

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

Executive Group

Thursday 15th February

Sub Group and Policy Group Updates

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Inward Investment Update – February 2018

Performance

Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire have assisted 18 companies in creating/safeguarding 1,006 jobs (608 created and 398 safeguarded) in the current financial year to date towards the annual target of 2,000 jobs.

Successes

Successes recorded during the period since the last meeting include:

- DW3 – 300 safeguarded jobs via acquisition (Stoke-on-Trent)

Lead Generation and Marketing

Tech Challenge Fund:

Make it Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire are supporting a project on the tech and digital sector led by the West Midlands Growth Company with funding from the Midlands Engine Challenge Fund. Numerous research pieces and organisations identify the Midlands as the second largest region for tech / digital in the UK. However, the Midlands currently punches below its weight in terms of success in attracting FDI projects and jobs into the region and does considerably less well than the Northern Powerhouse, Cambridge or the South East.

Tech is one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK so it is vital that the Midlands capitalises on its existing strengths and future proofs its growth by attracting more Tech investment. It is considered that this can be addressed by:

- Better and concerted promotion of sub-sectors which are already known to be strong and globally competitive
- Analysis of sectors which are emerging opportunities, where knowledge of the offer is less well-developed. (This is not in scope of this initiative but will be considered for future funding).

A collaborative working group, including Marc Wootton from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, has started to draw together a proposition for the Midlands Engine Tech sector. The proposition focuses at this stage upon the cyber, gaming, rail, automotive & finance tech sectors and highlights key locations and centres of excellence.

The propositions for each sector highlight a very strong tech sector offer throughout Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire, not only in our established Auto and Rail areas but also in the emerging markets of Cyber, Fintech and Gaming. Highlighted businesses include Finning UK, Synectics Solutions, FuseMail, Mirage Solutions & KoKo Digital, who are all pushing the boundaries in a new digital tech environment.

The project also includes the development of a microsite with the Midlands Engine Tech Sector proposition. Relevant to the sector itself, and constantly updateable the microsite will enable the inward investment teams to present the Midlands Tech proposition to new clients. It could be shared with Posts and potential clients and given that it is digital, provides greater flexibility than hard-copy collateral so that additional sectors can be added once they have been identified and mapped. The microsite will also be used as a platform to launch the 'Midlands Tech Challenge'.

Representatives from across the Region will launch the Tech offer and Tech Challenge at Mobile World Congress (Late February 2018). Marc Wootton will represent Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. A competition will be launched via the microsite inviting entrepreneurial SMEs in the 5 sub-sectors outlined to submit an entry (possibly a short video) for a chance (for the winner in each sub-sector) to win subsidised flights & accommodation to visit the Midlands to take part in an investment-focused programme, as well as a meeting with leading players who have a tech challenge which needs to be resolved, such as Jaguar Land Rover or Codemasters. 3-4 runners up per sub-sector to be offered opportunity to be part of programme if they are willing to come at their own expense.

Make it Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Website Update:

The redesign and development of the service's new website is moving forward well. The company doing the work, New Mind, are progressing with page designs and reviewing the submitted sitemaps. It is anticipated that the bulk of the design and development work will be completed by the end of March with the population and editing of content being completed by the Make it Team by June ready to go live. A tender is underway for new images to be used on the site and other marketing collateral. It is anticipated that this will also be completed by the end of March.

Property

Buy versus Rent Commercial Property Event – 8th February at Michelin, Stoke:

NatWest Bank, DPC Accountants and Make it Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire have come together to look at the benefits of Buying versus Renting Commercial Premises for end users. The event offers the opportunity to discuss borrowing options and how this has the potential to change business accounts making a saving on tax.

Make it Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Commercial Property Event & Joint Local Plan (Stoke on Trent City Council & Newcastle Borough Council) – 27th February:

Our next Commercial Property Event will be sponsored by LondonMetric Property PLC and will focus on the launch of the 142,000 sq ft speculatively built warehouse at Campbell Road (LondonMetric Property PLC) and the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (Stoke-on-Trent City Council & Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council).

The Joint Local Plan is fundamental in helping the economic potential of the area, a planning framework document that guides the long term future growth of the area over a period of 15-20 years. The public consultation period will commence from 1st February -1st March 2018. This will be an opportunity for agents, investors, developers, professional service providers, businesses & occupiers to understand how to respond to the consultation.

MIPIM 2018:

- The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire team are participating in six hotspot presentation or panel events within the Midlands UK pavilion.
- Stafford Gateway and Stoke-on-Trent City Centre will be presented in the Midlands Engine Investment Portfolio.
- The team have secured a total of £86,500 in private sector sponsorship across 15 partners.
- This supplements £50,000 of SSLEP funding and £37,500 supplied by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council.
- No funding from Constellation Partnership provided.

- Four events are confirmed in the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire apartment focusing on Stafford Gateway/New Garden Settlement, Stoke Station Masterplan and Stoke Smart Sustainable City. These will sit alongside the opening reception.
- The SSLEP dinner will be attended by a full house of 30 people from a range of sponsors, public sector partners, developers and professional service providers.
- Range of 1-2-1 meetings and external event activity currently being reviewed and booked for the team to supplement activity out at MIPIM.

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EU Funding
SSLEP Executive Meeting, 15th February 2018

European Social Fund (ESF) – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Opt-in Programmes

As the Executive is aware, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire benefit from ESF funding to address employment, skills and social inclusion issues. The SSLEP ESIF committee has delegated work on this agenda to an ESF Officer group, chaired by Tony Baines (County Commissioner for Skills and Employability, Staffordshire County Council).

Twelve ESF programmes are currently in delivery, of which eight are procured, contracted and managed by the ESFA as part of a co-opting agreement with SSLEP. Regular meetings are held between the ESFA and SSLEP ESF officers to discuss programme performance.

Originally, all the ESFA programmes were due to be of three year duration. However, the ESFA decided to restrict their programmes to just two years, due in part to the expected devolution of the Adult Education Budget, which they used for match funding, with an end date of 31st March 2018. That end date was subsequently extended to 31st July 2018.

Recent communications to the SSLEP ESF Officer group from the ESFA have confirmed that they propose to extend some of our existing programmes by time (until 31st March 2019) and / or money, partly because the Adult Education Budget has not been devolved as planned. The ESFA requested the SSLEP ESF Officer group consider the proposals and indicate their agreement or not.

The ESFA proposals and the SSLEP ESF Officer group's agreement are shown in the table overleaf.

The SSLEP ESF Officer group based its agreement on:

- Original contract value
- Funds remaining in ESF Priorities (1.1, 2.1 etc)
- Prime contractor performance to date
- Local need for support

Further discussion will need to be had with the SSLEP ESIF committee, GBSLEP, ESFA and the ESF Managing Authority (MA) before proposals can be confirmed. Any contract extensions are subject to agreement from providers delivering the programmes and the MA through their assessment process, which will consider strategic fit and value for money.

SSLEP ESF Officer group has stressed to the ESFA the need for this process to be expedited as swiftly as possible to ensure that programmes can continue and not have to "stop/start" in order to maintain current momentum.

Further updates will be brought to the Executive in due course.

Investment Priority	Provider Name	Proposed Action	LEP Agree (Y/N)
1.1 Vocational Routes to Employment – Enhancing apprenticeships	INTERSERVE LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT (SERVICES) LIMITED	Extend Time Only	YES
1.1 Careers Information, Advice and Guidance	LEARNDIRECT LIMITED	Do nothing	YES
1.2 NEET Support	ADVANCED PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT GROUP (UK) LIMITED	Extend Time Only	YES
1.4 Support for the unemployed	PEOPLEPLUS GROUP LIMITED	Extend Time and Money	YES to Time, NO to money
2.1 Skills support for redundancy	LEARNDIRECT LIMITED	Do nothing	YES
2.1 Skills support for the workforce – Basic Skills	SERCO LIMITED	Extend Time and Money	YES to Time, YES to money in principle, but further discussion within LEPs (SSLEP & GBSLEP) and with MA required.
2.1 Skills support for the workforce – Intermediate and Higher level Skills	SERCO LIMITED	Extend Time and Money	YES to Time, YES to money in principle, but further discussion within LEPs (SSLEP & GBSLEP) and with MA required.
2.1 Skills support for the workforce – Retraining for employees	STOKE ON TRENT COLLEGE	Extend Time and Money	YES to Time, YES to money in principle, but further discussion within LEPs (SSLEP & GBSLEP) and with MA required.

Please note: LearnDirect Ltd was graded "Inadequate" by Ofsted in 2017, and therefore is no longer able to hold ESFA contracts. Hence the proposal to allow the current programme end date to stand.

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