

**Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire  
Local Enterprise Partnership**

**Partnership Board**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November**

**Secretariat Report for Information**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Strategic Economic Plan Consultation</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Midlands Engine</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Communications and Engagement</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b><i>City and Growth Deal Programme - Confidential</i></b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b><i>Inward Investment - Confidential</i></b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Page 6</b>

1. **Introduction**

This short paper is intended to provide a brief update on a number of activities over the last six months for your information. It should be read in conjunction with the Annual Report which was published at the Conference and can be found at <https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/171016-SSLEP-SEP-Refresh-Consultation-Draft.pdf>

2. **Governance**

Members will be aware that we obtained your approval electronically to the appointment of four new board members, Wendy Dean, Mohammed Ahmed, Paul Farmer, and Alun Rogers and some amendments to the Executive Group membership.

Our Assurance Framework is published on our website and over the summer the Government commissioned Mary Ney and Non-Executive Director of DCLG to review of LEP governance and transparency. This work was published in October and makes a number of recommendations. It can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-local-enterprise-partnership-governance-and-transparency>

We will be revising the SSLEP website shortly to meet the requirements of the review and the "Annual Conversation" process has been amended to accord with the recommendations.

In addition Margot James and Jake Berry have commissioned a piece of work to look at the longer term role of LEPs.

The review is just commencing and views are being sought from a number of stakeholders by Government.

Locally it has become clear that we need to amend the meeting programme of the Programme Management Strategic Board to being more targeted. This may require some amendments to the Assurance Framework.

Finally could all board members please review their declarations of interests and where necessary sign a code of conduct form.

3. **Strategic Economic Plan and Industrial Strategy**

The refreshed Strategic Economic Plan is currently out to consultation with the end date being the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017. It can be found at <https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/171016-SSLEP-SEP-Refresh-Consultation-Draft.pdf> . The consultation has been publicised and please draw it to the attention of anyone who may be interested in responding.

We have also been pleased to work with the British Ceramics Confederation, Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and Lucideon on the development of a proposal for a Ceramics Sector Deal. In addition to support provided by the team the SSLEP has supported consultancy work and may need to continue this support.

4. **Midlands Engine**

The Midlands Engine published its "Vision for Growth" recently as outlined by Sir John Peace at the Annual Conference. The document can be found at <https://www.midlandengine.org/visionforgrowth/> SSLEP is a subscription member of the ME and participates in its work including the Investment Fund, Midlands Connect, and Investment promotion.

5. **Communications and Engagement**

Over the last six months we have participated in or led a range of promotional activities including a meeting with MPs, working with a range of partners, neighbouring LEPs, Further Education, Higher Education, local authority groups and Government. Subject to availability we are pleased to attend events to promote the work of SSLEP, the Growth Hub and other activities.

In addition to the Midlands Engine SSLEP is involved in the Constellation Partnership and is a member of the national LEP Network.

A revised website will be launched shortly.

6. **Confidential - City Deal & Growth Deal Programme Update**

7. **Investment Update – November 2017 Confidential:**

8. **Skills and Employment**

Wendy Dean has now become the lead Board member and thanks have been extended to Ken Stepney for his efforts in this area. The LEP continues to support a range of Skills initiatives as set out on page 23 of the annual report. Two current areas are.

**ESF Programme**

Two open calls have gone out to tender from the Managing Authority (MA) for Priority 2 Skills for Growth; 'Higher Skills' project and a 'Skills Hub' brokerage training support project. The Skills Hub brokerage call is combined and SSLEP and GBSLEP and covers all of the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent area and provides a single skills offer for business with a value of £3.36million. The higher skills project will provide higher level vocations skills training with a value of £7.4million. Single bidders have been received for each project and they are expected to advance to full bid stage. In terms of the remainder of the programme the LEP has committed and allocated just over £37 million through twelve contracts awarded. The latest data indicates over 4,200 people have started the programme as it begins to gather momentum, about 22% of contracted starts, although there is still quite a delay in data reporting.

**Skills Equipment Fund**

The LEP is inviting organisations across the area to submit an application for grants from a new £1.76m Skills Equipment Fund. The LEP funding will need to be matched by a contribution of the same value from the applicants. Local employers and training providers can submit bids to the Skills Equipment Fund to buy state of the art equipment and fund minor adaptations to equip buildings to deliver high quality and high level training programmes to help grow Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's priority economic sectors.

The investment will enable local employers and training institutions to respond to local training needs with the right equipment to train and reskill people in the LEP priority sectors.