

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

**Note of a Board Meeting held on
13 January 2013**

**Octagon Board Room, The Octagon Building, Staffordshire University
(Beaconside Campus), Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0AD**

Present

Board Members

Ron Dougan	(Trent and Dove Housing) -Chair
Ken Stepney	(JCB)
Kevin Oakes	(Steelite)
Sean Parry	(Michelin)
John Carr	(Barrington Engineering Ltd.)
Adrian MacLaughlin	(Dunston Business Village)
Jenny Tucker	(Keele University)
John van de Laarschot	(Chief Executive, Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
Cllr Ben Adams	(Deputy Leader, Staffordshire County Council)
Nick Bell	(Chief Executive, Staffordshire County Council)
Cllr Mike Heenan	(Leader, Stafford Borough Council)
Cllr Eddie Boden	(Deputy Leader, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council)
Cllr Mark Meredith	(Portfolio Holder, Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
Cllr Gordon Alcott	(Cabinet Member, Cannock Chase Council)

Associate Members

Jonathan Dale	(Longton Avia (UK) Ltd.)
Jeremy Mellor	(Wood Goldstraw Yorath LLP)
Geoff Riley	(Staffordshire and Black Country BIC)
Stuart Adams	Endeka Ceramics Ltd.
John Smart	(Kapability Associates)
Ian Jenkinson	(Stilwell LLP)
Richard Ward	(Vistage International (UK) Ltd.)

University/Further Education Observers

Paul Richards	(Staffordshire University)
Sarah Robinson	(Stoke-on-Trent College)

Observers / In attendance

Jeff Marlow	Southern Staffordshire Partnership
John Selgren	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Neale Clifton	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Stephen Brown	Cannock Chase Council
Cllr Brian Edwards	South Staffordshire Council
Tony Bray	BIS
Kevin Postones	BIS

Advisory/Secretariat

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

1. Introduction

The Chair welcomed Tony Bray - Area Director, BIS West Midlands – to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Mark Kerrigan, Kerry Diamond, Richard Cotterell, Judith Kirkland, Mohammed Pervez, Philip Atkins, Cllr George Adamson, Cllr Mike Wilcox, and Marie Stevens.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed.

It was noted that a date for the discussion about the business awards was being arranged and that advice on mechanisms to respond to job losses was being compiled.

5. Strategic Challenges and Opportunities for LEPs

Tony Bray outlined his thoughts on the future opportunities for LEPs in the light of the Heseltine Review and the Autumn Statement. The presentation was to be circulated separately.

He anticipated that a decision on Local Transport Bodies would be made in the next three to four weeks.

It was important to consider plans to draw down funding. These included;

- LEP strategic plans
- Single pot funding for local areas from 2015
- EU common strategic framework with priorities based on LEP plans
- LEP to set skills strategy for their local areas

Additional funds available nationally cover – local growth, employer ownership pilots, Regional Growth Fund and AMSCI. Support from Government would be available led by a senior Whitehall Sponsor – Emma Ward – BIS.

LEP Performance Management is likely to be required to demonstrate accountability.

The Board then discussed the presentation. The areas discussed included;

- The implementation of the Heseltine review. The view of Government was that issues such as overlapping areas should be resolved locally. It was noted that travel to work was a complex picture and not as straightforward as many assumed. A copy of an analysis would be circulated to the board.
- The management of European Funding is always likely to be have to be managed separately. Transition Area funding had yet to be confirmed and Ministers are considering this as part of their EU finance discussions. The development of the programme was likely to involve some amendments to the assisted areas map which could affect the area.

- A suitable performance management regime was a logical step, given the funding to be devolved. However, any approach also needed to extend to the various agencies involved. Tony undertook to take this back.
- Members were keen to create a successful LEP which would attract members from a range of partners and areas. They were also conscious of the need to link in across boundaries for example with Cheshire and Warrington and others.
- It was noted that the core package and proposals could involve significant decisions on funding being devolved to LEP. As a consequence democratic accountability was a potential concern. It was understood that Ministers have discussed this at a City Deal level. A model that had been mentioned in a number of areas was a combined authority with business membership on a board. The position was evolving and Lord Heseltine may make further recommendations based on his work with GBSLEP work.

6. Future Funding Plan

The board was updated verbally on progress. Match funding was being sought and members were asked to provide details of previous offers to the funding lead. A draft of the plan would be circulated two weeks before the next meeting.

Action:

Draft plan to be circulated in advance of the next meeting for submission by the 15th February

7. City Deal

The Chair reported that a successful dinner had been held at Keele University with local businesses. The Chair requested that a further similar event be held in March to include other businesses.

The Chair, Leaders and Chief Executives had met Greg Clark – Minister for Cities - today. This was an extremely constructive discussion. Sites, connectivity, and the need to balance energy emerged as strengths in the expression of interest (EOI). The critical appraisal was extremely helpful which will help finalise the document.

The EOI will be revised following the meeting.

Action:

- 1. Circulate to all Board Members.**
- 2. Chair to agree the final document as previously agreed.**

8. Sub Group Updates

(i) Supporting Existing Businesses to Grow (Business Development)

The board welcomed the report which highlighted its progress and in particular, work on regulation, the planning charter mark, and the potential for manufacturing events.

A report would be brought to a future meeting on the Red Carpet.

(ii) Inward Investment

The report was received. The Board was pleased to learn that the discussions with UKTI were progressing with a view to it promoting our areas strengths.

Action:

A copy of the Make It Inward Investment Strategy would be circulated

(iii) Successfully Marketing Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire as a place to do business

It was agreed that a further business engagement dinner should be arranged following the constructive discussion last night.

Members were asked to action the "Wall of Influence" work.

Newsletters continued to be circulated.

Action:

An invitation list to the business dinner would be circulated for information

(iv) Improving Access To Finance and Funding

The report was received. The progress on Equity Funding, the Business Support Loan Fund, the bidding support proposal pilot, and ERDF bids were welcomed. The summary of the LEP's spend was noted as work in progress.

(v) Providing the right Sites and Infrastructure

The report was received. The Local pinch point programme would be reported further at the next meeting.

The City Deal technical work represented a good start which will support key employment sites.

The Chair thanked John Smart and Jonathan Dale for offering to lead on broadband and transport respectively.

(vi) Ensuring the Skills and Training of our workforce meet business needs

The wrong paper had been circulated in error initially. A corrected version had been distributed electronically and was distributed to the meeting.

The paper set out headline priorities – quick wins, employers, influence, communications; and three supporting task groups.

The next meeting would bring activity back together.

Universities reported that they were developing a Phase 2 business ownership pilot project. It was noted that this approach needed to allow the participation of smaller companies. The Universities and Colleges were actively working on this and Colleges also have funding to facilitate apprenticeships.

Action:

More information on the ownership pilot to be brought to the next board meeting.

9. Any Other Business

Cllr Boden sought information on Travel to Work Areas.

Action:

Travel to work data to be circulated.

A meeting would be arranged to discuss Broadband involving AM, RD, JS, RD and officers.

The meeting closed at 19:30.