

**Notes of the LEP Executive Group Meeting
Drawing Room, County Buildings
Thursday 12th October 2017**

Present

Group Members

David Frost (Chairman)	
Cllr Philip Atkins	Leader, Staffordshire County Council
John Henderson	Chief Executive, Staffordshire County Council
Sarah Montgomery	National Memorial Arboretum
Wendy Dean	Strategi Solutions
James Leavesley	Leavesley Group
David Hughes (for David Sidaway)	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Anthony Munday (for Cllr Abi Brown)	Deputy Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Prof Martin Jones (for Prof Liz Barnes)	Staffordshire University
Cllr Brian Edwards	South Staffordshire Council
Mohammed Ahmed	National Grid
Paul Farmer	Wade's Ceramics
Alun Rogers	Risual

Advisory/Secretariat

Peter Davenport	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Julie Frost	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Alison Thomas	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
John Devlin	Programme Consultant

In Attendance

Andrea Whitworth	BEIS
Prof Ieuan Ellis	Staffordshire University

Apologies

David Sidaway	City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Abi Brown	Deputy Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Richard Cotterell	Perkins
Prof Liz Barnes	Staffordshire University
Kevin Oakes	Royal Crown Derby
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Stafford Borough Council

1. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

2. Apologies

These were noted.

3. Declarations of Interest

No additions were made to those already recorded.

4. Notes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting. Growth Hub statistics were circulated for information. An update was given on the Ceramics Deal, which would be submitted BEIS early next week.

5. Chairman's Delegated Decisions and Actions

There were no delegated decisions to report.

The Chairman gave an update of Stoke-on-Trent's bid to be UK City of Culture in 2021 and advised the panel – which included Phil Redmond – would be visiting the city next week. The Chairman had been asked to join the Stoke-on-Trent Opportunity Area Board, an initiative established by the Department for Education. Lord Stafford had recently carried out the formal opening of Stafford College's new STEM centre in which the LEP had provided £2.0 million for the project.

6. KPIs

The dashboard was circulated and an explanation of the content given for the benefit of the new Board members.

The challenge of low wage rates was discussed. It was agreed that this varied across sector as there were currently skills shortages in some sectors, including ceramics and digital. Business board members in these sectors reported difficulty in recruiting skilled staff. Agency workers also affected figures. This prompted a discussion around earnings of people working in Staffordshire being below the national average, whilst this wasn't the case for local residents working elsewhere. This was seen as an opportunity.

Action: Add as an agenda item to the Partnership Board Meeting 'In our Strategic Economic Plan, we set our ambition to see more jobs, higher paid jobs, and more productive jobs. How do we see this being achieved? Should we be equally focused on attracting prosperous residents as well as employees? What should we be doing to attract and retain skilled residents?'

7. Digital Sector Discussion

John Henderson gave a presentation on Smart Staffordshire which considered smart people, smart living and smart working.

Points raised in discussion included the impact of technology on logistics, lifelong learning skills needed to encompass middle management, graduates choosing not to stay in the region due to it not offering the city living they wanted; the importance of quality buildings.

David Hughes asked to be part of the Living Smart group.

Members of the Executive felt the LEP Strategic Plan was not ambitious enough in these areas.

8. City Deal & Growth Deal Report

James Leavesley declared an interest in St Modwen and did not participate in this item.

The report was circulated for consideration and discussion. The group agreed that the SSLEP should continue to strive to ensure that all projects promoters met their milestones.

Following discussion with the relevant project promoters, the Executive Group approved the recommendation to identify alternative scheme(s) to replace the current London Mill, Leek and Rugeley town centre Phase 2, Growth Deal schemes.

A local news report regarding Branston Locks would require investigation.

Action: David Frost and Peter Davenport to establish facts and report back

9. Q2 2017/18 LEP Finances Dashboard

The dashboard was noted.

10. Policy and Task Group Updates

A report was circulated for information.

- The Inward Investment report was noted and 11 companies had been assisted in supporting 561 jobs
- Communications work was ongoing and a meeting was to be held with MPs on the 1st November
- The Agri Tech West initiative was progressing well with a project manager in place and meetings are planned with DIT, DEFRA, BEIS and NFU
- The development of a Local Energy Strategy using funding secured from BEIS was welcomed. The secretariat will pursue this opportunity

11. Any Other Business

Prof Ieuan Ellis raised the issue of extra funding being available re the further development of the Ceramics Deal.

Action: Prof Ellis to speak with Peter Davenport

Wendy Dean, the new lead on Skills had met with representatives at the City and County to discuss education and skills. A further meeting was scheduled.

Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 14th December October, Drawing Room, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford, ST16 2HE