

**Notes of the LEP Executive Group Meeting
Drawing Room, County Buildings
Thursday 15th February 2018**

Present

Group Members

David Frost (Chairman)	
Cllr Abi Brown	Deputy Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Mohammed Ahmed	National Grid
Cllr Philip Atkins	Leader, Staffordshire County Council
Phil Cresswell	Director of Place, Growth & Prosperity, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Wendy Dean	Strategi Solutions
Cllr Brian Edwards	South Staffordshire Council
John Henderson	Chief Executive, Staffordshire County Council
Prof Trevor McMillan	Keele University
James Leavesley	Leavesley Group
Alun Rogers	risual
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Stafford Borough Council
Sarah Montgomery	National Memorial Arboretum
Kevin Oakes	Royal Crown Derby
	Risual

Advisory/Secretariat

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

In Attendance

Andrea Whitworth	BEIS
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Apologies

Richard Cotterell	Perkins
Paul Farmer	Wade's Ceramics
David Sidaway	City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City 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

Cllr Farrington declared an interest in various items relating to Stafford. James Leavesley declared his position as Lichfield Garrick Chairman whose premises were adjacent to the Friarsgate site.

4. Notes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting. Representatives from General Electric (GE) had met with representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions, together with the constituency MP. An update from that meeting was provided. Cllr Farrington had also chaired a taskforce meeting. It was understood GE had commissioned the services of a redeployment and upskilling specialist.

The financial status of Stoke-on-Trent College had gained national publicity. The LEP had provided a letter of support for its funding bid.

5. Chairman's Delegated Decisions and Actions

There were no delegated decisions to report.

The chairman had attended a meeting with local MPs held at the British Ceramics Confederation. Jack Brereton MP had secured a debate on ceramics, which would take place on 21st February and a briefing was being provided.

6. Governance and Transparency

A report setting out proposed changes to the Assurance Framework was considered. All members were informed Best Practice guidelines must be adhered to and MHCLG had given a deadline of 28th February for documentation to be completed and uploaded to the website in order to secure funding for 2018/19. Draft minutes from the Executive Group must be uploaded within 10 days from the meeting. It was important to be clear on the publication requirements and restrictions.

7. KPI

The dashboard was noted. Members were asked to consider if the current dashboard met its needs and advise the secretariat.

Action: Peter Davenport to circulate amended dashboard to members for consideration

8. Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone Implementation Plan

The draft Implementation Plan and reporting template had been circulated. This was ideally to be submitted by the 31st March 2018. It was agreed that following an introductory explanation, Board members need to consider the document and respond by the 19th April

Action: Final document needs to be approved prior to submission by the Board

9. City & Growth Deal Programme Report

Following an open call on projects, 14 applications had been received. These had been reviewed by the Programme Consultant and the following recommendation were agreed:

1. Churnet Works Small Business Units be granted their funding request in full. (£500,000)
2. The balance of the funds available (£850,000) be held back with a view to funding future projects or B & C rated projects which are capable, after further immediate development work, of maximising outcomes from the investment. These developed projects to be brought forward to a future Executive Group meeting for funding consideration.

3. The promoters of the unfunded schemes rated B & C be encouraged to further develop their business cases with a view to being ready for any future funding distribution round.
4. The Doxey Road and Stafford Western Access Route business case was approved releasing a capital grant award of up to £8.5m.
5. Spode Church Street – Phase 2 business case approved, releasing a capital grant award of up to £500,000
6. Skills Equipment Fund - a total capital grant award of £1,135,880 (£2,305,226 including match) is awarded to the following organisations, listed below, subject to the conditions stated and to undertake further discussions with Staffordshire University;
 - o PM Training
 - o Perkins Engines Company Ltd.
 - o Lucideon Ltd.
 - o Newcastle & Stafford Colleges group
 - o Stoke-on-Trent College

The project dashboard did currently not value for money, directly relying instead on the proposed outcome due to the diversity of the types of project. This would be reviewed and any omissions corrected

Action: John Devlin to investigate misalignment of figures on Branston Locks

Programme finances were considered and following the approval of the business cases, it was anticipated that an underspend of 0.11M would occur in 2017/18. However, this was a forecast and the Accountable Body would manage the spending. The Risk Management update was considered and it was noted that three issues were currently being reported as red.

10. LEP Finances Dashboard Q3 2017-18

The dashboard was discussed. Key points were:

- At Q4 2017/18 51.1.7 of LEP had been spent
- 407 of the funding secured through the City Deal had been spent with all projects in implementation
- £98.54M of the ESIF allocation of £133.45M had been committed
- Growing Places funding had been invested in 12 projects of which three had repaid the loan.
- The core funding allocation for strategic planning had been partly used but it was proposed to carry forwards an underspend to make most use of funding

CLlr Farrington referred to the need for some finances to investigate a new junction off the M6, potentially around the A51.

Actions: Session on GVA and LEPs role to be set up before the next Executive Group meeting

Stafford Borough Council to submit a funding request for consideration

11. Updates from Board Leads

An update was given on the Network Staffordshire meeting, including Smart Staffordshire. It was felt important for the initiative to be led by the LEP. The setting up of a Smart Staffordshire body to engage in local business was discussed.

An update on SME and Skills was given. The current skills provision did not match skills needs. It was intended to run 3 sessions across the region with businesses. A flyer explaining the role of the LEP which could be handed out to professionals i.e. solicitors was suggested.

Action: Mohammed Ahmed to produce a draft flyer for consideration at the next meeting

12 Policy and Task Group Reports

- **Major Road Network Consultation**

The City Council and County Council were producing a response. It was agreed that the Midlands Connect response was sufficient. It was noted that the A38 would be reduced to a single lane for 2 years during HS2 works, which would have big impact for the region. This would be highlighted to SCC and HS2.

- **Ceramic Sector Deal**

Kevin Oakes gave an update. The proposals had been positively received and work was in progress to flesh out the details in discussion with ministers and civil servants. Greg Clarke, Secretary of State for BEIS, had committed to visiting when next in the region and discussions had been held with Liam Fox, Secretary of State for International Trade. An adjournment debate was to be held on the 21st February in Westminster.

13. Strategic Economic Plan

A final document would be in place for the March Full Partnership Board. BC and LE offered to share learning on Local Industrial Strategies. It was agreed that the core funding carry over should be utilised to commission work to strengthen the detailed evidence base and under core sector research.

14 Any Other Business

It was noted that the Industrial Strategy pilot was going ahead. It was agreed that Andrea Whitworth would meet with Peter Davenport around data sharing.

The Executive Group welcomed news that Stoke-on-Trent City Council had been successful in securing £10M from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for 1,500 across 10 sites in Burslem.

Date and time of next meeting:

Full Partnership Board: Thursday 22nd March
6pm-8pm
County Buildings (room TBC)

Executive Group Meeting: Thursday 19th April
6pm-8pm
County Buildings Drawing Room