

**LEP Company Executive Board Meeting  
Staffordshire University  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019  
DRAFT Confidential Minutes**

**Board Directors**

Alun Rogers (Acting Chair)	risual
Wendy Dean	Strategi Solutions
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
Sinead Butters	Aspire Housing Ltd
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Leader, Stafford Borough Council
Prof Trevor McMillan	Vice-Chancellor, University of Keele
Cllr Abi Brown	Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Simon Tagg	Leader, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

**Advisory/Secretariat**

Julie Frost	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Jacqui Casey	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Sam Hicks	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP
Simon Ablewhite	SSLEP Accountable Body

**In Attendance**

Andrea Whitworth	BEIS
Jenny Dibden	MHCLG
James Dunn	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
David Stubbs	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Phil Cresswell	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Anthony Hodge	Staffordshire County Council
Prof Martin Jones	Staffordshire University
Martin Hamilton	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Rob Salmon	Staffordshire County Council

**Apologies**

James Leavesley	Leavesley Group
Paul Farmer	Wade Ceramics
Mohammed Ahmed	Homeserve
Cllr Duncan Goodfellow	Leader, East Staffordshire Borough Council
Cllr Philip Atkins	Leader, Staffordshire County Council
Prof Liz Barnes	University of Staffordshire
John Henderson	Chief Executive, Staffordshire County Council
David Sidaway	Chief Executive, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

**1. Introductions**

The Acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. For the benefit of the new Board Members, introductions were made round the table. MJ gave an update on activities at Staffordshire University, primarily the new £43M Catalyst Building, opening in August 2021.

**2. Apologies**

These were noted.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

The following were noted:

- Cllr Abi Brown – City East Link Road and Etruria Valley
- Anthony Hodge – Cannock Chase & Silverdale Enterprise Centre
- Wendy Dean – 5G Network discussions
- Alun Rogers – Caja Ltd. current commercial relationship

### **4. Notes of the previous meeting and matters arising – Summary of Electronic Decisions**

The notes were agreed to be a true and fair record of the meeting.

#### **Electronic decisions from the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 meeting:**

- **Item 6: LEP Strategy Focus: Digital Enablement & Opportunity**

To progress development of a digital enablement proposal for the whole of Staffordshire, working to a development deadline of February 2020 and bringing progress updates to Board in the interim.

- **Item 7: LEP Board Member Recruitment – Endorsement of Proposed New Board Member**

Subject to confirmation of DISC Assessment outcome, to endorse the recommendation of the Appointments Panel and confirm Sinead Butters and Sara Williams as Board Directors.

- **Item 8: LEP Chair's Recruitment**

Option for Board to offer honorarium to be retained for the Chair's position.

- **Item 9 ii: Update on High Risk Schemes: City Centre Access Programme**

To continue provision of LGF funding to the City Centre Access Programme and to closely monitoring progress and expenditure.

- **Item 9iv: Hilton Garden Hotel**

To approve the updated grant conditions relating to the Hilton Garden Hotel grant.

- **Item 12ii: Annual Performance Review Improvement Plan Update**

JC to pursue recruitment and conduct any interviews for junior secretariat roles while the interviews for the two senior posts (Strategy & Governance Manager & Chief Executive Officer) would be undertaken by relevant Board Members.

- **Item 14: AOB**

Approved request for the Chairman to provide a letter of support for Keele University's Keele Deal.

SA advised Board Members that the secretariat would shortly receive details from Stoke City Council Cabinet that would enable the notice of Resolution on amendments to the Articles of Association to be circulated. This should be circulated in the next few days.

### **5. Chair's Update and Delegated Decisions**

The chair reminded attendees that the government and local authorities were currently in purdah so there may be questions that couldn't be answered at the meeting. AR updated the group on the recent meeting he and JC had held with Stephen Jones and Jenny Dibden, who was present.

A letter had been received from Jake Berry (Minister for the Northern Powerhouse & Local Growth) and Nadhim Zahawi (Minister for Business & Industry) relating to geographic boundaries. SJ had made it clear that government would ultimately set the decision on boundaries but if LEPs resolve the issue themselves by 12<sup>th</sup> December, they would receive some of the funding that had been held back. An explanation of the impact on SSLEP on Districts aligning with GBSLEP was provided for the benefit of new Board Members.

## **6. LEP Board Induction**

The Board accepted the recommendation, subject to Disc Profile results, of appointing Caroline Brown (Caja Ltd) and Hannah Ault (Valentine Clays) to the Board. AR declared an interest that Caroline Brown was currently a client of his company, risual. WD advised that an induction programme was being put together for all new Board Members and mentoring would be provided for one new board member who had requested this approach. All members would be welcome to attend the induction session.

**Decision: Caroline Brown and Hannah Ault be appointed to the Board, subject to the Disc Profile results.**

**Action: WD to arrange Induction sessions for new members**

WD updated on a successful SAP meeting held on 19 November 2019, providing detail of the purpose of the group and its work programme to potential private sector members and partners present.

## **7. Local Industrial Strategy Update**

A presentation was given on progress to date and timescales. A discussion was held around potential new and innovate ways to engage with more businesses and future consultation events

**Action: AR and SB to liaise on potential events and business engagement**

## **8. Review of LEP Sub Groups**

A report was circulated, including a diagram of the current and potential future sub-groups. Now that private sector Board positions were being filled, the resilience of the sub-groups would be re-examined, with numbers boosted where needed and private sector chairs installed where groups currently didn't have one. Members were asked to consider offering support to MA on the Audit & Finance sub-group.

Following the recent government deep dive and process review undertaken by the new Independent Technical Appraiser, it was proposed that the work of the Programme Assurance Group would be merged into the Strategic Programme Management Group and board member representation would be boosted on that group.

AR asked Board Members to review the table in the report and express an interest in specific areas of work over the next two weeks. He would then consider and appoint members to groups. AB welcomed the clarity provided by the paper and stated SOTCC would welcome further involvement. TMcM noted the considerable value that had been provided by the SSLEP Innovation Council and suggested consideration be given to reinstating a similar arrangement to support development of LIS implementation. A discussion was held around the need to minimise the numbers of operational & advisory sub groups. While there was agreement on this, it was noted that some groups had funding-related governance requirements. Other required groups would be used as short-term Task & Finish groups. AR would lead a 5G Connection Task & Finish Group with Gary Thompson.

**Action: ALL to review the paper and Terms of Reference relating to groups [set out in the Assurance Framework <https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/about-us/governance/> ] and provide any comments on the proposed sub groups and express any interest in joining the sub groups to AR by 9 December 2019.**

## **9. City Deal & Growth Deal Programme**

### **9.i Outputs Dashboard**

The dashboard was circulated for information. Above the line details reflected the Local Growth Fund position, below the line details were a summary reminder of other work that

forms part of the LEP work programme and is provided in order to enable Board Members to raise questions or ask for a deep dive on specific areas. A deep dive into EU Programme work had previously been requested and would be brought to the next Board meeting. Clarification was still to be obtained on the LGF-related housing performance compared with the wider county area.

**Action: EU Programme Review to be brought to next meeting**

**Action: AR/JC to seek clarification on housing performance for next meeting**

#### **9.ii Update on High Risk LGF Scheme**

##### **Etruria Valley Growth Deal 1 Scheme:**

A summary of the scheme and progress update was provided by James Dunn. JC noted that this was a Dept for Transport (DfT) retained scheme and they were undertaking scheme appraisal. DfT was in touch with the LEP Secretariat. They advised that the full business case had been received on 19 November 2019 and anticipated that the appraisal could be undertaken over the next 3-4 weeks. DfT appraisers anticipated being ready to make a recommendation to Ministers in early January. This was subject to new Ministerial priorities. Options for ensuring Local Growth Funding could be spent as priority had been discussed. DfT would be considering options for providing their own funding. Members accepted the update, asked to see a cashflow forecast for the scheme showing the timetable for LGF, DfT and SoTCC funding and requested further detail on the developer's proposed time table at the next meeting. A decision on whether to continue to support the scheme was deferred until the outcome of the DfT scheme appraisal is received and confirmation of the ability to meet the spend profile is received.

**ACTION: Cashflow forecast showing expenditure profile (for each funding source) and detail of delivery risks to be provided at December Board meeting**

**ACTION: PC to request a member of the Balfour Beatty team present on the programme to the Executive Board at December's meeting**

##### **City East Link Road Growth Deal scheme:**

PC provided an overview of the scheme. Directors noted the content of the covering report and report of the independent technical appraiser (ITA; Hatch Regeneris) on the revised scheme. The ITA appraisal confirmed that requested expenditure on the revised scheme could be achieved by the 2021 deadline and that the scheme was considered to be good value for money based upon the transport improvements that would be realised and noted some 185 homes could be provided by deadline, with further homes to follow. The ITA recommended the inclusion of a number of conditions within any grant agreement, including detailed monitoring linked to delivery milestones. It was noted that match funding was required, in line with the LEP's Assurance Framework. This had been raised with the project promoter (SoTCC). Board members approved the scheme subject to a cashflow forecast showing expenditure (for each funding source), a detailed monitoring plan set against key milestones including meeting quarterly spend targets, with clawback arrangements in the event that milestones were not achieved/missed, confirmation of match funding, and confirmation of delivery timescales in respect of the housing outputs. The grant agreement to ensure delivery risk is with the promoter with failure to deliver against the agreed milestones resulting in reduced level of grant payments and/or clawback. An update should be brought to the Board in December

**DECISION: Directors approved the request for funding subject to inclusion of appropriate conditions in the grant agreement and the further information being provided.**

**Actions: LEP Secretariat to work closely with SoTCC officers on detail required for inclusion in any grant agreement, providing an update at December Board.**

#### **9.iii Cannock Chase & Silverdale Enterprise Centre**

**DECISION: Directors approved an increase in funding of £116,000, which would allow improvements to both Centres to proceed to timetable and enable opportunity to target businesses providing higher skilled jobs.**

#### **9.iv Growing Places Fund Update: Blythe Park**

**DECISION: Directors approved the request from the Growing Places Fund manager to award a £1.4m loan subject to recommended terms and conditions set out in the report.**

**10. Stoke-on-Trent Transforming Cities Fund Bid**

**DECISION: Directors approved the request for the Chairman to provide a letter of support for the funding bid.**

**11 LEP Risk Register**

Members noted the content of the updated Register and noted that the Full Risk Register would be brought to the December meeting for consideration.

**12. LEP Review Delivery Update: Annual Performance Review Improvement Plan Update**

An explanation of the report was given for the benefit of new members. Items still to be completed related to:

- Board recruitment (concluded earlier in meeting)
- Chair's recruitment – a pack and associated PR would be released on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. A third private sector Director was required to join the recruitment panel, which presently consisted of WD/JL/PA/AB. The possibility of asking a senior civil servant to join the panel for external advice was raised. WD proposed James Leavesley to Chair the process on behalf of the Board

**DECISION: JL to chair the Chair's recruitment Panel.**

- On-going recruitment of LEP staff
- Advisory Sub-Groups in place
- Review of High-risk projects
- 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Local Industrial Strategy
- Communications support – a draft tender was in place
- Website improvements – a comprehensive review would take place between January and March 2020. It was noted that a Phd student from Staffordshire University would be working with the secretariat to improve functionality and restructure the content, potentially building around LIS priorities.

**13. Any Other Business**

PF requested clarity on detail provided to Alternates (public sector and universities have named Alternates) attending the Executive Board meeting. It was noted that alternates are registered at Companies House and can vote when standing in for a Director. Alternates receive Board papers in order that they might keep up-to-date with business. Board meeting dates were also provided to alternates. Where a Director could not attend a Board meeting, they should approach their alternate or the secretariat to see if they can attend in their place.

ST updated members on the Town Deals for Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove and advised they may require LEP representation on their Boards.

**Action: ST to liaise with AR when requirements are known.**

***Stoke Station Power Upgrade – LGF – Confidential***

Members requested details of any variation to the Stoke Station Power Upgrade scheme be brought to next month's Executive Board meeting.

**Action: Stoke Station Power Upgrade to be brought to December Board meeting.**

**Date and time of next meeting:**

**Executive Board:** Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
6pm-8pm Venue TBC