

**LEP Company Executive Board Meeting
Michelin Tyres plc, Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 4EY
Thursday 27 February 2020
DRAFT Minutes**

Board Directors

Alun Rogers (Chair)	risual
Mohammed Ahmed	Homeserve
Cllr George Allen	Deputy Leader Regen & Planning, East Staffordshire Borough Council
Cllr Philip Atkins	Leader, Staffordshire County Council
Hannah Ault	Valentine Clays
Prof Liz Barnes	Vice-Chancellor, University of Staffordshire
Caroline Brown	Caja Group
Sinead Butters	Aspire Housing Ltd
James Leavesley (Vice Chair)	Leavesley Group
Prof Trevor McMillan	Vice-Chancellor, University of Keele
Cllr Simon Tagg	Leader, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

Advisory/Secretariat

Simon Ablewhite	SSLEP Accountable Body
Jacqui Casey	Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP

In Attendance

Martin Hamilton	Chief Executive, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Mark Parkinson	Staffordshire County Council

Apologies

Cllr Abi Brown	Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Wendy Dean	Strategi Solutions
Paul Farmer	Wade Ceramics
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Leader, Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Oates	Portfolio Holder Heritage & Growth, Tamworth Borough Council
Jon Rouse	General Manager, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Andrea Whitworth	BEIS

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. AR noted that the meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies

These were noted.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were raised.

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

The minutes of the 19 December 2019 meeting were agreed to be a fair and accurate record of the meeting. Under *Matters Arising* it was noted that a LEP business representative was still sought for the Kingsgrove Town Deal Board. This was currently being undertaken by the Interim Partnership Manager.

Action: Board Members were asked to raise their interest with the LEP Secretariat.

Electronic decisions from the 19 December were confirmed as follows:

- **Item 6. LEP Local Industrial Strategy**

To issue the draft LIS for public consultation early in the New Year, following amends to improve clarity.

- **Item 8. Review of LEP Sub Groups**

To agreed Chair and Vice Chair allocations for the Operational Sub Groups:

Audit & Finance: Chair M Ahmed; Vice Chair C Brown.

Strategic Programme Management Group: Chair J Leavesley; Vice Chair S Butters.

LEP Growth Hub Steering Group: Chair H Ault

Make It in Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Steering Group: Chair S Williams; Vice Chair A Rogers.

- **Item 9. Full Risk Register**

To add a new risk in relation to uncertainty around new government economic policy approaches and to hold a separate session to examine risk in detail.

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

AR advised that a further joint letter (dated 4 February) had been received from Stephen Clarke (Minister of Housing, Communities & Local Government) and Nadhim Zahawi (Minister for Business & Industry) relating to geographic boundaries and asking for a further attempt at local resolution, reporting back by end of February 2020. A meeting had been held with Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP and Worcestershire LEP on 19 February, with a Chief Executive follow up meeting the next week, to discuss options and opportunities to work more closely in improving the resilience of all LEPs involved. No scenario put forward was felt to resolve the issue to everyone's satisfaction. Individual letters were subsequently sent which included a request for a meeting with the Ministers to explain the position.

AR outlined other activity he had been involved in on behalf of the LEP over the previous month. A Board Induction Workshop Session had been held with 4 new board members on 19 February. Two existing board Members had also taken advantage of the session to refresh. All were asked to put forward topics for discussion at short, pre-Board seminar sessions.

Action: Board members to provide details of areas of governance, policy or delivery on which they would wish to hold further discussion and detail.

6. **LEP Local Industrial Strategy:**

Digital Staffordshire

LB updated the Board on the Staffordshire 5G Region work.

Draft Strategy Consultation Responses

There was good cross representation of groups responding. The document content had been received very positively. The LIS Steering Group had considered the detailed responses the previous day and concluded that there was a need to focus on three areas in any re-working, as follows:

1. Precision on the uniqueness of the offer (what's special about our county, city and towns)
2. More precise in the ambition
3. Highlighting the game-changers.

The expectation is that the SSLEP LIS will go to the LISA panel in March (*Subsequently notified as 11 March 2020*). AR noted plans for further engagement with local MPs. The Board had confidence that Metro Dynamics were working through the detailed feedback received to determine how the comments might fit within the strategic document. Board Members would receive an updated LIS together with details of how comments have been addressed in the next few days.

LIS Implementation Planning: Arrangements for advisory Sub Groups

AR noted the LIS Steering Group discussion around *Place*. It was considered that further work was needed on this and so work would commence on Future Workforce, Innovation & Growing Business, with Place following slightly behind. It was envisaged that the groups would work of up to 12 months against a set of tasks & deliverables, ensuring they were focused. They would report progress to April & May Board with a view to gaining Board approval for high level implementation plans that can be presented and tested at the Annual Conference in June.

Decision: Board Directors agreed the following leads for the three Groups:

Innovation: Chair T McMillan; Vice Chair H Ault

Growing Business: Chair H Ault; Vice Chair L Barnes

Future Workforce: Chair L Barnes; Vice Chair S Butters

7. Draft Operational Budget 2020/21

Board members were taken through the details of the core & match funding, the core funding application process and areas of allocation. It was noted that the draft budget would be used as a basis for the application. Any subsequent alterations to that budget would be reported back to Board for agreement. Specific attention was drawn to the restructure of the Secretariat and recommendation to merge the CEO and strategy & Governance Manager posts. This would enable further funds to be set against the LIS Implementation work.

Decision: Board Directors approved the draft Core Budget for 2020/21 and revised Secretariat structure.

8. City Deal & Growth Deal Programme

MA noted that only 8% of the LGF has been spent this year. Underspend related predominantly to funding allocated to the two lagging projects. An update on these was provided as follows:

- CELR: This scheme has been contracted and has now moved into delivery. This is the first scheme to be contracted using the revised grant agreement which has been put in place as part of our LEP review. This agreement strengthens the clawback arrangements and provides greater detail on requirements on branding. The CELR agreement incorporated requirements agreed at the November 2019 LEP Board in relation to closer monitoring on detailed milestones and clawback on under performance.
- Etruria Valley Link Road: DfT had been in touch and a decision on the due diligence was anticipated by the March Board.

It was reported that 96.8% of LGF had been contracted. This included the i54 extension project. Outstanding contracts were in the final stages of completion and anticipated to be completed by end of March. Stoke & Staffordshire partners, the LEP Programme Manager, S151 Officer & legal colleagues were thanked for undertaking the contracting at pace. This update had been fed through the CLGU in the Annual Performance review paperwork.

9. Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone Strategic Implementation Plan

Item was deferred until March meeting in view of the absence of AB and JR, whose previous meeting had overrun.

10. LEP Risk Register

MA noted that Strategic Risk 3, relating to development of the secretariat, should be closed and a new risk added in relation to the timely appointment of a CEO. The CEO post was undergoing job evaluation. It was confirmed that a recruitment panel would be used to make this appointment. SB noted interest in being involved in recruitment.

Lack of funding and lack of clarity over future funding continued to be an issue. There was a need to explore mitigation in full detail. Possible re-wording of the Strategic Risk 7 was needed to better explain issues and impacts.

Decision: JC to review Strategic Risks to reflect views provided.

11. LEP Review: Sub Group Revised Terms of Reference

Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone Project Board: ToR was agreed subject to alteration of typo on representation from Newcastle-under-Lyme council which should read 1 councillor and 1 officer.

Audit & Finance: MA requested interest from 1 public sector non-executive to join the two private sector board directors on the group.

Strategic Programme Management Board: JL noted discussion held on the draft ToR. In respect of voting members he sought support to alter the draft to read 3 private sector board members and 2 public sector non-exec members. In respect of observers, the need for consistency in public sector non-executive representation was appreciated. This would maximise the opportunity for the Group members draw on specialist advice at each meeting with regard to a range of queries from strategic fit of new schemes to performance management issues on existing projects & programmes.

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

Of the 7 outstanding areas for action, three had been completed: Board induction had taken place earlier in the month and the LIS Sub Groups and SPMG Chairmanship and terms of reference has been included on this board agenda and agreed. None of the outstanding issues relate to compliance. The four remaining points were as follow:-

- Secretariat staff on LEP emails (recent attempt to transfer caused interference with Growth Hub telephone line; problem currently under review by SCC IT Team)
- Comms Plan in place by end of March (the Partnership Manager was pursuing this working with H Ault)
- CEO's job description had been agreed with the new Chair, was currently undergoing job evaluation and would be advertised as soon as possible.
- Due diligence was expected to be completed on Etruria Valley by mid March.

AR noted the need to make a further Board Appointment during April 2020.

The 3 February 2020 Annual Performance Review meeting note had been circulated and attention was drawn to new actions agreed with BEIS at the meeting, as follows:

- The company secretary function to become more visible at Board Meetings
- Annual Local Growth Funds expenditure forecasting for 2020/21 to be reviewed by end of May
- Executive Board to be better sighted on City Deal projects – noted this is on the March meeting Agenda
- Forward planning meeting with Chair, Partnership Manager and BEIS to examine further development of the LEP.

SB requested further detail on the approach being taken on LEP-related auditing.

Decision: SA/JC to circulate all Audit reports for the past year to new Board Members for information.

13. Forward Plan

This would now appear on the agenda as a standing item, giving Board Members opportunity to plan their programme of work together. HA requested Nicola Kent's attendance at a future meeting to take the Board through the work that the LEP's Growth Hub was undertaking on their behalf and ensure the Board can steer and influence the programme of work going forward.

Action: Growth Hub item to be added to Forward Plan.

14. Any Other Business

LB noted that University of Staffordshire was working with the Colleges to respond to the wave 2 expression of interest on Institutes of Technology. AR requested LEP involvement in discussions.

The consultation on freeports was briefly noted and it was considered that a response should be made. SW noted that the Chambers of Commerce were responding

Action: Secretariat to prepare a LEP response to the consultation.

JL requested that clarity be sought on the A38 arrangements for the period of construction on HS2.

Action: JC to pursue response.

The meeting closed 7.30pm.

Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 19 March 2020 6pm-8pm

Venue: LEP Drawing Room, Judges' Chamber, Martin Street, Stafford ST16 2LH.