

**Notes of the LEP Executive Board Meeting
Drawing Room, County Buildings
Thursday 13th December**

Group Members

David Frost (Chairman)	
Alun Rogers (Vice Chair)	
John Henderson	risual
James Leavesley	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Patrick Farrington	The Leavesley Group
Cllr Abi Brown	Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Brian Edwards	Deputy Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Prof Mark Bacon (for Trevor McMillan)	South Staffordshire Council
Phil Cresswell (for David Sidaway)	Keele University
	Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Advisory/Secretariat

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

In Attendance

Andrea Whitworth	BEIS
Archie Corliss	Encraft

Apologies

Sarah Montgomery	National Memorial Arboretum
David Sidaway	City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Prof Trevor McMillan	Keele University
Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Paul Farmer	Wade Ceramics
Mohammed Ahmed	National Grid
Wendy Dean	Strategi Solutions

1. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that the Annual Performance Meeting had been held that afternoon.

2. Apologies

These were noted.

3. Declarations of Interest

James Leavesley declared that he was a shareholder of St Modwen PLC and would not participate in any matters where that company had an interest.

4. Chairman's Delegated Decisions and Actions

None to report.

5. Notes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

The notes were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting with the addition of "zone" in 8 iii.

It was noted that the report on regulation would be delayed until the next meeting due to availability.

6. KPI

The dashboard and overview was noted

Action: Secretariat to circulate portfolio of dashboards for comment

7. Energy Strategy – Archie Corliss

The Energy Strategy and Summary had been circulated and published on the SSLEP website. Archie Corliss from consultants Encraft highlighted the key areas of the strategy as follows.

- An evidence base has been developed assessing local energy demand, generation and infrastructure
- The area has significant energy generation resources
- There is a strong base of local industry in the energy sector
- Electricity network constraints cause issues in some areas
- Stakeholder engagement was led by Sustainability West Midlands
- Two workshops held, over 50 attendees, 40% from the private sector
- The strategy has developed a vision, targets and actions to undertake, across the residential, commercial and industrial, transport and public sectors.
- Implementation of the strategy will be supported by an ongoing steering group, as well as by the BEIS Midlands Energy Hub
- This strategy will feed into the development of the Local Industrial Strategy

The strategy included the following vision "Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is a leader in smart energy and the development of smart cities. The county is a leader in community energy generation and has a secure, distributed energy generation and supply system based on low carbon and renewable participation backed by strong digital infrastructure, delivering reliable and low-cost energy to businesses and communities."

The board discussed the strategy and the issues raised by the strategy, particularly;

- The availability and means of increasing the availability of electric vehicle charging points
- The role of the local planning authorities in delivering the strategy and using it as advice to guide their policy
- The need for central government support to deliver changes through funding and policy support
- The need to ensure that businesses weren't disadvantaged locally compared to other areas

The board approved the strategy for publication.

8. City & Growth Programme Deal Programme

The board noted the project highlight paper which set out progress on the schemes in the programme.

It was noted that the Growth Deal target for Jobs was slightly above target, 5008 jobs by the end of 2020/21 (target 5000 jobs). Total forecast jobs = 10731. Currently 372 jobs have been created.

The housing forecast was currently below target, 828 houses by end 20/21 (target 1000 houses). However the total forecast housing units at 4850 would ultimately exceed the target. 97 houses had been completed (SWAR – Bellway development). Construction of an initial 5 units of 70 had now commenced at Branston Locks. A further 201 houses for Taylor Wimpey were planned to start March 2019 having received reserved matters planning approval. In addition a further housing development had received permission in Stafford.

City Deal jobs created to date 693 (IGISS / SSBSP / AME Hub Ph 1); the remainder of the jobs and energy outcomes will be achieved from delivery of DHN and SEND schemes.

A verbal update on the open call was given. The projects had all been analysed and the Programme Assurance Group had undertaken an initial assessment. The Programme Consultant was to review the outcome and seek clarification before a Strategic Programme Group was held in January to discuss the report to the February Board meeting.

9. Audit and Finance Group

- Q2 Outputs Dashboard

The dashboard was circulated for members' approval, which was given.

- Risk Register

The overarching strategic Risk Register was discussed together with the mitigating actions. These highlighted the need to implement the changes required by the LEP Review and the overarching delivery of programmes. The board requested a detailed report at six monthly intervals with major changes reported as they arose at intermediate meetings.

10 Local Industrial Strategy Development Update

Alun Rogers gave a verbal update on the progress made to date.

A series of engagement meetings had been held which had been well attended. The sessions had provided good feedback and robust discussion. A further series of meetings would be taking place in the New Year. A steering group had been set up and the inaugural meeting had taken place. The steering group would be bringing a draft document to the Executive Board in the spring.

Lessons were being learnt from other LEPs and good practice events.

11. Policy & Task Group Updates

Investment Update:

To date for 2018/19 Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire had assisted 7 companies in creating/safeguarding 1,195 jobs (879 created and 315 safeguarded) towards the annual target of 2,000 jobs.

The team also recorded details of investments and jobs created/safeguarded by businesses where there has been no assistance provided. Although not comprehensive, when combined with those assisted this gave a total of 1,580 jobs and 17 companies.

Growth Hub

The Board reviewed the work of the Growth Hub and noted from 1st April 2014 to 1st December 2018 the Growth Hub had achieved the following:

- 6544 businesses engaged with the Growth Hub Advisors
- 9407 referrals made for businesses by the Hub Advisors
- 9287 businesses engaged with the Business Helpline

- 10160 signposts made for businesses by the Business Helpline
- 2193 businesses assisted from the manufacturing sector
- 1207 businesses assisted from the Information & Communication Sector
- 1284 three-hour Business Diagnostics undertaken by the Hub Advisors

The Growth Hub also runs a small grant scheme which assists businesses with the purchase of capital equipment and machinery that will help them to grow their business. From the scheme launch in November 2016 £798,034 worth of grants have been approved from a pot of £811,000 of up to £10,000 per business. To date 116 new jobs have been promised in return for the grants.

ESIF

The board noted that 84% (£76m) of the £91m of ERDF available had been committed leaving £15m to be allocated in the final bidding call in March 2019 to remaining projects in the pipeline. Government had given a commitment to honour all ERDF funded projects and programmes provided they are contracted by December 2020 with delivery extending to December 2023.

The majority of ESF is being delivered through DWP, ESFA and Big Lottery programmes. To date 63% of the £64m available has been committed and nearly 16,000 beneficiaries have been supported through skills and employment programmes.

To date grants totalling £4.5m from EAFRD and LEADER have been committed that will support 54 businesses and community projects across the LEP's rural areas improving farm productivity and helping and food and drink businesses to develop and expand.

Both the LEADER and EAFRD programmes have sufficient bidding activity to take up in full the £5m grant allocation

Education Skills and Employment Group

The group met on the 28th November and discussed the Careers Hub, the development of the Local Industrial Strategy, Skills Advisory Panels and the European Social Fund programme.

12. Any other Business

- The area had been included on the list for the next tranche of business rate retention pilots
- The Queens Awards for Enterprise represented an excellent opportunity for businesses

Date and time of next meeting:

Partnership Board:

Thursday 14th February

6pm-8pm

Drawing Room, County Buildings, Stafford