CEO Report

Period: Oct/Nov 2021

This report sets our progress made by the operational team to support Board strategy and ambitions locally. It specifically details progress made against the agreed Delivery Plan to ensure transparency, accountability and promote good governance. It also provides insight into the staffing resources and related risks. The delivery Plan has been operationalised and directly informs operation team priorities and individual work programmes.

Delivery Plan Action update:

1. **Governance**: continue to drive strategic change through evidenced-based, ambitious strategy underpinned by robust governance; a platform for future growth

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| **Qtr3: Oct-Dec** | **Progress** |
| AGM + formal appointment of new NEDs  Induction of new NEDs | AGM planned to take place 18 Nov 2021  Not yet commenced: to take place following any new appointments |
| Strategy review/refresh  Structural review  Review of Governance and of associated Assurance Framework  Implementation of any recommendations emerging from:   * review of accountabilities * Mid-Year Review | SSLEP Board subgroups have reviewed their current position in light of strategic changes/emerging new policy. A strategy refresh will commence in Jan 2022 when the future role of the LEP is made clear.  Not yet commenced: A Structural review, Review of Governance and the implementation of the review of accountabilities (delivered by Hatch) will take place once the purpose and function of the LEP is made clear. The Hatch Review will help to inform any future changes |

1. **Operations**: continue to progress local projects and initiatives, demonstrating high-impact delivery of capital schemes and test-bed projects, whilst developing granular-level insight to support policy and investment decisions.

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| **Qtr3: Oct-Dec** | **Progress** |
| Programme Management/M&E of grant programmes incl LGF / GBF / GPF / EZ’s / ESIF / City Deal | Sharon continues to proactively project manage the significant LGF and GBF programmes and liaises regularly with individual programme managers leading on GPF, EZ, ESIF, City Deal etc, to ensure that regular reporting into Exec Board occurs.  Our aim is to work with the collective programme management ‘team’ to ensure consistency of reporting across the investment portfolio |
| Recruitment of Growth Hub lead  SITREP modelling/testing Incl.new economic briefing notes developed for local leaders  Business Support Review Commission | JD share with T&F Group and Executive Board therefore prepared to action as soon as the LEP Review is concluded.  SITREP design team (GC Business) and telemarketing function (Team Telemarketing) appointed. Stakeholder co-design meeting taking place 15/11/21. Excellent response from local stakeholders received.  To action once Head of Growth Hub in post, as a key opportunity for them to engage and learn about the local landscape delivery partners |

1. **Stakeholder engagement**: building mutually-beneficial relationships at a local/regional/national level whilst amplifying the voice of business and the brand of our place.

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| **Qtr3: Oct-Dec** | **Progress** |
| Monthly 121 with all LA Leaders/CEOS  Covid response task force  Network of Networks event  Strategic engagement with local initiatives and working groups to accelerate growth  Championing the interests of SOT/Staffs through strategic engagement with Midlands Engine/LEP Network/Peers/ Government | 121s taking place on a regular basis improving communication and collaboration between ourselves and local partners  The Taskforce has been a useful forum for local leaders to share information and agree action. The group has paused given the re-opening of the economy but an appetite exists for future meetings of this nature  Meetings regularly taking place (each quarter), bringing together a wide cross section of industry bodies and networks to discuss challenges and opportunities for local businesses  Activity this month included engagement with: Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, SSLEP Growth Hub, Make It SOTS, SCC Rural Strategy, input into the Local Plan process, Support Staffordshire, Motorcycling Industry Association, Midlands Engine Observatory, Lets Do Business Expo, ASOS event.  Meetings held this month with Dept International Trade, Midlands Engine, Midlands Energy Hub, Made Smarter, Midlands-wide peers, Highways England Route Strategy planning, LEP Network, BEIS. |
| Business engagement: test-bed survey launch  Thought leadership: series of round table events - economic changes/recovery/net zero etc  Strategy refresh consultation | Under development to be piloted before end Dec and rolled out Jan/Feb 22  Not yet commenced: All planning/preparation in place, to commence Jan 22.  To commence post-strategy refresh |

Staffing:

The LEP Core team has been reduced to 3.3FTE following the departure of the Strategy & Insight Officer. The Team comprises:

* CEO X 1 FTE
* Business Engagement Officer x 1 FTE
* Programme Manager x 0.8FTE
* Governance & Project Officer x 0.5 FTE

Susan Nutter will join us w/c 15 November 2021 as a temporary resource (0.8 FTE) to provide Executive support on a contract basis (incl Board meetings and administration) to enable our Business Engagement Officer to contribute towards the agreed Delivery Plan 21/22. This refocus fits with two existing areas of the Business Engagement Officer JD, specifically:

* *To promote the strengths of the partnership and the area to businesses, stakeholder business organisations, other LEPs and partnerships at local, regional and national meetings and events.*
* *To work in partnership, and build trust with, a range of local business, public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders at a national, regional and local level to drive forward agreed strategies*.

This action complies with the Core Funding Award Terms & Conditions as it replaces an existing resource. This results in a continued new loss of 0.2 FTE from an already limited staffing resource.

Operational risks:

**Demand on resources**: Local and regional partners continue to engage with the LEP team and seek input into local plans and developments. Limited resources hamper our ability to engage as widely as we could, impeding our ability to influence and add-value.

**Loss of key personnel**: Whilst current staff contracts provide agility in terms of scaling up/winding down the organisation, it also exposes fragility in the temporary nature of contracts. Of the 3.3 FTE resource, 1.5 FTE could be lost within 1 month (notice period), impacting on organisational memory and capacity. LEPs across the country are experiencing staffing disruption due to uncertainty created by the extended LEP Review.