

CEO Report

Period: Jan/Feb 2022

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

Qtr3: Oct-Dec	Progress
AGM + formal appointment of new NEDs	Completed
Induction of new NEDs	N/A at this time
Strategy review/refresh	Pause on planned strategy refresh until the Levelling Up White Paper confirms the future of LEPs and their function is fully understood.
Structural review	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
Review of Governance and of associated Assurance Framework	
Implementation of any recommendations emerging from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of accountabilities • Mid-Year Review 	
Qtr4: Jan-Mar	Progress
Annual Performance Review	Completed on 3 rd Feb 2022.
NED recruitment	N/A at this time due to extended LEP Review
Development of Business Plan and Budget 2022/23	Draft budget produced for 22/23. Business Plan and revised budget to be prepared once remit and funding is confirmed Scrutiny session took place on 6 th Jan 2022, hosted by Staffordshire County Council with input from colleagues at Stoke-On-Trent City Council and wider Districts
Launch of SSLEP Strategy 2022+	Delayed due to extended LEP Review and uncertainty regarding remit
Implementation of any recommendations emerging from:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Governance and of associated Assurance Framework /any newly released guidance • review of Sub-groups • structural review <p>Review/conclusion of T&F (Strategic Change)</p> <p>Development of Marketing Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan</p>	<p>To be reconvened to determine strategic positioning and structures post-Review</p> <p>Marketing support resources have changed. Proposal to appoint 12m FT mar/comms to ensure continuity of communications during transitional period. Marketing Strategy to align with Business Plan ambitions and objectives</p>
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2. **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.

Qtr3: Oct-Dec	Progress
<p>Programme Management/M&E of grant programmes incl LGF / GBF / GPF / EZ's / ESIF / City Deal</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Our aim is to work with the collective programme management 'team' to ensure consistency of reporting across the investment portfolio</p>
<p>Recruitment of Growth Hub lead</p> <p>SITREP modelling/testing Incl. new economic briefing notes developed for local leaders</p> <p>Business Support Review Commission</p>	<p>Not actioned at this time. NB current Manager able to extend support until May 2022 only.</p> <p>Test-bed surveys commenced 08/12/21. T&F group updated, learnings incorporated into revised survey and rollout commenced Jan 22</p> <p>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</p>
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Appointment and onboarding of Growth Hub Lead	Delayed due to ongoing LEP Review and unclear policy position regarding Growth Hub futures
SITREP mainstreamed with review cycle	To be reviewed once surveys are completed and draft SITREP circulated
Business Support Review	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

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

Qtr3: Oct-Dec	Progress
Monthly 121 with all LA Leaders/CEOS	121s taking place on a regular basis improving communication and collaboration between ourselves and local partners. This month's engagements include: Economic growth district directors, Staffordshire Moorlands DC, Lichfield DC and Tamworth BC
Covid response task force	The Taskforce has continued to meet in a less formal structure. To share information and ideas to support recovery
Network of Networks event	Meeting held Jan 22
Strategic engagement with local initiatives and working groups to accelerate growth	Activity this month included engagement with: Engagement with district Councils, participation in SMDC peer review,, Growth Hub Steering Group, SOT Opportunities Taskforce, Countywide Redundancy Task Force, We Are Staffs (Ambassadors event), Agri-Tech West Staffs partners , Business Crime Partnership, Inward Investment subgroup, Economic Growth District Directors meeting, FHSF Tamworth, Town Deal Newcastle, Bank of England Monetary briefing, Enterprise Zone Board meeting
Championing the interests of SOT/Staffs through strategic engagement with Midlands Engine/LEP Network/Peers/ Government	Meetings held this month include: Ministerial meeting pre:LUWP, MEIF, Midlands Energy Hub Board, Midlands Engine Digital Conference, Stoke Levelling Up event, Stoke H&W Board, Department for International Trade, Midlands Connect, Midlands LEP peers, Made Smarter , Stoke Business Club, Business Support for Manufacturing Post ERDF , Centre For Cities event

SSLEP Strategy Launch event	On-Hold
SITREP disseminated locally	Under development whilst survey roll-out takes place
Business engagement: ongoing surveys	
Thought leadership: series of round table events - economic changes/recovery/renaissance	To commence post-strategy refresh

Staffing:

- Our temporary Exec/business support officer has changed. Kirsten Trenell joined us in January.
- Current Growth Hub Manager (P/T) is able to extend support until May 2022 only. JD is prepared to recruit to replacement, awaiting policy position on Growth Hub futures and confirmation of future funding

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. This ongoing situation is also impacting on working hours, with many staff members regular extending beyond contractual hours.

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.