**Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Improvement Plan 2019-20**

***Strategy***

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| Improvement summary  *Summarise the improvement that needs to be made, including KPIs* | Milestones  *Add key milestones and dates (where possible)* | Monitoring process  *Note how you will monitor progress* | Area Lead progress update  *To be completed on a quarterly basis, referencing progress on KPIs* |
| 1. The vision and ambition of the LEP needs to translate into a clear framework of strategic policies that are owned by the LEP Board and drive investment decisions. This will be influenced by the LIS development process during 2019.   *LEP Leads:*  *LIS: Alun Rogers, Jacqui Casey, Sam Hicks*  *SAP: Wendy Dean, Tony Baines, Julie Obada*  *Sub Group Structure: David Frost, Jacqui Casey, Simon Ablewhite.*  KPIs:   * Skills Advisory Panel to be in place by end May. * LIS development informs priorities by 30 September. * Sub-group structure confirmed by Nov 2019. * Policies confirmed or being developed by Nov 2019. * Policy discussions at LEP Board | * Phase 1 of LIS completed **30 June** with evidence base * Phase 2 of LIS completed **30 August** with emerging priorities. * Review of LEP sub-group structure in the light of LIS priorities by **30 Sept 19**. * Re-establish sub-groups with effective private sector leadership in place by **30 Sept 19** – recognising the skills and knowledge of board members (Deep Dive Report pg 7) * Each Sub-group to be in place with clear policy objectives, transparent operations and with improved reporting to LEP Board by **30 Dec 19.** | * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. * LIS Progress Reviews between Area Lead and LEP Strategy Researcher | Phase1 presented to 20 June LEP Board  SAP – met as a shadow board on 29 May. ToR is to be signed off by Exec Board 18 July.  SAP – project group in place with both authorities and LEP as members. This enables LEP to keep in touch with programme of work which is supporting LIS. |
| 1. Key Performance Indicators should be used to regularly review progress against strategy to inform plans and investment decisions.   *LEP Leads: Mohammed Ahmed, Sharon Palphreyman, Jon Vining, Mark Connell*  KPIs:   * Evidence of KPIs informing board decisions. | * Review ownership and responsibility for the KPI Dashboard within LEP organisation by **31 July**. * Dashboard to be reviewed by **end of May and revised by end of July** to ensure it meets board expectations and captures latest progress towards output delivery. * Delivery dashboard to be discussed quarterly at LEP board. * Dashboard to be compliant with guidance from Cities and Local Growth Unit | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * Evidence of KPIs being reviewed by officers and revised proposals being developed | * 20 May Meeting held to progress work on amending dashboard. * 25th June: Work continues and draft formats have been formulated for internal discussion and discussion with LEP Board lead member. |
| 1. The LEP to develop as a strong convenor of local partners – targeting the broader business community, public and voluntary communities and local MPs.   *LEP Leads:*  *Convening: David Frost, Alun Rogers, Jacqui Casey, Sam Hicks.*  *Comms Plan: David Frost, Alison Thomas.*  *SME Lead: Paul Farmer, Wendy Dean.*  KPIs:   * Higher level of engagement in LIS stakeholder events. | * Formal stakeholder engagement plan to be developed to support LIS development by **30 June 19**. * LEP to develop a formal communications plan for the **June LEP Board.** * SME Lead Role to be reviewed, defined and set out on website and ensure capacity is in place by **30 June 19.** * Engagement with DfT to be reviewed by **30 June.** | * Area Lead Monthly meetings with LEP Comms Lead * Area Lead Monthly meetings with LEP Partnership Manager * Website review. * Feedback from Stakeholders | * Engagement plan developed for the LIS and discussed with Exec Board in June. * LEP Comms Plan to be drafted for Exec Board in September when new comms service is in place following procurement. * DfT has been invited to PAG meetings and will receive papers. Will attend relevant meeting where transport schemes are being monitored. * LEP Partnership Manager to engage with DfT in regular meetings with SCC & Stoke City Council Highways team. |

**Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Improvement Plan 2019-20**

***Governance***

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| Improvement summary  *Summarise the improvement that needs to be made, including KPIs* | Milestones  *Add key milestones and dates (where possible)* | Monitoring process  *Note how you will monitor progress* | Area Lead progress update  *To be completed on a quarterly basis, referencing progress on KPIs* |
| 1. LEP / Accountable Body to commission an audit of Governance procedures against the new National Assurance Framework.   *LEP Lead: Jacqui Casey, Simon Ablewhite.*  KPIs: | * The LEP to provide indication how recommendations from the **March 2018** Compliance Audit incorporated into local assurance framework (Deep Dive report pg 15). * The local assurance framework includes a complaints and whistleblowing policy. (Deep Dive report pg 17) * Commission audit by **30 April** * Draft report 31 May * Final Audit report presented to the Board **31 July** * Actions completed **31 August** | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * Accountable Body to check to ensure that all actions from the 2018 audit have been embedded in the new local assurance framework. * A further audit has been undertaken in May 2019 and the final report has been received. * The results and actions will be reported to the LEP Board in July and those accepted will be incorporated into the APR improvement planning process. |
| 1. The LEP to ensure that it complies with the New National Local Growth Assurance Framework (Jan 2019) which requires registers of interest for all members within the LEP structure and the senior management of the LEP. (Deep Dive Report pg 16) | * Declarations paper work **reviewed in March** for Board Members and staff. * Declarations made at start of each board and sub group meetings and recorded. * Written brief / reminder to all Chairs on process to follow during course of meetings **June.** | * LEP / Accountable Body monthly Governance Reviews * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * Register of Interest is in place for Staff and Members: confirmed from April 2019. * A written brief to be prepared for all Board Members during summer 2019 to remind them of their commitments. * Declarations of interest process will be built into the sub-group review and built into the new ToR for each group. * SAP is a good example of how this is being applied to new sub-groups as they are being established and re-established. The SAP in its ToR is required to comply with LEP governance procedures. |
| 1. LEP Transparency to be improved ensuring board papers are publicly available and greater consistency as to which papers are published   *LEP Lead: Jacqui Casey, Simon Ablewhite.*  KPIs: Monthly Board papers to be consistently published in accordance with LEP Assurance Framework  Pre-board agenda planning meeting to be established  Forward plan of agenda for Executive Board to be maintained. | * LEP to review its policy for publishing board papers to reduce the number of confidential items and ensure maximum transparency of decision making **31 May 19**. * The LEP to review its approach to confidential and redacted information and provide the Area Lead with an update. (Deep Dive Report pg 22) * As part of the review of sub-groups (see action 1) consider which Boards and sub boards could publish their minutes and set this out in the assurance framework. **Sept 30th.** (Deep Dive Report pg 22) | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. * Area Lead to received board papers alongside board members | * A more open, transparent approach was implemented for June Board to ensure more papers are publicly available. However, there was a problem with uploading these to the website on time. * Draft revised Scheme of delegation out to consultation 20 May. Paper went to June Exec Board. * Pre-board Agenda planning meeting established and operational from May. * Forward Plan for future LEP board meetings in place from May and implemented at June Exec Board. |
| 1. The LEP to ensure it has on its website a rolling schedule of projects, outlining a brief description of the project, names of key recipients of funds/contracts and amounts of funds designated by year. This should be updated every quarter or more frequently if relevant (e.g. when new projects are signed-off). (Deep Dive Report pg 22)   LEP Lead is Sharon Palfreyman | * Review project & programmes information on website in line with requirements listed (left) (Sept) * Scheme of Delegation to be published once agreed. | * PAG meetings * Area Lead meetings with Partnership Manager | * A version of this is available [here](https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/delivering-growth/strategy/) |
| 1. The LEP to ensure that its local assurance framework clearly details how the LEP operates in a way that is easy for a member of the public who knows nothing about the LEP to understand. (Deep Dive Report pg 21) | * SSLEP Constitution now described as an “Assurance Framework” which comprises governance & operational arrangements (constitution) and all policies (April). * Review of AF document to be undertaken when revising sub groups, with clarity and ease of understanding for the public in mind. **(Sept)** * Local Assurance Framework to specify the quorate levels required for sub-groups of the Board by **31st Aug** (Governance Audit) * Local Assurance Framework to ensure it refers to latest Data Protections Laws per the 2018 Act and not 1998 by April (Governance Audit) | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * The SSLEP framework has been updated to correct data protection references. * Version 5 of the LAF has been completed following comments from the CLGU Compliance Team and this has addressed some issues around clarity and ensured full compliance. * A further version (6) will be prepared over the summer 2019 to further address clarity and transparency. |
| 1. The LEP to ensure that the local assurance framework contains links and references to all policies and procedures operated by the LEP. (Deep Dive Report pg 21) | * Review of AF document to be undertaken when revising sub groups, with clarity and ease of understanding for the public in mind. **(Sept)** | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * A further version (6) will be prepared over the summer 2019 to further address clarity and transparency. |
| 1. The Local Assurance Framework to specifically cover arrangements for the process to escalate and de-escalate risk across different meetings, the process and frequency for LEP Board oversight over risk or the approach for how individual sub-group risk registers will link with the risk register presented at AFC. (Governance Audit) | * The SSLEP Assurance framework will be updated to clarify the process around risk management by **July 31st.** | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * A further version (6) will be prepared over the summer 2019 to further address clarity and transparency. |
| 1. The LEP to consider what systems are needed to ensure minutes accurately reflect the decisions taken at meetings, and where appropriate indicate whether it is a binding decision or a recommendation. This could include training for those drafting minutes, or system to approve minutes. (Deep Dive report pg 13) | * Review terminology in ToRs. * Brief note takers on governance process and appropriate terminology. * Implement from **June Board** | * Area Lead attendance at LEP Board meetings * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * Future board Agenda to make clear which items are for decision, discussion or information from July Exec Board. * Future agenda also to make clear which items are confidential (papers are marked but agenda doesn’t reiterate). * Key LEP Staff involved in setting agenda and taking minutes to receive coaching to ensure the new system is fully operational from July. |
| 1. The LEP to consider how it can ensure that its role as a leader of local growth policy is distinct from its Local Authorities and that this is perceived as such by local stakeholders and the wider public.   *LEP lead: David Frost, Jacqui Casey*  KPIs:  Clear LEP ID embedded  LEP Staffing understood by all partners  New email address for LEP staff  Planning approval for LEP signage for LEP offices to reflect company status | * LEP Resources Review by **April 19** * New Staffing Structure to be agreed by LEP Board June 19 * The LEP staff to operate with LEP email addresses **June 30th.** (Deep Dive Report pg 22) * Local Assurance Framework document to be amended to ensure it specifically states the role of the secretariat is independent and how this is achieved and maintained by **31st July.** (Governance Audit) | * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. * LEP Partnership Manager to include details of the revised independent secretariat in the Assurance Framework. | * LEP staffing review undertaken. Meetings held with local partners to discuss this on 14 May and 17th June and 20th June. * Staffing structure discussed at June Exec Board – additional resources committed from HEI and LA partners. * Updated staffing paper to go to July Exec Board. * Emails: LEP staff to have LEP email address: work in progress as at 25 June. * Signage: Details of plaque agreed. Owner approval given to erect sign. Listed building consent awaited as at the 25 June. * LAF version 6 to reflect the new secretariat function and demonstrate independence. |
| 1. The LEP to define job descriptions and responsibilities of key positions within the LEP structure e.g. Chair, Chief Executive, responsible officer for risk, VfM, ensuring conflict of interest is managed appropriately. (Deep Dive Report pg 12) | * Work underway and will go to Board in sections for sign off between **June and September.** * Completed **30 September** | * LEP / Accountable Body monthly Governance Reviews * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * Key JDs are being prepared. * Already done for programme manager. * Further JD to be finalised for proposed posts in new staffing structure. * LAF has been updated to include details of the role of Chair & VC. * LAF – sets out role of audit and finance group and needs to be updated in version 6 make explicit the role of chair of this group including responsibility for risk and VFM. * CEO role as Company Secretary will be responsible for ensuring management of conflicts of interest. This will need to be captured in JD for this post. |
| 1. Board recruitment process is reviewed in line with the LEP Review requirements by April 2019.   *LEP lead: David Frost, Jacqui Casey*  KPI’s:  LEP Geography resolved June 19  Full board membership by September 19  Further progress towards gender ratios evidenced following recruitment. | * Board recruitment process ready for implementation **30 June 19** * The LEP to provide the Area Lead with an action plan for the recruitment of the private sector board members by **June 30th** (Deep Dive Report pg 7) * This to include further details of its proposals for a nominations committee (when this will be in place and operational). (Deep Dive Report pg 10) * Board recruitment underway by **30 July** * Consideration of approach to address diversity in recruitment programmed for **June Board** meeting (Deep Dive Report pg 7) * Consideration to be given to a Board member to be nominated as Diversity Lead at **June Board** meeting (Governance Audit) | * LEP / Accountable Body monthly Governance Reviews * LEP Partnership Manager and Area Lead monthly review. | * June Exec Board recommended immediate commencement of recruitment of private sector board members. * Public sector members also need to be recruited – June Exec Board discussed that four places to be made available to the District Councils. * Articles of Association to be amended to enable four District Council representatives. * Articles of Association set out the process for private sector board recruitment as at June 2019. * Plans to have recruitment underway by end of July. * Approaches to addressing diversity will be dealt with at July Exec Board. * Diversity board lead to be nominated after this recruitment process. * LEP Geography issue continues to be outstanding as at 25 June. * Unlikely that all board places will be filled by end of September and will move into the autumn. |
| 1. Local Assurance Framework to ensure succession planning arrangements cover narrative on when a resignation is notified, how knowledge and information is passed onto any successor or arrangements for a handover discussion. (Governance Audit) | * The SSLEP Assurance Framework will be updated to clarify the approach around succession planning by 31st July | * LEP / Accountable body monthly governance meetings * LEP / Area Lead monthly meetings | * LAF version 5 has addressed succession planning. See para 2.14.3 * **ACTION COMPLETED 25 JUNE** |
| 1. LEP Chair Succession Planning Process to be implemented. (Deep Dive Report pg 9) | * An action plan with key milestones should be produced and provided to the Area Lead by **August 19.** * Consideration of approach to recruitment programmed for September Board meeting. * Example recruitment packs and approaches from other areas being considered **June / July.** | * LEP / Accountable body monthly governance meetings * LEP / Area Lead monthly meetings | * Recruitment pack to be on agenda for Sept board. |
| 1. Local Assurance Framework document to include specific narrative around Board member training and induction covering how and when induction packs are provided and what they will cover. The packs should cover the Board’s objectives, the Local Assurance Framework, requirements around conflicts and ethical behaviour, claiming expenses and what training is available as a minimum. It should also be clarified that the induction pack training must be documented as complete within the first quarter of joining. (Governance Audit) | * Assurance Framework to be updated by **July 31st.** |  | * A review of the current induction progress is in progress and the assurance framework will be updated when this is completed. * To be picked up in version 6 of the LAF to be prepared over the summer 19. |
| 1. LEP Scheme of Delegation be reviewed.  * The LEP to consider appropriate schemes of delegation and capacity to support the workings of the LEP within the revised structure to ensure the principle of subsidiarity and that the decisions are taken at the most appropriate level. (Deep Dive Report pg 12)   *LEP Lead: David Frost, Simon Ablewhite, Jacqui Casey*  KPI: in place by 30th June 2019. | * Scheme of delegation included in the local Assurance Framework (April) * To be reviewed further and considered at June LEP Board. * Review to be completed June 19. | * LEP / Accountable body monthly governance meetings * LEP / Area Lead monthly meetings | * Scheme of delegation out to consultation 20 May and to the June Exec Board where it was discussed. * Board members continue to make comments as at 25 June. * To be agreed by electronic process asap. |
| 1. To revise the SSLEP Assurance Framework document to state the Boards role in overseeing non-compliant funding specifically covering whether they or other sub-groups receive summaries of cases and what they receive. Furthermore, the arrangements to recover funding should be made specific covering how decisions are made on when it has been agreed that recovery is not worthwhile, who makes this decision and how steps are taken to document this. (Governance Audit) | * The position to be clarified in the Assurance framework and the scheme of delegation by 31st July. | * LEP / Accountable body monthly governance meetings * LEP / Area Lead monthly meetings | * The details of recovery of non-compliant payments relating to the Growth Deal is set out in the individual grant agreements. * At 25 June a review of terminology is underway as used in the grant agreements (being done by legal team at Accountable Body). * Awaiting finalisation of review of grant agreements – will be incorporated into v6 of LAF with new clauses included. * Included in the scheme of delegation is information as to who can make decisions with regard to grant recovery. (25th June) |
| 1. The LEP to update its Local Assurance Framework to include details of all sub boards (including Growing Places Fund and Enterprise Zone) and include their terms of reference, appropriate representative membership (such as VCS and FE representation on the LEP Board and broader representation on the SPMG), and any delegated authority. *(Deep Dive report pg 6-7)* | * All sub group details to be included by **June 30th** * Membership of Exec Board and wider partnership to be made clear by June 30th * Membership form and function of SPMG to be reviewed as part of review of project assessment process (see action 23) with changes implemented **by Sept**. Deep Dive report pg 13). | * Monthly LEP / AB Governance meetings * Monthly Area Lead meetings | * Version 5 of the LAF includes details all sub-groups * Review of sub-groups to be undertaken by the autumn which will address appropriate membership requirements. |

**Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Improvement Plan 2019-20**

***Delivery***

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| 1. Risk Management processes to be embedded into management processes.   *LEP Leads: Mohammed Ahmed, Jacqui Casey, Sharon Palphreyman.*  KPIs   * Audit and Finance committee identifying strategic risks to the board * Risks being acted upon and reducing. * Register to be incorporated into the LEP’s forward plan for Board agenda | * Risk Register to go to monthly LEP Board meetings for information * LEP Board to discuss risks by exception and agree mitigating actions * LEP Board to undertake a deep review of risks twice yearly. | * Area Lead attendance at board meetings | * Risk Register now going to every Board Meeting with red risks flagged (25th June) * Risk Register is on the LEP forward plan for future Board agenda items. |
| 1. LEP to commission a review of developer activity and planning approvals to assure current forecast of housing and job outcomes are secure and consider how targets can be achieved.   *LEP Leads: PAG/SPMG Chair, Sharon Palphreyman, Jon Vining*  KPIs:   * LEP Output dashboard to be kept updated with latest information * PAG to oversee this work with LEP Programme Manager * LEP Outputs to be monitored at PAG | * To be delivered in line with forthcoming CLGU review of LGF outputs. | * Area Lead to work with LEP Project Manager * Area Lead attendance at Programme Assurance Board. | * Review of dashboard is underway at 25 June 19. * Outputs monitored as part of LGF monitoring process. * LEP to consider obtaining supporting evidence from project sponsors to demonstrate the basis on which future output commitments are made. * Programme Manager to build this into quarterly output monitoring. This would determine the level of risk around output delivery. |
| 1. Project assessment process to be reviewed to ensure these are robust with clear vfm considerations.   *LEP Leads: Independent Technical Advisor, Jacqui Casey*  KPIs:   * Independent assessor identified for period post May. | * Project assessment & approval process to be independently reviewed by **31 July.** * Process to be implemented with clear & consistent guidelines for vfm considerations by **September**. * As part of this effective private sector leadership of the Strategic Performance Management Group to be in place and the role of the group to be embedded into the LEP operations with clear and effective reporting to the LEP board by **Sept 2019.** * The local assurance framework to set out the revised process for project assessment and the function of the PAG and SPMG to be fully defined and circumstances set out when the SPMG can be bypassed and the PAG would report directly to the Exec Board. (Deep Dive pg 13) | * Monthly LEP / AB Governance meetings * Monthly Area Lead meetings | * Draft Tender document developed for independent project assessment. * Seven potential companies identified. * Procurement process is underway and awaiting approval / completion as at 25 June. |
| 1. Project sponsors should to be asked to update their websites to ensure LGF branding is consistent with current guidelines   *LEP Lead: PAG Chair, Sharon Palphreyman, Alison Thomas*  KPIs:   * Funding agreements have conditions relating to use of LGF Branding | * PAG to monitor branding guidelines are being implemented and adhered to. * Project sponsors to be reminded of branding guidelines for use on location and on websites by end of **July 19.** * Programme Manager and Communications Manager to continue to identify PR opportunities in relation to LGF. | * Area Lead attendance at Programme Assurance Board * Programme Assurance Board to monitor project adherence to guidelines. | * Project sponsors have been reminded of commitments to branding guidance (May 19) * LAF has been updated to reflect this as at the 25 June. * PAG to undertake compliance checks from 25th June. |
| 1. Etruria Valley business case: Louise Clare to check on the timelines for approval and delivery.   *LEP Lead: PAG Chair, Sharon Palphreyman, Steve Vitta*  KPIs:   * Project sponsors continuing engagement with DFT and LEP. * LEP to keep project under review at PAG. | * Final Business Case to be with DFT by end of **September** * Start on site by **December 19.** * All LGF to be spent **by March 21.** * DfT regional engager to be invited to PAG meetings where significant transport projects are to be discussed. | * LEP Programme Manager engagement with Project Sponsor * Area Lead attendance at Programme Assurance Board * Area Lead and DfT regular meetings. | * DfT rep invited to PAG on 28 May. * June Exec Board received an update from City Council. Commitment to deliver project given. * Economic and Financial business cases are outstanding and due to be submitted to DfT by 28th September by City Council. * To be kept under review by PAG. |