

Thursday 17th December 2020

4pm-6pm

MS Teams Meeting with Dial In Option

AGENDA

Open Meeting			
Item	Subject	Lead	Report Status/Timing
1	Introductions	Alun Rogers	5 mins
2	Apologies		
3	Declarations of Interest		
4	Notes of the previous meeting and any matters arising		
5	Chairs Update and Delegated Decisions	Alun Rogers	5 mins
10 mins			
Strategy			
6	Mid Year Reflections: Thinking Back, Looking Forward Comprehensive Spending Review, Conference, Delivery Plan updates, Annual Performance Review, Annual Report, Celebrating Success <i>Update: verbal</i>	Alun Rogers / All	Discussion 15 mins
7	Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) Update: (i) Kickstart Scheme – <i>Update: verbal</i>	Liz Barnes / Secretariat	Information 5 mins
8	DiT Export and Investment Policy Emerging Investment Strategy – <i>Update: verbal</i>	Karen Ball / Alex Parker DiT	Information 15 mins
35 mins			
Delivery			
9	Growth Hub DiT Export Advisor Advanced Manufacturing Cluster Plan	Hannah Ault/ Simon Rainer / Robert Lawley	Information 15 mins
10	Export Advisor Services Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce – <i>Update: verbal</i>	Sara Williams / Robert Lawley	Information 15 mins
11	Growth Hub Steering Committee Business support for Brexit Transition – <i>Update: verbal</i>	Hannah Ault / Nicola Kent	Information 10 mins
12	Marketing & Communications: <i>Update: verbal</i>	Hannah Ault / Clare Abbotts	Information 10 mins
50 mins			
Governance			
13	Equality & Diversity Champion: Update <i>Update: paper</i>	Sara Williams	Discussion 10 mins

14	Resourcing the LEP Secretariat <i>Covid-19 Resilience Planning</i>	Alun Rogers / Mark Parkinson	Decision 10 mins
15	Forward Plan	All	5 mins
			25 mins
16	Any Other Business	All	5 mins

Forward Plan

Executive Board		Meeting Date	
		18 February 2021 / March 2021	
Lead Board Member/ Officer:	Item Name:	Time:	Recommendation:
A Rogers & Sub-Group Leads	Emerging Implementation Plan incorporating Covid Recovery, International Trade, Future Workforce; Growing Businesses; Innovation; Place		Discussion
A Rogers / Liz Barnes	5G Update		Information
A Brown	CVEZ		Information
A Brown	Transforming Cities Fund		Information
Tbc	Future High Street Fund / Towns Fund		Information
J Leavesley / Secretariat	SPMG: Getting Building Fund update		Information
A Rogers / Secretariat	Annual Performance Review		Information
A Rogers	CEO Recruitment Committee		Information
A Rogers / Secretariat	Annual Report		Information
A Rogers / Secretariat	Assurance Framework: v0.9 updates		Decision
A Rogers / Secretariat	Midlands Engine / Connects		Information
M Ahmed / Secretariat	Audit & Finance Committee: Risk Register		Decision

**LEP Company Executive Board Meeting
via MS Teams conference call
Thursday 19 November 2020
Draft Minutes**

Board Directors

Alun Rogers (Chair)	risual
James Leavesley (Vice Chair)	Leavesley Group
Mohammed Ahmed	Homeserve
Hannah Ault	Valentine Clays
Prof Liz Barnes	Vice-Chancellor, University of Staffordshire
Caroline Brown	Caja Group
Cllr Abi Brown	Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Sinead Butters	Aspire Housing Ltd
Emma Catterall	former Divisional Director of Alton Towers Resort
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Leader, Stafford Borough Council
Prof Trevor McMillan	Vice-Chancellor, University of Keele
Cllr Jeremy Oates	Portfolio Holder Heritage & Growth, Tamworth Borough Council
Cllr Simon Tagg	Leader, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Cllr Alan White	Leader, Staffordshire County Council
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

Advisory/Secretariat

Simon Ablewhite	SSLEP S151 Officer
Mark Parkinson	SSLEP Chief Executive
Jo Kemp	SSLEP Secretariat/Business Engagement Officer
Sam Hicks	SSLEP Strategy & Research/LIS Lead
Lucy Sefton	SSLEP Secretariat/Governance and Project

In Attendance

Clare Abbotts	Senior Campaigns Officer, Staffordshire County Council
Ewa Bloch	Innovate UK
Andrew Briggs	Strategic Manager for Energy, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Mark Connell	Strategic and Partnerships Manager, Stoke-On-Trent City Council
Tim Clegg	CEO, Stafford Borough Council
Phil Creswell	Director of Place Growth and Prosperity, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Brian Edwards	Leader, South Staffordshire District Council
Martin Hamilton	CEO, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Jon Rouse	City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Rob Salmon
Andrea Whitworth

S151 Officer County Treasurer, Staffordshire County Council
Assistant Director, Cities & Local Growth Unit

Apologies

Cllr George Allen
Karen Gosden (invited guest)

Deputy Leader, East Staffordshire Borough Council
DWP

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SA (S151 Officer) confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies

These were noted, above.

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

4. Notes of the previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Chair's Update and Delegated Decisions

The Chair informed the Board of his activity with the following this month:

- Karen Gosde, DWP Area Director, Central England/Head of Place, West Midlands
- Steven Jones, CLGU
- Stafford Chamber Local Area Advisory Board
- Silicon Stoke
- District & Borough CEO & Leader one-to-ones have continued
- Commonwealth games CEO, who is to attend the December Board meeting
- Midlands Engine Roundtable
- Ministerial Roundtable with Nadhim Zahawi
- CEO recruitment

The CEO provided an update on activity since the last meeting and upcoming, in particular attendance at a variety of networking and consultation events at local, regional and national levels, including:

- Engagement in the Business Crime Strategy refresh, with JCB & JLR
- Countywide Redundancy Task Force
- Economy & Prosperity Recovery Meeting
- Growth Deal and Economic Growth District Directors
- Staffordshire's Future Economy and Enterprise - All Party Working Group listening session (c/o SCC)

- West Midlands Cluster group - Coventry lead, working at pace with BEIS nationally
- DIT really active in past month – proposed to bring deep dive session to Board in December
- MHCLG Planning White Paper, Ministerial Roundtable c/o LEP Network

6. Emerging Implementation Plan incorporating Local Industrial Strategy, Covid-19 & International Trade.

AR advised that the Covid-19 Taskforce still meets, providing an overview of partnership activity;

- The Growth Hub is increasing capacity, via further advisors being recruited. AW added that £2.4m to be shared across Growth Hubs has been increased to £6.4m to cope with the increased demand.
- A Civil Contingency Group/Staffordshire Prepared is mobilising.

7. Skills advisory Panel (SAP) Update:

(i) Institute of Technology

LB provided an update on the IoT Phase 2. No LEP input is needed at this stage.

(ii) Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Each year the SAP will conduct a survey to support the LEP. At present this is being carried out on 'careers' with talks being held with education & work placement providers, to ascertain the current position around progression in these areas. A deep dive into the following topics is ongoing;

- What education providers perceive as barriers
- Placement suppliers - What placements are sought
- Working with employers to ascertain what they want
- Talking to young adults to ascertain their aspirations

The next agenda item for surveying is to be 'place'.

(iii) Kickstart

Plenty of applications have been made but there is a lack of information coming back from DWP. LB has written to the DWP to attempt to learn this information, with no response to date.

The Chair & CEO are developing a relationship with Karen Gosden (DWP), who might be a useful contact to escalate this issue.

SW added that Chambers now have clusters of willing companies secured, but as the smaller ones are not all fiscally secure this might cause problems. There is no contract from these SMEs with the DWP, as Chambers are a conduit. Chambers have been working with Stoke MPs & established potential risks at present.

JL advised that Kate Griffiths MP (Burton-on-Trent) is presenting a Kickstart webinar to promote this in the East Staffordshire area.

LB reported rumours of some companies trying to use the scheme for Christmas staff, which is clearly not what was intended.

8. Innovate UK

TM introduced Ewa Bloch (EB) of Innovate UK., which forms part of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) working on the R&D roadmap & Levelling-Up agenda.

EB shared presentation on screen in which she highlighted;

Innovate UK is the UK's national innovation agency, their remit being to connect businesses in order to promote innovation. Budget of £7bn to spend per annum. They:-

- provide funding to business; non-monetary support to ensure collaborative working; promote demand led innovation through competition; support & encourage nationwide knowledge transfer - B2B networks via Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) & Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), which is busy helping business to pivot & future plan.
- are at the heart of delivering implementation of Industrial Strategy which considers; Ageing Society; AI & Data Economy; Future of Mobility and Clean Growth.
- Provide a Covid response to help innovative companies. e.g. for cashflow & project extensions as swift reaction to challenges.

A £750m package was announced in April 2020, for Fast Start, Sustainable Innovation Fund, Continuity Grants & Innovation Loans, so there is scope to help Staffordshire businesses.

EW shared some statistics via slides, with the caveat that they require internal verification prior to publishing. Information, as follows:-

- With a 10,000 business population, Stoke & Staffordshire are 35/39 in LEPs, so improvement is needed.
- 67 projects led by Oxfordshire vs. 7 here
- At fundable rates (if money was no object) projects of high quality sees just 50% of ours being at that threshold.
- Funding for LEP area 2014/15 - £14m for us, which is also low.
- LEP participants since 2014/15 for companies of any size who seek funding:- Stoke & Staffs = 101 vs. Coventry @ 559 & Greater Birmingham @ 519.
- Lucideon, MedPlay, Cobra Biologics, Wells Plastic & Health2Works are in our area. Innovate are happy to nurture more.

MA observed that this links in with the British Business Bank & it's funding streams trying to interest businesses to work with Universities, questioning what is happening elsewhere differently.

EB explained that other places have a stronger enterprise base, collaborative supply chains & infrastructure is also in place. However, we have Staffordshire & Keele universities, so improvement can happen.

TM stated that the Innovation sub-group have had similar discussions. A meeting to consider where we can look & learn from successes inside & outside of our area is needed. A request for information on the successful grants was made. EB will provide this/arrange a meeting with TM.

AR advised that risual, used Innovate UK recently & he can praise it.

9. European structural & Investment Funds (ESIF) Committee:

JL, as the new Chair of the ESIF Committee, introduced the topic by explaining he would like to push for impetus on what will replace ESIF & establish what the Shared Prosperity Fund will look like.

MC updated the Board on the current position of the ESIF Programme. A brief background to the programme was given, for the benefit of new Directors, confirming that ESIF is made up of three streams of funding

1. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),
2. European Social Fund (ESF) and
3. European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), each with its own allocation

The main programme, ERDF, aims to invest over £80M into the LEP area, covering innovation, business support, carbon reduction, flooding & biodiversity.

It was confirmed that in comparison to other Transition Areas funding allocations & spend were very good and exceeded other LEP's performance across all funding priorities.

Similarly, in terms of outputs the ERDF Programme was in a healthy position in being able to meet its contracted outputs. In addition, it was confirmed that MHCLG are now taking a more rounded approach to accessing the impact of a project look at a more outcome-based assessment.

The ESF programme (circa £70M) was also performing well, since its establishment the programme has delivered 3,176 job outcome, 275 apprenticeships & aided 27,515 learners. In addition, the ESF programme had been key to the ability to create a redundancy service within the LEP area.

MC confirmed that all the underspend from the programme went into a National Reserve Fund, which has subsequently been used to help our Cities and towns with Opening Up the High Streets Funding & with a small grant programme for businesses & the tourism sector specifically which has been operating through the SSLEP's Growth Hub

MC emphasised that the key message was the current scale and scope of the programme which will be ending gradually up to 2023. It had been anticipated that the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund would have been clarified by now, but no Government announcement has yet been made on its establishment.

LB – raised the issue under ESF around impact. At present the data provided to the LEP is not granular enough to enable policy decisions to be made and there is a need to understand providers who are performing & where people progress to in terms of jobs, so we can select the good providers.

MC confirmed that City and County officers have good relationship with DWP & that this was a long running issue in that DWP have been cautious in releasing any granular information which in turn hampers our knowledge of what is happening on the ground.

JL thanked MC for presentation, adding that he was aware that farmers don't yet know new rules around biodiversity Post-Brexit & that they require further clarification.

SW commented that UKSPF ought to be more outcome based, more holistic, rather than being output driven.

AW commented that we may only have 1 year of funding for UKSPF won't know for sure for a while.

ACTION - AW confirmed that a meeting was in her diary for early December and that the data sharing issue would be addressed within this meeting if MC and LB could forward more detail around the data being sought.

10. Transforming Cities Programme Group

Jon Rouse & Andrew Briggs presented an update to the board of the City Deal District Heat Network (DHN)

DHN was a long-term programme conceived in approximately 2011 & coming to more tangible fruition by 2016 under a Section 31 Grant for a pilot project. Conceptually it is an interesting project & remains a young concept in the UK for energy from natural gas.

There are 3 parts to programme:

1. Sustainable generation of fuel
2. Distribution
3. Supply to consumers

This is being delivered in an uncertain market context at present, with reliance on the price point of natural gas, which has decreased significantly at present. The decarbonisation agenda will probably increase this so CHN may then move forward again.

AB explained the simplicity of the DHN process - moving heat around via hot water in pipes, with an interface unit at the target buildings to heat the building. Traditional boilers will be replaced with heat interface units. These are smaller, simplified systems, requiring less maintenance.

DHN is challenging. Up to 90% of central heating in Sweden Denmark & Germany is via this type of source vs. only 2% here at present. Our aim is 20% in the next few years.

1900GWh of heat is consumed in the City, 95% of which is from burning gas. This is imported at great cost. Heat demand has been scrutinised in 120 targeted buildings; The Public Sector demand is high, as they operate large buildings in the City & can keep an eye on figures for this purpose.

Delivery has not been easy. Over 300 years of Industry in Stoke has thrown up 'surprises' when digging up roads. Continuation & improvement of pipe laying is planned, with a view to using the opportunity to install other infrastructure, like fibre networks, at the same time. The DHN pipework has an expected life of 100 years at present.

Options considered for the heat source are:

- Geothermal – high capital investment, but provides investment opportunity for private sector, once volume of demand is reached.
- Heat from waste plant is an alternative. 2024-25 is timescale at present.
- Combined Heat & Power units (CHP)

DHN is planned for the University Quarter area first, the latest phase has been delivered under both budget & timescale, during this Covid crisis. Budget resources are presently OK but might change. Most jobs to date have been under development & construction. The next 12 months should see decent heat outcomes, with growth opportunities for the domestic area.

Overview of issues to date:

- Deep geothermal still an option - hoping for multiple heat options
- University Quarter not yet ready
- Heat tariff costs are not currently attractive to customers
- Lockdown slowed things
- Construction price increases
- Supply chain from EU may be an issue - hope sourced in the UK
- Shortage of skills & operators around the system at present
- Cost of infrastructure conversion

SB observed it had been an interesting and complex project, enquiring what has been learned, if we would do it again, and if technology has moved in a different direction now.

JR confirmed that he had asked the same question as incoming City Director. On balance yes, being good for decarbonisation, as the rest of Europe can't be wrong. Patience is needed for realisation of benefits.

AB added that Stoke-on-Trent has higher energy requirements due to type/age of buildings existing in the area. It is a great project but clearly looks into the future.

SW agreed that low carbon will drive investment If we can lead it will attract other benefits, Chambers have worked well with AB over year & DHN could be a fundamental game changer for Stoke-on-Trent.

11. LEP Annual Conference:

HA reported that personal invites have now been issued to Board members & introduced Clare Abbotts, who has worked hard preparing the conference.

CA appraised the Board of this being our 1st virtual conference & we are hoping for attendance of 800 - 1000 over the 2 days. The conference will be possible to view online for up to 6 months afterwards too. An overview on screen was shown of how the system will work, navigating via left hand icons on the screen once logged in.

A virtual brochure is on LEP website. Delegates can network virtually in advance of conference. 'Contributors' tab showcases individual panellists/hosts & their involvement during the conference. There are 2 x guest speakers (Carol Shanahan & Jenny Campbell). We have Board member, Growth Hub, Skills Hub, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, Councillor & local SME owners' involvement. Approximately 100 delegates signed up within a few days of the invite going live.

Information will be provided in Friday 20th's Advocacy briefing – a request was made for Board members to support this by sharing amongst their peers & networks.

12. Strategic Programme Management Group (SPMG) update:

JL provided an overview of the SPMG. Projects are progressing well; the only complex issue being Drakelow, but a developer should be announced shortly. The Tamworth project had successfully secured alternative private sector funding so there is an opportunity to use the funding on contingency projects. A geographic spread of where money is being spent was shown to the Board. Clusters are in Stoke-on-Trent & Stafford.

LGF projects all moving ahead, with three still working through the process; in particular a £1.2m flood mitigation project delivered by the Environment Agency in Stoke-on-Trent which had consumed the SPMG's time at the last meeting. The Environment Agency are reworking the scheme based on a better understanding of the data, but this has meant the spending profile is concentrated into the final spending quarter. The implication being that the funding might have to be withdrawn and redirected into its contingency scheme rather than lost to the LEP area if it cannot deliver on time. SPMG will consider latest position again in January 2021. The other projects that are at risk, but making reasonable progress to take mitigation action are:

1. £1.25m Blythe Park
2. £100k Stoke station power upgrade

13. Audit & Finance Committee:

MA showed slides of extracts from the SSLEP Outputs Dashboard, which had been summarised for ease.

LGF targets will be exceeded, but after the due date. CVEZ has £90m & Growing Places Fund has £79m private sector investment making good news stories. ERDF was covered earlier by MC.

How we deliver on time moving forward is something which will be discussed, but most projects are performing on target.

An overview of the Risk & Issues Log was provided; Over October & November high & medium risks decreased; Skills KPIs are also delivering. e.g Hilton hotel opening in Hanley.

An issue is if LGF money might not get spent. The A&F committee have been asked for assurances from the S151 Officer (SA) that we can spend this elsewhere. This will therefore come off next month's Risk & Issues.

[The matter of the mitigation action around the Stoke-on-Trent Eastern Link Road was raised by MA under AOB].

14. Growing Places Fund:

Deferred to December's meeting due to time constraints.

15. Scrutiny Committee Arrangements for 2020/21: Update

The LEP annual Scrutiny Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday 23rd November, with approximately 20 Cllrs on panel (including a representative invite to all eight District & Borough Councils). The arrangement was that AR will front questions from the committee, and will have the S151 Officer and Chief Executive also in attendance to assist with any governance type

questions if necessary. The papers are now published. MP requested to the LA Executive Board Members (and alternates) that if their Local Authority has not yet confirmed representation, please try to contact the committee clerk at Stoke-on-Trent City Council to ensure that a delegate is added. However, further opportunities to appoint to the scrutiny committee will come around next year and also to refresh the terms of reference through the Board / update the Assurance Framework as appropriate.

16. Resourcing the LEP Secretariat:

Deferred to December's meeting due to time constraints.

17. Forward Plan

MP advised of a full agenda for the next meeting, to now include the two items brought forward from this one. Key items include:-

December

- Scrutiny Committee will have met, so outcomes will be reported
- 5G update scheduled.
- Equality & Diversity Champion to provide an annual report (per section 2.3.4.4 of the AF).
- Growing Places updates due (B/F from November).
- Resourcing the LEP Secretariat (B/F from November).

January

No meeting

18. AOB

Cllr AB appraised the Board of;

- a. Powering Up The City Strategy having been passed on Tuesday at a Stoke-on-Trent City Council cabinet meeting.
- b. Stoke-on-Trent City Council's 'Assistant Director Investment, Planning & Regeneration' post is to be filled. The interview panel is scheduled for Wednesday 9th December - AR is to sit on this panel.

MA – Stoke-on-Trent City East Link Road project awaiting spending forecast, requested that JR assist in expediting this from a mitigation perspective [relevant to Item 13 A&F Committee Update].

Cllr ST detailed that;

- a. Kidsgrove's Town Deal bid has been submitted. He will issue a link to the Board.
- b. Newcastle Borough Council are pleased to learn of the LEP Scrutiny Committee, but the invite wasn't sent via their Democratic Services, so he didn't know about it until this week.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 17th December 2020 @ 4pm

Location: Via MS Teams.

**Company Executive Board Meeting
17 December 2020**

**Advanced Manufacturing Cluster, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Action Plan Summary**

Background

1. Simon Rainer is hosted by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce as Cluster Adviser for the Advanced Manufacturing sector. His principal reporting lines are with the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) Growth Hub and West Midlands International Trade LLP.

Objectives

2. The following objectives form the core focus for the Advanced Manufacturing Cluster Action Plan:
 - 1 cluster campaign (including a minimum of 4 events)
 - A minimum of 20 Service Deliveries (as evidenced on DataHub) after engaging with a
 - A minimum of 50 businesses as recording those engagements as interactions.
 - At least 2 cases studies per cluster (before 31st March 2021)

Additionally: To engage with both High Export Potential clients (HEP) and non-HEP clients to offer a consultative service for the purpose of increasing or initiating export revenues

Action Plan Summary

Advanced Manufacturing Definition

3. Advanced Manufacturing (AM) or smart value chain manufacturing is the use of innovative technologies and methodologies for improved competitiveness in the manufacturing sectors.

Communication Programme

4. With only a 4-month window (end of November to end of March) to complete the objectives, it is essential to make an immediate start in contacting prospective clients.
5. Using DIT DataHub and WMITLLP Knowledge Bank information, sector specific companies have been identified with a turnover in excess of £500k and supplemented by additional desk research to identify potentials where there has previously been no commercial contact.

6. This list has been edited by the Staffordshire Chamber's International Trade Team to ensure there is no duplication of effort/disrupt existing relationships.
7. Key HEP's such as JCB, Michelin, Perkins Engines, JLR, Fiskars (Wedgwood) and JCB have been deleted owing to ongoing ITA/Central relationships
8. With an initial 140 contacts, this will enable concentration of focus.
9. Segmentation has been a key factor in forming communication strategy.
10. The original thought process was to segment by industry type and develop commonality of message per sector – e.g. automotive vs medical technology where needs and markets would differ.
11. However, it is intended to adopt an alternative vertical marketing strategy in segmenting as follows:
 - Export Curious. These have been sourced from the West Midlands' LLP Knowledge Bank where there has been a known interaction to provide assistance and where no further contact/result has been recorded.
 - Unlisted on either the West Midland's LLP DataHub or Knowledge Bank Treated as new to market or new to DIT services. Also, companies new to the area or where contact details have changed.
 - Additional companies represent those who have previously exported in the last 5 years but where no further contact has been recorded - treated as Lapsed.
12. In all three segments, an initial tailored email (as part of the overall engagement strategy) will:
 - Introduce the cluster adviser
 - Reference to their last interaction/service delivery (e.g..... sought advice on USA market in 2019 as sourced from DataHub)
 - Introduce the Events programme (as described later) and encourage feedback for suggested new content
 - Email and telephone follow up
 - Incentivise cluster adviser review of their current export status and to identify new opportunities and pathways to relevant assistance
 - Account management – to ensure what has been agreed has been delivered

Events

13. Objectives in this role will be reached with a focus on encouraging the export curious to convert interest into action, the inactive to re-engage and stimulating new ideas with existing exporters. These to be achieved by a

programme of peer to peer webinar events to supplement the initial email campaign.

14. The following proposed plans have so far been discussed with the Stoke – on - Trent and Staffordshire International team and DIT Marketing and deemed “workable”.
15. Within the Stoke – on - Trent and Staffordshire area there are 5 companies who are identified as DIT West Midlands 2020 export champions and who all fall within the A&M sector.
 - Addfield Environmental
Designers and manufacturers of industrial incinerators specialising in energy recovery, waste disposal and thermal treatment. Products are distributed to more than 100 countries. Theme: Energy
 - Lucideon
Materials development and using advanced materials in the aerospace, ceramics, construction, energy and healthcare markets. Also, a Midlands industrial ceramics research partner with Midlands Engine. Theme: Advanced Materials
 - Addmaster
Supply of technically innovative additives for the plastics, paper, textile, paints and coating industries. Three Queen’s Awards for Innovation. Theme: Advanced Materials
 - Woolcool
Design and manufacture of insulated packaging for the food and pharma markets through the use of wool. Theme: Green Innovation
 - Elite KL
Design and manufacture (including rapid prototyping) of heating, cooling and power products for the railway, military, sports cars, construction and PSV markets. Theme: Engineering (Transport)
16. The aim is to hold a series of webinars featuring the above experienced exporters imparting their knowledge and experiences to the export curious.
17. Format will be a one-hour programme – 40 minutes of content and 20 minutes Q&A

Content:

- First time we exported
- Help provided by DIT to facilitate
- Obstacles faced
- Obstacles overcome

- How to expand upon original export success and find new markets
- How to develop export USP's – particularly innovation in design, technological advances and improving manufacturing techniques.
- How to export more effectively
- Explanation of the menu of DIT services, which could include market research, transition, web design, ITA support, improved access to USA and Chinese markets
- Explanation of the Midlands Region Internationalisation Fund (dependent on start date)
- Where and how to find the help
- Government policy
- Sustainable development
- Cluster adviser role to aid identifying needs and putting into action required export services

18. Those participating in the webinars will be

- Representative(s) from the featured companies
- A member from the Stoke – on - Trent and Staffordshire ITA team
- AM Cluster Adviser
- DIT representative as webinar facilitator

Success will be identified with the subsequent follow up to convert interactions with service deliveries

Approvals Process

19. The full plan is subject to:

- Approval from Steve Havins, DiT. Received
- Approval from Ian Harrison, DiT. Currently under review and awaiting sign off.
- SSLEP. Report submitted and awaiting sign off via Growth Hub Steering Group.

Advanced Manufacturing Cluster-Stoke – on- Trent and Staffordshire Activity Timeline

	Mid/End of November	Early December	Mid December	End of December	Mid December to Mid-January	Mid-January to End of January	End of January	February	March
Action Plan Finalised	Yellow								
Action Plan Approved	Yellow								
First Tranche Contact List finalised with names/details		Blue							
Action plan presented to SSLEP		Blue							
email sent to initial Contact List			Red	Red					
Interactions Recorded				Green	Green				
Finalised Events Action Plan to DIT for evaluation and implementation				Orange					
Cluster Campaign/4 events start to finish					Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	
Service Deliveries Recorded							Green	Green	Green
Case Studies Completed									Yellow
Ongoing Research to add new contacts within the AM sector	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

Report Commissioner: Simon Rainer, c/o SSLEP Growth Hub.

Job Title: International Cluster Adviser – Advanced Manufacturing SSLEP

Company Executive Board Meeting

Thursday 17 December 2020

The SSLEP Equality & Diversity Champion Report

Summary

1. This is the first report which is to review the current policy and presents an annual report on the work undertaken by the SSLEP.
2. This report suggests that the LEP could use its board members' experience to promote greater diversity and inclusion within the work of the LEP itself, within the private sector and add value to wider Staffordshire policy development and delivery, in line with the responsibilities of the role of the Equality and Diversity champion (see appendix a).
3. The LEP Board is asked to provide feedback on the report and to provide suggestions on the development of future actions.

Background

4. The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) ensures that business leaders are empowered to set a strategic course, determine local priorities and drive growth and job creation, working in partnership with the local authorities and government.
5. The SSLEP has a stated commitment to diversity and equality that understands that different people bring different ideas, knowledge and perspectives. The SSLEP has worked hard to epitomise diversity on the Board and so lead by example on good governance and leadership. As part of this approach Sara Williams from the Board has been appointed as its Equality & Diversity Champion to lead on issues of diversity and inclusion.
6. In order to deliver significant growth and productivity gains Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) aim to remove all barriers to achieving economic performance, resulting in tangible economic benefits to our businesses, residents, visitors, workforce and diverse communities. Our diverse communities will benefit from strong economic growth and no community will be excluded from full participation in economic life and progress.
7. Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristic, including race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and age.

8. Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people’s differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

9. SSLEP is dedicated to supporting a fully inclusive culture. We recognise that we have a role in promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination and seek to do this in the way we conduct ourselves and our business. The chart below indicates the different proportions of the population relating to protected characteristics.

Characteristic	Category	Staffordshire Population *	West Midlands	England
Age	39 or under	45%	51%	50%
	40-59	27%	25%	26%
	Age 60+	28%	24%	24%
Sex	Male	50%	50%	49%
	Female	50%	50%	51%
Ethnicity	White British	94%	79%	80%
	BAME	6%	21%	20%
Race, Religion or belief	Christian	68%	60%	59%
	No Religion	23%	22%	25%
	Other religions	3%	11%	9%
	Not stated	6%	7%	7%
Disability	Disabled (incl. long term health problem)	19%	19%	18%
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	93%	93%	93%
	LGBT **	7%	7%	7%

East Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent populations are 14% BAME

*Based on 2011 Census, ONS 2019 mid-year population estimates UK Government Estimates

** [UK Government estimate of LGBT across England and Wales](#)

10. The competitive advantage arising from local diversity will be harnessed to drive growth. Deloitte’s have projected a £100bn boost to the UK economy over the next 10 years can be achieved by narrowing the gender gap. Firms with gender balanced leadership teams are at least 15% more profitable, out-perform their peers and are 20% less likely to go bankrupt (by adding just one woman to the Board). The RSA indicate that BAME participation in top management roles and boards can add £24bn to the economy. So, as an

organisation responsible for setting strategies on economic growth, it is important for SSLEP to champion equality and diversity.

11. The direct impacts of the virus and the indirect impacts of lockdown are likely to have widened existing health inequalities in our communities and the pandemic has exposed inextricable links between health and wealth. The economic and social response to COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities in both physical and mental health. Young people’s mental health is a particular concern in light of their employment prospects, with a 250% increase on the previous year in those reporting suicidal thoughts. Also underlying health conditions have increased the risk of serious consequences from infection with 8.2 per cent of the region’s population (compared to 6.8% nationally) having diabetes - a condition reported on more than 20% of death certificates for those who have died from Covid-19. It is important that the LEP considers the health agenda as part of the discussion on equality, diversity and inclusion as an economic driver for the development of the region.

Diversity in SSLEP as an organisation

12. All organisations which employ LEP staff have regular Equality and Diversity training. The conditions of employment encourage flexible and agile working and the LEP have invested appropriately in the IT and infrastructure for their staff to work effectively from home.
13. From the team of 5, 4 are women.

The current position on the LEP Board and sub-groups is:

2020 -2021	Total number	% women	% BAME
Board*	16	43.8%*	6.25%
Subgroup Growing Business	12	66.7%	Not known
Subgroup Innovation	10	33.3%	Not known
Subgroup Future Workforce	14	50%	Not known
Subgroup Place	13	46%	Not known

14. Last year this was 41% when there were 17 Board members.
15. In order to get up to date data on subgroup members and ethnicity, it is suggested that this information is sought when members join.

Future developments

16. A tailored, bespoke SSLEP Equality Framework and Action Plan (closely aligned to our resources), could be produced to set an objective baseline of where the partnership is, and where it wants to be over the coming years.
17. This would provide the LEP with a framework in which to consider these issues and judge the impacts expected, in commissioning and allocating current and future funding. It will help with assessing how these topics will be evaluated and expectations of those funded through the LEP.
18. As an example of what could be included in the SSLEP Equality Framework and Action Plan, to be considered and then included as appropriate, here are some suggestions from research from organisations specialising in developing equality, diversity and inclusion plans:
 - i) Ensuring all marketing images and case studies are representative
 - ii) Understanding how to review equality and diversity issues in decision making
 - iii) Recognition of equality and diversity in strategy documents (including the LIS)
 - iv) The level of expectation and targets on equality and diversity to be applied through programmes, projects and investments (e.g. around apprenticeships in the delivery of funded initiatives; education on equality, diversity and inclusion in all business support). The LEP itself should track all data on members of staff and subgroups.
 - v) Championing best practice, especially in the private sector, and recognition of equality, diversity and inclusion in business awards
 - vi) Establishment of an advisory panel (in association with the work on social value) to look at ideas such as a good employment charter, educational outcomes, and support for increasing diversity across all decision-making bodies (e.g. local council, school governors, board appointments).
 - vii) A Social Value framework regarding procurement and links with the government's approach to social value for public spending.
19. During the writing of this report, it became clear that the role of LEPs and their remit is possibly changing. As a result of Covid-19 there are other areas which affect the economy which were possibly not considered when developing the National and Local Assurance Framework to ensure a compliance level which has been expected.
20. There is a strong link between the development of the LEPs' social value work and possible framework and the inclusion of equality and diversity in decision making. This is not least because of the government's review of the Green Book and the impact this will have on the ways in which public funds will be spent.

21. The conversations in the subgroups of the SSLEP Board indicate that we all wish to raise our governance aspirations to achieve excellence and be a beacon of good practise for other LEPs, our partners and the business community.
22. In particular, there is a need for more relevant data - finding and using data on the impact of the pandemic response will be necessary to prepare for recovery and renewal, in anticipation of the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper in early summer. We will need to understand the impact of national polices, such as the furlough and Kickstart, on our local economies and whom has been most affected. This will show how the LEP can better position itself within the UK Government's 'levelling up agenda' to secure better outcomes for the area.

Report Commissioner: Sara Williams

Job Title: SSLEP Equality and Diversity Champion / Chief
Executive Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

Appendix

The responsibilities of the Equality and Diversity Champion are:

- To promote awareness of equality and diversity issues and to enhance and embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the partnership
- To review the current policy and present an annual report on the progress of the LEP in encouraging diversity and how improvements can be made.
- To produce a diversity statement explaining how the LEP will ensure representation at board and sub-board level which is reflective of the local business community (including geographies, gender and protected characteristics). The statement should also set out how the LEP will monitor diversity at board level and explain what steps the LEP is taking to ensure diversity in its engagement with local communities and local businesses. The diversity statement should include a commitment to ensure that by 2020 at least one third of members of LEP boards are women with an expectation for equal representation by 2023.
- To present an annual report on the progress of the LEP in encouraging diversity and how improvements can be made.
- To educate LEP employees and boards on diversity and the effects of discrimination.
- To identify areas in which the LEP can improve its efforts to be more inclusive.
- To actively promote, celebrate and raise awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues
- To deal with queries as appropriate and take any equality matters to the LEP Directors Board.
- To feedback information on current Equality and Diversity legislation and guidance to the LEP Director /Board as relevant.
- To support and encourage engagement in all equality initiatives and share and promote best practice.
- To work closely with the LEP Business Engagement Officer in undertaking their role effectively.

Company Executive Board Meeting

Thursday 17 December 2020

Resourcing the LEP Secretariat - Covid-19 Resilience Planning

Background

1. A review of the LEP budget, staffing and spend commitments associated with resourcing the LEP Secretariat have confirmed that there remains a staff vacancy dating back to the start of the financial year (1st April 2020). An approved budget line of £33K for 'Sector/Project Officer post' is contained in the core fund. Recruitment to bolster the LEP Secretariat's capability and capacity was paused following the change in senior management within the LEP Secretariat in early Summer 2020.
2. With regards to this change in senior management of the LEP Secretariat, the LEP Recruitment Committee commenced an external recruitment process in late Summer/early Autumn 2020 to recruit to the position of LEP Chief Executive. It is anticipated that the appointment to this post will be confirmed by the end of January 2021 with a potential lead in time of 3 to 6 months before the successful applicant is in post (i.e. Spring 2021).
3. The LEP are currently experiencing a relatively high demand on their resources due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic situation, preparing for leaving the European Union and raft of emerging policy associated with the Central Government administration elected in December 2019. For example, the emerging Recovery and Devolution White Paper that was trailed throughout the Summer of 2020 and targeted policy inventions associated with the 'Levelling Up' agenda that include reinforcing the Growth Hub with extra staff via the Department for International Trade, the Peer Networks programme sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Getting Building Fund administered by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The short-term budget settlement associated with the ongoing Comprehensive Spending Review are also a contributing factor to the LEP Executive Board considering adopting a short-term flexible approach.

Proposed approach to improving the short-term resilience of the LEP Secretariat

4. The LEP Secretariat is likely to continue experiencing resource pressures over the remaining Quarter 4 2020/21 period and continuing up to at least Spring 2021 when the appointment process for the LEP Chief Executive will have concluded.
5. It is proposed that the incumbent/interim LEP Chief Executive utilises the available staff budget to bolster the LEP Secretariat through a number of short-

term (e.g. rolling or fixed monthly or quarterly agreements as appropriate) Service Level Agreements with partnering Local Authorities to secure the necessary capabilities and capacity. For example, it is envisaged that the LEP will need access to technical officers to support the LEP's Covid-19 Task Force (data analyst), a Local Industrial Strategy Implementation Plan Sub Group (e.g. economic development officer), and transition from EU funding programmes to the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (external funding officer).

6. It is envisaged that the SLA's will secure officer time from across the LEPs Local Authority members based on modest time commitments per month (e.g. 2 to 4 days per month) and on a pro-rata cost basis so the SLA will cover their contribution (i.e. conventional approach of salary plus overheads). SLAs would be communicated (and if necessary, negotiated if there are a number of potential candidates) through the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Directors Group.
7. It is proposed that approximately four additional officers/SLAs will be in place at any one time with the budget profile capped at £9K per quarter (i.e. no carry over of unspent budget to next quarter). It is also proposed that Audit & Finance Committee receive updates at each of their meetings from the LEP Secretariat and Accountable Body finance officers, and also monitoring to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. The SLA arrangements would naturally be subject to review once the Chief Executive appointment process is complete, and/or through annual budgets agreed at Executive Board, or otherwise will end by 31st March 2022. Any SLAs would commence from the point they are agreed/signed, and not back dated or eligible for any retrospective payments.
8. If any opportunities to secure additional staff resource via SLAs with other LEPs arise through our LEP Cluster working groups, these would be raised and discussed with the A&F Committee, LEP Chair and LEP Executive Board as appropriate.

Recommendations of the Chief Executive, Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP

I recommend that:

- a) The Board is updated by the LEP Secretariat that an allocation of £33K to fund a staff post within the 2020/21 agreed budget remains unspent/uncommitted to date.
- b) The Board endorses the ability of the LEP Chief Executive to enter into discretionary short-term Service Level Agreements with the Local Authority Membership of the LEP in order to secure additional LEP Secretariat/technical officer resource. This will provide added resilience throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, exiting the European Union and shaping emerging policy and associated interventions.

- c) The principles of any SLAs will reflect the content of this board paper, i.e. to be aligned to cost recovery, a LEP budget quarterly spend profile of up to £9K per quarter, and time limited in order to exit such arrangements within reasonable timescales. The Assurance & Finance Committee will provide a monitoring role.

Reasons for Recommendations:

9. To ensure the Executive Board both discharge their responsibilities set out in the Assurance Framework and to seek opportunities to secure economic recovery and renewal throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
10. To demonstrate to Central Government, that the LEP and its partners are capable are managing risk and contingency planning associated with short term policy.

Contact Details

Report Commissioner: Mark Parkinson
Job Title: Chief Executive, SSLEP