the 2014 – 2020 European Programme would be managed. The UK Government was still in discussions with the European Commission as to how this would be managed. The UK Government favoured a LEP based approach whereas the Commission wished to see fewer Accountable Bodies. If a proposed model was approved, sign off could be achieved by March 2015.

Action: LEP secretariat to keep executive group informed of developments. **PD/KP**

5. Chairs Delegated Decisions and Actions

It was reported that Chair had agreed to support a request for reduced rate borrowing by SoTCC for the development of the city centre.

6. Key Performance Indicators

KPIs were circulated and summarised. KPIs positively reflected economic growth.

It was reported that following the closure of Phones4U, all former employees were reported to have found employment.

A point was made about future challenges in the health and social care economy; currently care is not seen as an aspirational career path and employment is dominated by low value jobs. There is a growing need to expand this sector in response to an aging population, however, we have aspirations to create more better paid jobs for the people of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. It was noted that the LEP should seek to influence where possible the interplay of these two factors.

Finally, it was highlighted that GBSLEP's KPIs may be improving at such a rate largely due to the performance in the non-metropolitan areas (including the SSLEP overlap) as Birmingham City's isolated performance was poor in comparison to the figures reported for its LEP.

7. Discussion item - Growth Hub – Update on progress and thoughts for the future

A presentation was delivered on the development, performance and future of SSLEP's Growth Hub.

Recommendation: The Growth Hub officers recommended that the LEP Executive delegate responsibility for planning further development of the Growth Hub to an officers' working group comprised of the Growth Hub steering group's members. The Executive Group approved the recommendation and asked that a report of recommendations be submitted in three months.

8. Growth Deal

Outcome of round 2

The extension of the Growth Deal had seen the LEP awarded £15.4m of new funds to support 6 new projects including development of town and city centres.

Assurance Framework Response

The report was received. There had been thorough considerations of the Assurance Framework for the Growth Deal and it was highlighted that a number of measures would have to be adhered to going forward. These included but were not limited to:

- Reporting on commercially sensitive information to the same standards as local authorities.
- Publishing business cases for projects.
- Documenting agreements between LEP and accountable body, and accountable body and funded bodies.
- Dispute resolution procedures between LEP and accountable body

Action: Detailed response to be written by March 2015 with advice from BIS Local. **PD**

9. City and Growth Deal Programme Report

The status report for the city and growth deal programmes was circulated before the meeting.

The chair of the programme board, Richard Cotterell, had been working with the team to review progress and was engaging well. The programme board was meeting at intervals of 2-3 months in order to purely focus on effective delivery. As well as these board meetings, a quarterly report would be produced alongside more frequent monthly status updates.

For the larger, more critical projects in the programme portfolio the LEP programme manager would be sitting on the project boards.

City Deal

The summary was welcomed it was noted that the programme was on track and that further work was needed with the National Careers Service. The business case for the District Heat Network had been submitted. The LEP was involved in discussions with the SFA to secure a stronger LEP influence in its activities.

Growth Deal

The Growth Deal was nationally planned to commence implementation in April 2015. However, Staffordshire County Council had already progressed the work around Lichfield Park. Over Christmas the railway bridge had been removed.

The County Council also reassured the executive group that despite an increase of the costs of the Stafford Western Access project, the County Council would manage these costs with partners. It was emphasised that this project was of utmost importance to the County Council and that any issues would be solved.

10. Quarterly Financial Update

The Executive Group had been presented with a revised format of quarterly update. This consisted of an overall summary dashboard summarising the scale of funds under the LEP's control and a secondary detailed dashboard which indicated current progress on spend. Elements of the dashboard were confidential

A further round of Growing Places Fund submissions was in progress. A number of the successful applicants had withdrawn their projects after considerable work. There was a discussion of the potential reasons for withdrawal and a desire to promote the scheme to companies and learn from recent experiences.

11. Cross Boundary Working With Other LEP – Verbal

The LEP had been pleased to receive a letter received from Tamworth Borough Council expressing its desire to fully participate in the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP. This was welcomed

Action: Letter of response to be written, welcoming Tamworth Borough Council's declaration. **PD/DF**

12. Policy and Task & Finish Group Updates

The written updates were received and quickly summarised.

The additional note on Midlands Connect and the LEP's participation was welcomed.

13. Any Other Business

No other business raised.

20:00

Close of Meeting

Date of next meeting: 16th March 2015