

Thursday 15th April 2021

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	10 mins
15 mins			
Strategy			
6	Introduction to new LEP CEO <i>General Update: verbal</i>	Alun Rogers / Anne Boyd	Information 10 mins
7	LEP Review c/o MHCLG <i>General Update: verbal</i>	Alun Rogers / All	Discussion 15 mins
25 mins			
Delivery			
8	Town Deal <i>Verbal + presentation</i>	Tbc	Information 25 mins
9	Skills Advisory Panel: (i) Local Skills Report publication (ii) Revised Terms of Reference	Liz Barnes / Secretariat	Information 25 mins
50 mins			
Governance			
10	A&F Committee: LEP Draft Budget 2021/22 <i>Covering Note and excel sheet</i>	Mo Ahmed / Secretariat	Decision 10 mins
11	LEP Executive Board Recruitment <i>Update: verbal update</i>	Alun Rogers / Secretariat	Information 5 mins
12	Forward Plan	All	5 mins
20 mins			
13	Any Other Business	All	5 mins

Forward Plan

Executive Board		Meeting Date	20 May 2021
Lead Board Member/ Officer:	Item Name:	Time:	Recommendation:
A Rogers / Liz Barnes	National policy paper: Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth, c/o DfE		Information
A Rogers / Liz Barnes	LIS: 5G Update		Information
A Rogers / Secretariat	Assurance Framework: v0.9 updates		Decision
A Rogers & Sub-Group Leads	Emerging Implementation Plan incorporating Covid Recovery, International Trade, Future Workforce; Growing Businesses; Innovation; Place		Discussion
Tbc	Future High Street Fund / Towns Fund		Information
S Williams / E Catterall	Social Value policy		Decision
A Brown / D Jellyman	Transforming Cities Fund		Information
A Rogers / Secretariat	Midlands Engine / Connects		Information
M Ahmed / Secretariat	Audit & Finance Committee: Risk Register		Discussion/Decision

**LEP Company Executive Board Meeting
via MS Teams conference call
Thursday 18 March 2021
Draft Confidential Minutes**

Board Directors

Alun Rogers (Chair)	risual
James Leavesley (Vice Chair)	Leavesley Group
Mohammed Ahmed	Homeserve
Hannah Ault	Valentine Clays
Sinéad Butters	Aspire Housing Ltd
Caroline Brown	Caja Group
Emma Catterall	Camping & Caravanning Club
Prof. Martin Jones	Alternate for Prof. Liz Barnes, University of Staffordshire
Prof. Trevor McMillan	Vice-Chancellor, University of Keele
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
Cllr Abi Brown	Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Cllr Patrick Farrington	Leader, Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Oates	Portfolio Holder Heritage & Growth, Tamworth Borough Council
Cllr Sybil Ralphs	(Alternate) Leader, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Cllr Alan White	Leader, Staffordshire County Council

Advisory/Secretariat

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

In Attendance

Andrea Whitworth	Assistant Director, Cities & Local Growth Unit
Clare Hannah	Area Lead, Cities and Local Growth Representative
Jon Rouse	City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Phil Creswell	Director of Place Growth and Prosperity, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Matt Chadburn	Strategic Manager; Finance and Commercial Finance, Strategy & Resources, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Apologies

Cllr Simon Tagg
Prof. Liz Barnes
Cllr George Allen

Leader, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Vice-Chancellor, University of Staffordshire
Deputy Leader, East Staffordshire Borough Council

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SA (151 Officer) confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies

These were noted, above.

3. Declarations of Interest

AB, PC, JR & MC – Stoke-on-Trent City Council re: Item 7 & 8

JL - St. Modwen interest at CVEZ re: Item 7 & 8

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:

- HS2 Ltd Local Business Roundtable
- Budget 2021 Comms
- CEO Recruitment panels w/c 22nd February
- CEO and Leader 1 to 1's
- LEP Chairs: West Midlands & ME9
- LEP Peer Review c/o LEP Network
- Stoke-on-Trent CC Prospectus Launch

The CEO provided an update on activity since the last meeting - attendance at a variety of internal networking and consultation events including:

- Countywide Redundancy Task Force
- Economy & Prosperity Recovery Meeting
- Growth Deal and Economic Growth District Directors
- Transforming City Fund Programme Board
- Kidsgrove Town Deal Board
- Business Crime Strategy Implementation
- Panel for Assistant Director Strategy, Workforce & Communications (Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
- Restart Prime Providers – SAP
- River Trent Partnership – Environmental Agency

6. Budget 2021, HM Treasury policy - Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth

SH was invited to provide the Board with an overview regarding the shift from BEIS's LIS to HMT's Build Back Better.

- DFE will support apprenticeships £3k new incentive for each apprentice taken on (all ages)

3 pillars of growth are:

- Infrastructure – Capital spending for broadband, roads, rail and cities; Levelling-Up plus UKSPF funds to regenerate struggling towns; funding for projects under the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution; investment and advice on public/private projects to accelerate progress to net zero.
- Innovation - financing for start-up & scale-up; talent attraction for highly skilled immigrants; support for SMEs - management & Digital
- Skills – reforming technical education; lifetime skills & Skills Bootcamps; apprenticeship levy flexibility.

Plans also include further detail for:

- 'one... globally competitive City'... per region (details unknown as yet).
- Centres of excellence to improve jobs access through digital and transport connectivity
- Freeports (1st of 8 announced thus far).
- Transition to net zero
- Support for a vision of Global Britain

Strategy development timescales are intended as:

- Within 3 months - Heat & Building, Industrial Decarbonisation, Integrated Rail (Midlands & North).
- Within 6 months - Hydrogen, Innovation, R&D, Transport Decarbonisation
- Within 12 months - Devolution & Local Recovery, Digital, Net Zero, Sector Visions

AW commented on the end of the LIS, that the Government is clear that industrial policy remains a priority. They refer to this as a transition from the LIS to the new framework, reacting to new challenges. Existing sector deals will continue. BEIS will support Build Back Better (BBB). The Industrial Strategy Council is to be stood down, but the BBB council has been convened. CLGU is still in place as a MHCLG & BEIS collaboration. MHCLG own the Levelling Up fund but CLGU will continue act as delivery arm. Local figures have not been announced

A LEP Comms campaign update was supplied by AR, with focus on a Lockdown Exit Campaign & raising the LEP's position as central to business support.

- A 'Supporting Business Out of Lockdown' survey is being launched.
- Future comms strategy is intended to have a consistent rhythm, with timely communications, with one voice across Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire

7. Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone Pt.1 *Commercially Confidential*

MP introduced Items 7 & 8 of the Agenda & reiterated the LEP Conflicts of interest. Assurance Framework extracts were shown.

AR suggested that after the discussion, during which all will be present, conflicted members should leave the meeting during item 8.

Board comments & approval was sought & agreed, including that of Stoke-on-Trent City Council Officers, as the conflicted parties & the S151 Officer. JL will also leave the meeting at decision time

AB provided a quick recap of the CVEZ project, with which the LEP had been involved at the outset 6 years previously, under David Cameron's Premiership. Board support was given in 2015 & the EZ legal status was confirmed in 2016, as a partnership with the LEP & LA's. Its success thus far is down to all involved. Stoke-on-Trent has one of the best EZs in the country. There is a good relationship with the developers too. Some of these brownfield sites had previously sat empty for 40 years. Business Rate Discounts (BRD) is a big deal for both developers & occupiers - most occupiers have moved from homeworking into units, BRD helped make the difference. There has been a high take up. The City's Covid Vaccination centre is currently occupying one of the units & it is hoped that all the units would be occupied soon after that centre has gone.

BRD ends on 31/03/21. Gap funding & additional funding has helped. No further Government support can be obtained, although there have been numerous ministerial visits & AW has been a huge support.

Matthew Chadburn (Strategic Manager; Finance and Commercial Finance, Strategy & Resources, Stoke-on-Trent City Council) was introduced to provide further details to the Board.

- Business Rate Retention scheme is not to be confused with BRD which is offered to tenants
- Stoke-On-Trent City Council is the accountable body for the CVEZ.
- Use of Business Rates - Enterprise zones may require pump-prime investment to kick-start take-up and growth. Until sufficient uplift is generated, this investment (i.e. Etruria Value Link Road) is required to be funded by partners. Following LEP approval of such investments, expenditure by the investing partner is recouped through the business rates uplift
- The forecast for 2019- 20 (pre pandemic) was that a surplus would be reached by 2026. The existing BRD lasted from 2016 - 21 to encourage growth. The discount was up to £55k p/a, but no further government funding has been forthcoming.
- The CVEZ Project Board therefore propose that any new occupants from April 2021 to March 2026 receive up to £60k p/a discount. No retail businesses will be eligible.
- The expected benefits from filling the units with this incentive are to attract approximately 65 new businesses & unlock 2750 jobs, with GVA of £20m outweighing costs of £3.4m
- However, surplus will be delayed until c.2028.
- Risk of displacement - <18% of SME occupants have moved from elsewhere in the city thus far. This is considered low & displacement is not always negative, as vacated units can be backfilled. Displacement is preferable to SMEs moving outside of the city.
- No onus on the LEP to make similar offers to other areas - each EZ is unique & assessed on its own merits.

2 main proposals:

1. That the Board approve the implementation of a locally funded BRD scheme at a cost of £3.4, noting the economic benefits.
2. That the Board approve that the increased costs of EVLR be recouped through the business rates uplift by Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The 3rd item being;

3. That the Board approve the revised Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP)

AR invited any questions before moving onto Agenda item 8.

MJ asked about 'We have calculated the number of net additional jobs expected and then monetised these using a GVA of £47,000 per job' (per page 24 of pre-Board papers) - What's the cost of getting there?

MC advised that a green book approach had been used, based on units & take up to a £20m figure, then the cost = £3.4 m discount given. He later added via the online chat – "The average 'cost' on a per job basis would be roughly £8k, this would be differ depending on the rates charge for each business and also the number of jobs per that same business".

(Cllr JO made apologies & departed @ 5pm).

8. Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone Pt.2 *Commercially Confidential*

JL to talk through technical detail from SPMG viewpoint, based on the report & all documents as presented by MC tonight.

EZs are given to areas of the UK where commerce doesn't naturally go, so is of great importance. Occupational costs are drivers & seeing what has happened has been great. However, the economy has stalled things, without this problem there would be more take up & less 'ask' now. A decent infrastructure is key for attracting occupants.

SPMG has already asked why not retail? Where have costs come from? They are therefore happy that all has been well explained to them. They have debated heavily & are satisfied with their questions & the answers supplied. Therefore, the suggestion to the LEP Board is that the 3-point plan is decided upon.

AR invited any questions for JL.

TM enquired;

- i. about any potential match funding issue for EVLR – are there any concerns it might not be signed off & we default on that funding
 - ii. When does an EZ stop being one?
 - iii. Does the EZ provides an unfair advantage to the city & EZ areas.
-
- i. SA confirmed that it is Local Growth Deal money so there were no match funding conditions.
 - ii. AB confirmed that EZ status ends after 25 years.
 - iii. JL countered that this will always be the case with an EZ due to the benefit offered.

AW added that ECA continues for longer. She will confirm, but each site can have either a BRD or Capital Allowance Scheme, not both. EVV site has Capital allowance.

SB assured the Board that SPMG had spent a great deal of time on this issue, understanding the complexities & risk mitigation. The choice seemed to be to protect the EZ as risk mitigation, as if not cleared it might not go ahead at all.

AR asked relevant people to leave. It was suggested that remaining Board members do not voice their responses in the online chat facility, to retain anonymity.

1. No opinions to contrary - supported
2. Ditto
3. Ditto

Decision - All 3 items were carried.

TM expressed thanks to SPMG for their level of scrutiny, which gives confidence to the rest of the Board.

AR readmitted the parties who had left the meeting. Thanks were expressed to all for making it a comprehensive conversation & decision.

9. Strategic Programme Management Group:

Project updates were given for the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF)

LGF: The project list for was shown. Some projects were subject to reallocation of funds, CELR had been moved to Green. Blythe Bridge had been moved to Amber, with the possibility of £1.25m back if this fails to contact in time. Reserve projects can adopt & absorb this. If SPMG feel any schemes are not fitting, then the catch-all is i54.

GBF: - reserve projects have received consideration as the Four Ashes scheme has been withdrawn. SPMG will review the contingency list, but GBF project changes require CLGU/BEIS/MHCLG approval. The Drakelow scheme submission has gone to D2N2 LEP. We need to ensure we receive press coverage to highlight our part.

10. Annual Performance Review & LEP Peer Review

CH appraised the Board that there were no issues from BEIS with February's APR.

AR advised that the Peer Review with Cumbria LEP occurred on 9th March.

Key discussion areas for us with Cumbria had been around their Start-ups, GBF & airport. The upshot was that SSLEP had found it interesting & felt confident at the review's conclusion.

MP added that Cumbria LEP is perceived as one of the higher performing LEPs in the North West. They had been particularly impressed with our approach to innovation and deal concepts with the anchor institutions (e.g. Keele Deal).

11. Annual Report 2020/21, Delivery Plan and LEP Budget 2021/22

MP updated the Board – this year's Delivery Plan is in progress, along with the with Annual Report. Q4 outputs will be required for completion of the latter.

The LEP Budget will be brought to the next meeting.

12. LEP Chief Executive Recruitment

MP left the meeting whilst AR advised the Board about the successful candidate.

AR thanked the Board members who were involved on both the stakeholder & final interview panels. Anne Boyd is the successful candidate. Her employer references were received back today & the formal job offer was issued, with a suggested start date of 01/04/21. SA confirmed that she has, this afternoon, accepted the post & commencement date.

MP returned to the meeting - AR thanked him for all his hard work, commitment & support in the past 10 months & his grace during this recruitment process.

13. Forward Plan

MP informed the Board that there is abundance of material to pick from for April & May's Board meetings, including:-

- The Annual Reports & Delivery plan will need signing off in due course.
- Future High Street/Towns Funds - Kidsgrove town board; Cllr Simon Tagg & Simon McEneny (N-U-L BC), plus Cllr Patrick Farrington (Stafford BC) could report on their successful bids.
- Other items are on the Agenda, under Forward Plan.

14. AOB

AR reminded the Board that it was Andrea Whitworth's last Board meeting, conveying thanks for the great support she has been for our LEP. This was re-iterated & echoed by many others verbally & via the online chat facility.

AW coyly extended her thanks for the comments.

AB – informed the Board that the company 'Capital & Centric' from the North West have been brought to Stoke-on-Trent, to help champion the area. Tim Heatley is their lead contact.

AR invited AW to close the meeting, which she did with charm & refinement.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 15th April 2021 @ 4pm

Location: Via MS Teams.

The Skills Advisory Panel Local Skills Report publication

1. Project title and proposing organisation

Project Title: The Local Skills Report (LSR)
Lead Organisation: The Skills Advisory Panel Board
Contact: Liz Barnes, Chair, The Skills Advisory Panel Board

2. Decision date

15.4.21

3. Decision summary: Recommendation

The Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP Executive Board to approve the Skills Advisory Panel Local Skills Report.

4. Background

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) bring together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. There are 36 SAPs across England as part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The Department for Education (DfE) supports SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high quality analysis of local labour markets and to publish a Local Skills Report by **31st March 2021**. The Reports set out the local strengths and skills needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities. The Reports aim to influence local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

The SAP Evidence Base and Skills Strategy that informed the LSR has been subject to an open and extensive consultation through the SAP board and a number of communication channels that have included feedback mechanisms on the SSLEP website following the publication of the draft documents, and sharing and seeking comment through stakeholder groups such as the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce sector groups, the Staffordshire Partnership for Employability & Skills, the FE colleges, the HE universities and ESF partner network groups.

The LSR has been shared for comment with similar groups. The draft has been reviewed by the DfE SAP programme team and has been considered good practice and it was approved by the SAP boards at its meeting on 17.3.21.

5. Local Skills Report

In order to comply with the requirements to publish the LSR by the 31st March 2021, the LSR was circulated to board members prior to this date, for information purposes. The Local Skills report is now published on the LEP website [StokeStaffsLEP | Skills Advisory Panel Board & The Local Skills Report](#)

The Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) board Terms of Reference v3 (revised 17.3.21)

Purpose

The Skills Advisory Panel board is responsible for securing delivery of the SAP Local Skills Report and its programme of activities and investments.

Its role is to bring together local employers and skills providers to work together to understand and address key local challenges. This includes both immediate needs and challenges and looking at what is required to help Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire employers and skills providers adapt to future labour market changes, grasp future opportunities and give more people in the local community access to higher quality skills provision.

The SAP will secure influences on resources and agencies for delivering these priorities acting as a strategic commissioner of skills provision, on behalf of the Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The SAP board will make recommendations on the strategic fit of skills projects and proposals to the LEP's Future Workforce Group and Executive Board.

The SAP will feed local intelligence to the national level Skills & Productivity Board.

Remit/powers/decision-making

The SAP board will:

- Produce a robust and authoritative evidence based Local Skills Report, supporting the SSLEP Local Industrial strategy, which clearly identifies existing local skills and employment challenges, and identifies key areas of future needs related to projected local employment growth areas;
- Discuss and agree local skills needs priorities in the short term and longer term recommending these to the LEP's Future Workforce Group and Executive Board for endorsement and to work with the Department for Employment to gain influence on the provision offer of skills providers to meet those skills needs;
- Advise on, and help implement, funding and investment decisions for local skills and employment provision;
- "Work closely with careers and employability services to ensure that potential learners, pupils and students receive independent and impartial careers advice and guidance, informed by local labour market information, to make successful career transitions;"
- Provide a strong strategic influence and leadership within the region on education, training and employability by acting as a forum for organisations, including public sector bodies, private sector businesses and third sector organisations, schools, colleges and other education and training providers.
- Maintain an overview of delivery of the SAP Local Skills Report and ensure feedback to inform future development;
- Monitor skills related projects and their outcomes;

- Report to the LEP’s Future Workforce Group and Executive Board on delivery of the Local Skills Report and achievement of programme delivery milestones and outcomes, spend and targets;
- Promote activities that seek to raise the achievement of pupils and students in education and training within the region;
- Promote activities that seek to raise educational and training aspirations amongst young people, their families and advisors;
- Work through local delivery bodies and support individual or groups of schools, colleges and other providers to raise student achievement and attainment;
- Provide a network of contact for communications and mutual support between business, public sector, third sector and educational organisations; and
- Seek to influence policy makers at national level of the needs and potential of education and training within the region to leverage resource to the delivery agents to support the achievement of its key purpose.
- Maintain and manage a risk register and associated mitigation plan.
- Build knowledge of the range of both local, regional and national employment provision that exists or is planned.
- Provide analysis to inform the development and the implementation of the “People” element of the Local Industrial Strategy.
- Raise the profile of Apprenticeships and T Level qualifications with local employers and providers.
- Advise where skills and labour market resource should be directed to support local employers and residents.
- Share analysis and best practice as widely as possible.

Governance

The SAP board will adhere to the standards of transparency, conflicts of interest, accountability and diversity as set out in the “Local Enterprise Partnership National Assurance Framework” and “Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships” publications and reflected in the SSLEP Assurance Framework, March 2019 v4.

<https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/app/uploads/2019/03/SSLEP-Assurance-Framework-v4.0.pdf>

Key inserts of the SSLEP Assurance Framework are detailed below:

2.14.2 Transparency Engagement and Scrutiny

The scrutiny of the SAP work will be conducted through the SSLEP scrutiny process.

2.14.3 Rules of Conduct and Appointment of Members

- *The Company Executive Board and Partnership members (where they are not ex-officio) will be appointed via an open application process. All*

appointments will be made in accordance with the provisions of the [Governance Code on Public Appointments \(December 2016\)](#).

- *Arrangements for advertising and recruiting Company Directors and Partnership members will be delegated to the Secretariat, with all appointments to be made through a nominations committee and formally signed off by the Company Executive Board*
- *All members will be required to sign a code of conduct – see Code of Conduct for LEP Board Members (Section 4).*

4. Code of Conduct for LEP Board Members

1 All Board Members of the SSLEP sign up to a Code of Conduct on commencing their role with the LEP. LEP Officers sign up to their own Officer Code of Conduct.

Board Member Code of Conduct

2 Board Members of the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership shall have regard to the following principles – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership in your conduct at all times.

3 Accordingly, when acting within their capacity as a Board Member of Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership:

- *Members must act in a manner consistent with the LEP's equality and diversity strategy and treat fellow Board Members, members of staff and others they come into contact with when working in their role with respect and courtesy at all times.*
- *Members must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, a friend or close associate.*
- *Members must not place themselves under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might be reasonably regarded to influence them in the performance of their official duties.*
- *When carrying out their LEP duties members must make all choices, such as making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, based on evidence.*

- *Members are accountable for their decisions and must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their position. Members must be as open as possible about both their decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of the LEP. In addition, they should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.*
- *Members must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, including membership of any Trade Union, political party or Local Authority that relates to their LEP duties. Furthermore, they must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest. This includes registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out in the section 'Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests' in the LEP's conflict of interest policy.*
- *Members must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your LEP, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political or personal purposes (including party political purposes).*
- *Members must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in their LEP post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.*

5. Conflicts of Interest Policy

- 1. SSLEP is committed to ensuring that all Board Members and Officers act in line with the Nolan Principles of public life. This policy provides the detail of how LEP Board Members and Officers should consider conflicts of interest and declare any interests in line with the LEP's processes.*
- 2. This policy explains the procedures through which SSLEP will seek to maintain its high ethical standards and protect its reputation against any allegations of conflict of interest. It is communicated to everyone involved in the LEP to ensure their commitment to it and it applies to all staff and Board Members.*
- 3. Board Members and staff take personal responsibility for declaring their interests and avoiding perceptions of bias. To demonstrate this all Board Members and staff produce and sign a register of interests and publication¹ on the website which is reviewed every six months and updated regularly.*

4. *In addition, SSLEP ensures that the Conflict of Interest Policy is followed through its decision making processes. It is committed to ensuring that this policy applies to decision makers regardless of whether there is a formal meeting. The SSLEP ensures that decisions are recorded and published [link to publication policy], regardless of how they are taken to ensure full transparency in all SSLEP decisions.*

Definition

5. *A conflict of interest is any situation in which an employee's or a board member's personal interests, or interests that they owe to another body, may (or may appear to) influence or affect their decision making.*

Identifying conflicts of interest

6. *Conflicts can inhibit open discussions and may result in irrelevant considerations being taken into account or decisions being taken that are not in the best interests of the LEP. Conflicts may arise, for instance, where a Member's personal interests, for instance, as a shareholder in a company that is a potential beneficiary of grant funding, conflict with the interests of the LEP.*
7. *There may be commercial, actual or potential conflicts of interests. This policy covers all three types of interests.*

Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

8. *As a Board Member or staff member of the LEP, you must:*
9. *Within 28 days of taking office, notify your LEP Chief Executive and Accountable Body's Section 151/Section 73 Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a spouse, or as if you were civil partners.²*
10. *Within 28 days of taking office, notify your LEP Chief Executive and Accountable Body's Section 151/ Section 73 Officer of any non-pecuniary interest which your LEP has decided should be included in the register or which you consider should be included if you are to fulfil your duty to act in conformity with the Seven Principles of Public Life.³ These non-pecuniary interests will necessarily include your membership of any Trade Union.*

² For the purpose of this guidance, we are using the definition of a pecuniary interest as set out in the Localism Act 2011 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

³ A Non-Pecuniary interest is any interest which is not listed in the Schedule to Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (No. 1464)

11. *Review your individual register of interest before each board meeting and decision-making committee meeting and declare any relevant interest(s) at the start of the meeting.*
12. *If an interest has not been entered onto the LEP's register, then the you must disclose the interest at any meeting of the LEP where you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'.⁴*
13. *Following any disclosure of an interest not on the LEP register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the LEP Chief Executive and Section 151/Section 73 Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.*
14. *Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions your LEP places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by your LEP.*
15. *Categories of disclosable interest are stated in the LEP's register of interest.*
16. *LEP Board Member's and Officers should also familiarise themselves with the LEP's gifts and hospitality policy.*

Procedure for managing conflicts

17. *When an interest materially affects a member's ability to vote without prejudice, this will be deemed to be non-trivial and a conflict of interest. In such circumstances the member will withdraw from the meeting while the discussion and vote takes place.*

18. *Upon the declaration of any conflicts of interest at a meeting of the Board, the nonconflicted members will:*

- *assess the nature of the conflict;*
- *assess the risk or threat to member decision-making;*

⁴ A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the authority's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

- *decide whether the conflict is non-trivial (that is, it is material or has the potential to be detrimental to the conduct or decisions taken by the members); and*
- *decide what steps to take to avoid or manage the conflict.*

19. *The conflicted member must not take part in the discussion or decision and will not be counted when determining whether the Board meeting is quorate.*

20. *The non-conflicted members will consider whether it is necessary to seek the advice of the LEP's legal adviser on whether the conflict is nontrivial and/or on how to manage the conflict declared.*

21. *Subject to the provisions set out in the LEP's Articles of Association, if the nonconflicted members consider that the declared conflict is trivial, they may agree that the conflicted Member may continue to participate in discussions and the decision-making process.*

22. *If the non-conflicted members consider that the conflict is non-trivial, the non-conflicted members will determine what action is appropriate in light of the nature and extent of the conflict. A number of steps can be taken to deal with the conflict, including:*

- *excluding the conflicted member from discussions in relation to the matter to avoid inadvertently influencing the non-conflicted members;*
- *excluding the conflicted members from decision-making in relation to the matter while the conflict exists;*
- *delegating the matter to a sub-committee of non-conflicted members;*
- *seeking independent advice to help with a decision;*
- *appointing an alternative, non-conflicted member;*
- *resignation of the conflicted member where the conflict is acute or pervasive; and/or*
- *applying to the court for directions.*

23. *The Chair of the Board will inform the conflicted member of the non-conflicted members' decision. The secretary to the Board will note in the minutes of the meeting the conflict declared, an outline of the discussion and the actions taken to manage the conflict.*

2.14.6 Risk Management Statement

- *The Audit & Finance Committee will maintain and manage the overarching SSLEP-wide risk register and associated mitigation plan on behalf of the LEP Executive Board.*
- *Each permanent sub-group is responsible for owning its own Risk Register and associated mitigation plan.*
- *The named individual responsible for “Risk” on behalf of the SSLEP will be the Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee.*

Appendix 1 - Electronic Procedure (Decision Making)

- *In this text the term “committee” is deemed to cover Board, Committee, Panel or sub-Committee, etc.*
- *Where the Chair of a committee has decided to seek agreement to a proposal via the Electronic Procedure the following process shall be implemented:*
 - *In such cases, the Secretariat shall write to each member of that committee requesting agreement to a specified course of action.*
 - *Committee Members shall be given no fewer than five clear working days to respond, unless a decision is required urgently, which in relation to the Electronic Procedure, will be determined by the Chair in conjunction with the Vice Chair.*
 - *For a decision to be taken, the number of members participating and the composition of those members must be the same as for a quorate meeting and over 50% of those participating must agree to the course of action. All decisions made by Electronic Procedure shall be ratified at the next scheduled meeting of the relevant group, provided a quorum is present.*
 - *The relevant committee may also delegate specific decisions to the Chair following a meeting, for example if some additional action is required on an item which has been discussed at a meeting. Where the Chair receives a specific delegation, any decision must be:*
 - *recorded, stored by the Secretariat, and published on the SSLEP’s website; and*
 - *ratified at the next meeting of the relevant committee, provided a quorum is present.*

Appendix 2 - Register of Interests

For the avoidance of doubt, this covers all members, participants in SSLEP meetings and key members of staff, and includes the expected personal Code of Conduct and anything that may be construed as Conflicts of Interest.

Board Members are required to complete a Register of Interests before participating in any decisions as set out in the “[National local growth assurance framework](#)” guidance.

Members declarations of interest can be found at SSLEP website, Governance section, [Declarations of interest](#)

Appendix 3 - Meetings & Papers

Summary of timings – applies to ALL SSLEP meetings:

- *Giving Notice of items for inclusion on an agenda - 10 working days prior to the meeting*
- *Issues of Papers - 5 working days prior to the meeting*
- *Minutes issued (in draft) - 5 working days after the meeting*
- *Minutes ratified - At next meeting of the group*

GENERAL:

The agenda and papers for meetings will be coordinated by the Secretariat and approved by the Chair, and members of the relevant panel may request that items are added.

- *Panel members wishing to propose items for the agenda should contact the Secretariat at least ten clear working days prior to the meeting. Ordinarily such items will be added to the agenda for the next meeting unless at specific direction from the Chair who shall provide reasons to the proposing Board Member.*
- *The Secretariat will issue an agenda and papers for meetings at least 5 clear working days in advance of that meeting which will be made available for public inspection through publication on the SSLEP's website.*
- *Documents which are not circulated with the agenda may be circulated with shorter or no notice, with the agreement of the Chair. Decisions arising from this process shall not be taken unless in accordance with the protocols in Appendix 1 – General - in relation to urgency.*
- *Some papers will not be suitable for release into the public domain, due to them containing personal information about individuals or commercially sensitive data. Any reports which are not published will be stored by the Secretariat. However in this instance a summary decision notice will still be posted on the SSLEP's Website. If necessary, the decision regarding whether an item should be considered confidential will be made with reference to the categories of Confidential and Exempt Information set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and any later amendments to that Act.*
- *Member(s) of the Secretariat will attend meetings in order to:*
 - *take minutes; record decisions; update and circulate Action Lists*
 - *provide any information requested at earlier meetings; and*

- *provide any other support required by the Chair.*
- *Minutes of meetings shall be approved in draft form by the Chair and disseminated to members following the meeting. Minutes shall remain draft until approval at the next meeting.*
- *Minutes shall be made publicly available on the SSLEP website following approval, except for minutes which are not suitable for release in the public domain, for example due to them containing personal information about individuals or commercially sensitive data. Any minutes which are not published will be stored by the Secretariat.*
- *The Secretariat will maintain and publish a schedule/diary of meetings, including:*
 - *the date for notification of agenda items,*
 - *the date for receipt of update reports,*
 - *the date for issue of agendas & papers,*
 - *the date for issue of draft minutes,*
 - *the date for publication of authorised minutes.*
- *The Secretariat will maintain a central electronic store of all paperwork pertaining to SSLEP meetings including, but not limited to: agendas; minutes; terms of reference; register of interests; and a record of decisions taken outside meetings.*

Appendix 6 – Diversity Policy

The SAP follows SSLEP complaints procedure & diversity policy as detailed in the SSLEP Assurance Framework.

Representation & Attendance

The SAP board will be constituted as follows:

- Chair – SSLEP Board Member (1) –
- Senior representatives of City and County Council (2)
- District Council representatives (2)
- City & County School Head teacher (2)
- City & County Employer/Business representatives* (6)
- University Vice Chancellors (2)
- Training Provider Association (1)
- Chamber of Commerce (1)
- FE College Principals (1)

- Voluntary Community Sector representative (1)

* Will include SME and Larger business and public and private representation

The following will feature as Advisors:

- SSLEP Skills Leads (2)
- Education & Skills Funding Agency
- Cities & Local Growth Unit (1)
- Department of Work & Pensions/Jobcentre Plus (1)

For the SAP to be quorate no fewer than 9 members must attend the meeting

Where the SAP is not quorate, business may proceed but decisions will be subject to confirmation by the majority of members present and voting at the next appropriate meeting provided always that a quorum is present or, where more appropriate, by the Electronic Procedure.

- Local Authority Executive Board Directors can register one named alternate to attend in their place.
- District/Borough Council Leaders should nominate another District/Borough Council Leader.
- The University Board Director can register a named alternate to attend in their place and this should be another University within the LEP Area.

Others relevant stakeholders may attend meetings and participate in discussion at the invitation of the Chair.

Officers and members of the bodies participating in the SSLEP, but not invited to attend and participate, may attend as observers at the discretion of the Chair.

The SAP board will be supported by a secretariat that will be responsible for communication coordination and reporting on programme performance and risk and will conform to the requirements set out in the SSLEP Assurance Framework.

Company Executive Board Meeting

Thursday 15 April 2021

Audit & Finance Committee: LEP Budget 2021/22

1. The provisional LEP Budget 2021/22 was considered by Audit & Finance Committee at their March 2021 meeting. The budget is considered provisional to allow the new Chief Executive of the LEP time to review the individual budget line items and work with the Executive Board to finalise the shape of the budget by the end of Quarter 1.
2. This provisional budget is structured along similar lines to the previous financial year and can be considered to comprise a 'rollover budget' that will need to align to the emerging LEP Delivery Plan for 2021/22.
3. There are a number of areas in the budget that contain a degree of flex to reflect uncertainty as we emerge from the Covid-19 lockdown (e.g. sponsorship of physical business award ceremonies), but also acknowledge that the current LEP Review being undertaken by UK Government that is due to report in July 2021, the status of national and local industrial strategy and the progression of high profile projects such as HS2 and the associated A500(T) Corridor work with Midlands Connects.

Recommendation

4. That the provisional budget is acknowledged by the Executive Board pending a refined budget proposal aligned to the LEP Delivery Plan, that is to be brought to the Executive Board for approval at the end of Q1 2021/22.

Report Prepared by: Mark Parkinson
Job title: Chief Executive, LEP
On behalf of: Mo Ahmed
In the capacity as: Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee

Enc: Excel sheet of provisional budget.