**STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE**

**LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

**COMPANY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**18 July 2019**

**LEP Board Vacancies & Board Member Induction Programme**

1. **Background:**

1.1 At 20 June 2019 SSLEP Executive Board meeting, Board Directors instructed the LEP Secretariat to commence the search for new private sector Directors immediately.

1.2 Government requirements in respect of appointments to the Board, set out in the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (January 2019) are as follows:

* LEP Boards must be 2/3 private:1/3 public sector in make up.
* LEP Boards must be a minimum of 1/3 female by February 2020 and 50:50 male:female by 2023.
* No more than 20 directors on a Board, with an option to second up to 5 more Directors for a 12 month period to support specific priorities.
* Opportunities to apply to be a private sector Board Director should be openly advertised.
* Current LEP Board make up must be reviewed, as part of the LEP Review, in the light of the future work programme, which focusses upon delivering the government’s economic priority of increasing productivity and better opportunities for all, through delivery of our Local Industrial Strategy.
1. **Current Make Up of the SSLEP Board**

2.1 SSLEP Company Executive Board has a total of 18 Directors: 12 private and 6 public. Following the recent resignation of Sarah Montgomery, there are currently **5 private sector Board vacancies**. Appendix 1 sets out the current Board membership, the role/specialist area of each member and dates of re-appointment to their seat.

2.2 There are currently only three female Directors: Wendy Dean; Prof. Liz Barnes; and Cllr Abi Brown, our only female public sector Director. At this point, a further 3 female Directors must be appointed to meet the required ratio by the deadline.

2.3 Liz Barnes is the current University Director. This place has been subject to annual rotation between the two main Universities and is therefore due to rotate back to Prof. Trevor McMillan in January i.e. prior to the 1/3 female representation deadline. **Under current arrangements, 4 of the five private sector Board vacancies would need to be female appointments to ensure the male:female ratio is met.**

**3. New Private Sector Director Appointments**

3.1 The make-up of the new Board must reflect the needs of the Partnership in delivering the LEP’s Local Industrial Strategy. Specifically, Board Directors will work together effectively to determine LEP priorities, identify opportunities & potential solutions and commission delivery against the agreed work programme. Board membership should be sought from relevant areas of expertise in developing a place-based strategy and the recommendations on new Board Directors in this paper are therefore not purely sector-specific. Full consideration has also been given to our evidence base on future growth businesses and these are indicated in summary Table 1 below (taken from the evidence base work).

3.2 The unique and complementary roles of the Universities of Keele and Staffordshire in supporting delivery of the LIS is recognised by our partners and by the supporting government departments with whom the LIS is being co-designed. Supporting business with research, innovation and high level skills development will be central to our productivity growth strategy. This is the business of our Universities and, as LEP partners, they and other HE providers can assist in identifying a range of solutions and, where appropriate, bring opportunity to align resources with agreed priorities to meet identified local business requirements. It is considered that the Board’s current needs are best served by having both Universities represented on the Board. Amendments to the articles would be made to accommodate this.

**Recommendation 1: That Board Directors agree to amend the Company Articles to dispense with the current university rotational arrangement, to appoint University of Keele Vice Chancellor to the Board as a University Director and to enable the retention of the University of Staffordshire Vice Chancellor after December 2019.**

3.3 Based upon the LIS Evidence Base detail, it is possible to highlight key areas of business expertise from which the board should consider inviting applications. The priority areas which highlighted the strongest evidence for providing significant future growth potential are as follows:

* **Advanced Manufacturing** (*specifically* ***Auto/Aero*** *expertise. Advanced Materials is already represented*)
* **Energy** (plays to our opportunities in the energy market, provides potential to bring expertise around the growing green energy/climate change agenda)
* Digital (*already represented*)
* **Logistics** (*provides potential to also bring expertise around: connectivity across and beyond our boundaries; transport; and technological innovation*)

**Recommendation 2: That Board Directors agree to seek new Director representation from the following three areas of expertise: Advanced Manufacturing: Auto/Aero; Energy and Logistics.**

3.4 Other key areas of business expertise which also provided strong evidence for future growth potential and which could contribute strongly to the ‘Place’ Foundation, are:

* Professional & Business Services(*finance, HR & legal already represented*)
* **Tourism & Leisure** (*provides opportunity across urban & rural part of area, plays to promoting & branding of our area*)
* Agri-Food (*already represented*)
* **Medi-Tech**
* **Housing Construction**
* **Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise** *(embedding social value in project & programme development)*

3.5 If Board Directors accept recommendations 1 and 2, there will be one further private sector Director to recruit from among the areas of expertise shown in bold above (para 3.4). The new National Assurance Framework (Jan 2019) provides opportunity for Boards to invite up 5 additional experts to join them for a period of up to 12 months, so selection of one area of expertise will not prevent those which are not selected from supporting the Board where the need arises.

**Recommendation 3: That, subject to the decision on Recommendation 1\* of this paper, Board Directors provide their agreed view on one other area of business expertise from which they would wish to seek Board Director applications, selecting from: Tourism & Leisure; Medi-Tech; Housing Construction; and Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise.**

**3.6 Young People’s Ambassador: C**reating an environment in which young people will thrive in their training, work and leisure time is critical to our strategic approach. While not recommended as a Board appointment for practical reasons, opportunities for co-opting and proactively engaging local young people in the development of delivery solutions must be built into the process.

3.7 The advertisements for Board Appointments will include reference to the work of the LEP, the role & responsibilities of a LEP Director, the extent of the anticipated time commitment and the need to identify an equalities & diversity champion from among the applicants. A copy of the application pack will be circulated for information & comment. Appointments will be made in line with the details included in our Assurance Framework, comprising of an interview with a Nominations Panel which will comprise of a small sub set of Board Directors.

**4. Board Member Induction Programme**

4.1 SSLEP is required to put in place a Board Member Induction Programme for new Board Members. It is proposed that the SSLEP Process will comprise of the following:

1. Successful Applicants would be invited to:
* sign the Code of Conduct Form
* complete a Declaration of Interests Form
* attend their first Board Meeting in a letter of appointment which would include an Induction Pack
1. Board Induction Pack would include: SSLEP Assurance Framework (incl. Company Articles of Association, all partnership governance and LEP policies), strategy documents setting out SSLEP priorities and latest Annual Report and Delivery Plan.
2. An Induction Meeting would be held with the Chair/Vice Chair and LEP CEO. Where multiple appointments are made this would be held as a joint session organised by the Secretariat.
3. New Board Members would have access to the new LEP Network National Training Programme.
4. Refresher sessions on Board Director requested areas (e.g. governance, procedure on declarations of interest etc.) would form part of a LEP Annual Board Strategy/Away Day, the main purpose of which would be forward planning.

**Recommendation: That Board Directors note the information and provide any comments on process and content.**

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