**STOKE-ON-TRENT & STAFFORDSHIRE**

**LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**27th February 2020**

**LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADVISORY SUB-GROUPS**

1. **Introduction**

Following a period of public consultation in late January/early February, SSLEP is undertaking a final review of its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) prior to adoption. Government has not yet confirmed whether LISs will continue to be published as joint documents and this may affect the final detail and timetable. However, local partners and the Board have been clear that this should not prevent us from making early progress. Maintaining momentum and putting swiftly in place the appropriate implementation arrangements are vital if we are to achieve the objectives and priorities identified in the LIS.

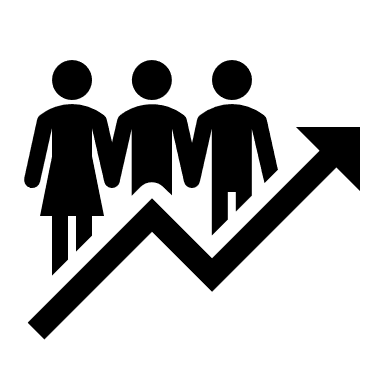
The purpose of this report is to seek Board agreement to proposed arrangements for advisory sub-groups that will drive progress on specific priorities. This approach will enable us to maximise the impact of specific skills of Board members and external expertise and allow for deeper focus than would be appropriate or manageable at full Board. These proposals build on the work that has taken place during 2019 to strengthen our networks and governance and will actively ensure leadership and involvement from our local businesses and key partners.

**2. A Framework for the Advisory Sub-groups**

The LIS for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire has been developed within the context of government priorities for the future UK economy, using robust evidence on local strengths and opportunities to contribute to increased productivity and economic growth. The results of our research and engagement with stakeholders suggest four areas of focus:



**Place**



**Growing Business**



**Future Workforce**



**Innovation**

An illustration of how these sub-groups fit into the LEP governance framework is provided in the chart at Appendix 1.

The role and scope of each sub-group is set out in the next section. Each is required to operate in line with the governance procedures and processes set out in the SSLEP Assurance Framework. Generic Terms of Reference, which incorporate the key requirements, are provided in Appendix 2. In addition, each sub-group will have a more detailed Specification, which will be specific to its remit and specialism. Specifications for each sub-group are provided in Appendices 3a-3d.

1. **Role of the Sub-groups**

The role of the sub-groups is advisory and will make recommendations to the Board, which will retain overall responsibility for investment decisions and progress of the LIS as a whole. The areas of work have been organised into the four sub-groups, recognising that some activities will be relevant to more than one sub-group. Chairs will be expected to share information and work collaboratively, coordinating their efforts through a monthly governance call with the SSLEP Chair and CEO.

* 1. **Place**

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is a diverse place. Differentiated interventions will be required to meet the needs of our cities, towns and rural areas whilst combining to realise our ambitions for the area. We aim for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to be the highest quality environment for our businesses and those who live, work, study and visit here, addressing the challenges of climate change and opportunities for zero carbon transition.

This sub-group will bring together partners with local knowledge and expertise in what works best for their areas, ensuring that interventions meet local requirements. The remit of the sub-group will include transport, housing, enabling disadvantaged communities, natural capital, culture, leisure and tourism. It will also work to ensure a joined-up approach to geographically specific interventions that complement other government place-based initiatives (such as town deals) and where regionwide programmes of investment are most effective, but need a clear local focus (for example on incubator space or enterprise support).

* 1. **Future Workforce**

Our ambition is for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to be a place where people can thrive and benefit from economic growth. Our businesses need access to skills and talent, so we aim to widen our potential labour market through: retaining more of the many skilled people who come here to study; attracting new people into the area to work; retraining and upskilling our experienced workers. This sub-group will build on the work of the Skills Advisory Panel and sector groups to ensure strategic alignment with the LIS in creating a workforce for the future. We will work with businesses and providers to develop pathways into work and progression in work, ensuring that our skills system is future-fit.

* 1. **Innovation**

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire has recognised strengths in manufacturing, logistics and energy, making the area a great location for the UK to test and implement transformative technologies and approaches. We aim to: grow our expertise in business innovation and excellence; increase demand and capacity for innovation across our whole business base; and help firms of all sectors to scale and grow through innovation.

Taking a strategic approach, we will identify the right commercial opportunities, establish a clear pipeline and build business demand for innovation. Alongside private sector research and development, our universities have excellent and growing links with local businesses and neighbouring centres of excellence. The sub-group will engage with these partnerships to maximise our investment options in innovation. Priority project development areas that have already been identified include AI/digital transformation, energy and clean growth, including our unique opportunities explored in our City Deal.

* 1. **Growing Business**

Our ambition is for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to be the place of choice for people wanting to start, grow or locate their business. We aim to increase the numbers of new and scale-up businesses, raising productivity across all our sectors and promoting sustainable use of energy and resources. The remit of the sub-group will include high-growth business support and inward investment. There is an opportunity to build on successful services that are already in place, ensuring that support, including zero carbon transition, is targeted to drive business change and stimulate demand for advice and new approaches.

1. **Timeline for 2020-21**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Initiation of Advisory Sub-groups and Work Plan** | **Monitoring and Evaluation** |
| Apr 20 | 16th - Two of the four sub-groups (1&2 - to be named) to present their plans to Executive Board |  |
| May | 14th - The remaining two sub-groups (3&4 - to be named) to present their plans to Executive Board Executive Board to sign off all plans |  |
| Jun | Conference - Sub-group chairs' presentations and facilitation of breakout sessions | Monthly governance call (LEP Chair/CEO/Sub-group Chair) |
| Jul |  | Monthly governance call 16th - Sub-group Chairs' (1&2) bimonthly report to Executive Board |
| Aug |  | Monthly governance call |
| Sept |  | Monthly governance call 17th -Sub-group Chairs' (1,2,3&4) bimonthly report to Executive Board |
| Oct |  | Monthly governance call 15th - Sub-group Chairs' (3&4) bimonthly report to Executive Board |
| Nov |  | Monthly governance call 19th - Sub-group Chairs' (1&2) bimonthly report to Executive Board |
| Dec |  | Monthly governance call 17th - Sub-group Chairs' (3&4) bimonthly report to Executive Board |
| Jan 21 |  | Monthly governance call |
| Feb |  | Monthly governance call Sub-group Chairs' (1,2,3&4) bimonthly report to Executive Board |
| Mar |  | Monthly governance call  Evaluation of sub-groups - reviewing purpose and function, adapting to changing landscape |

1. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

* 1. The LEP Board endorses the proposals for the LIS Implementation Plan Advisory Sub-groups and the Specifications outlined in this report.
  2. A chair, vice-chair and lead officer for each Advisory Sub-group be agreed upon.
  3. The first meetings of the sub-groups be convened in March 2020, with meetings at least bimonthly thereafter.
  4. The proposals for the timeline be adopted.

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