



# WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

## Strategic Economic Plan Board

Thursday 16 November 2017 at 10.00am

### Minutes

#### Present

Jonathan Browning  
Councillor George Duggins  
Tim Pile  
Councillor Ian Kettle  
Stewart Towe

Coventry & Warwickshire LEP  
Coventry City Council  
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP  
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council  
Black Country LEP

#### In Attendance

Deborah Cadman  
Paula Deas  
Delma Dwight  
Paul Edwards  
Julia Goldsworthy  
Richard Hutchins  
Sarah Middleton  
Hywel Ruddick  
Perry Wardle

West Midlands Combined Authority  
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP  
Black Country LEP  
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP  
West Midlands Combined Authority  
West Midlands Growth Company  
Black Country LEP  
Black Country LEP  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Apologies

Councillor Ian Courts, Stuart Croft, Councillor Dennis Harvey, Ninder Johal; Paul Kehoe; Councillor Bob Sleigh, Councillor Ian Ward and Graham Wynn.

#### 79/17 Welcome

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting.

#### 80/17 Notes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2017 and Matters Arising

The notes of the meeting were received.

The Chairman advised that the Mayor now required the notes to be submitted to the WMCA Board meetings. He asked that officers ascertain when the notes were expected to be submitted, as his preference would be that they were received by the CA SEP Board for comment and approval prior to submission to the WMCA Board. If this was not possible, then an alternative mechanism for approval would be adopted prior to submission to the WMCA Board.

## 81/17 **SEP Board Tracker Log**

**Agreed** that the SEP Board Tracker be noted.

## 82/17 **Forward Plan**

The Chair noted that the Forward Plan continued to be developed.

**Agreed** that the contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

## 83/17 **Devo 2**

Julia Goldsworthy provided a brief on the Devo 2 and highlighted that given the Government was a minority Government and the Fiscal outlook, the scale of the ambition had been constrained.

She highlighted that in regard to the budget announcement around Devo 2, it was:

- the Housing Deal it was expected that a substantial package would be announced on the within the budget.
- the Skills agenda and apprenticeship levy, there had been limited progress.
- the Metro Mayors, it was noted that their respective concerns regarding the differing levels of co-operation and support of Government Departments, particularly the Department of Education had been conveyed through.
- the Industrial Strategy, it was noted that the Energy asks had been well received; Automotive had engendered interest in the CAD data centre and Ministers were engaged with Creative, Culture deal.
- the Precept powers of Mayor it was advised that there could be expected an announcement on borrowing powers.

Julia Goldsworthy advised that the Communications Plan would be shared with all, early in the following week and the Chairman requested that a common briefing be prepared for all LEPs.

The Chairman commented that there were increasing frustrations with certain Government Departments and suggested that the Metro Mayors and national business organisations should seek to apply pressure through their respective routes into Government. It was suggested that the WMCA Business Advisory Group could act on behalf of the WMCA in lobbying Government in respect of Departments that did not co-operate.

Deborah Cadman advised that Government had committed to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to develop the Industrial Strategy outside of London and there would be a need to hold civil servants to account.

Richard Hutchins advised that in relation to the economic sustainability of the region there was a need to maintain a future relationship with Europe. He advised that currently Birmingham and the West Midlands had an office in Brussels and agreed to share the Greater Birmingham and WM Brussel's office details to Deborah Cadman and Mayor.

Deborah Cadman advised that the Mayor was having ongoing discussions with international partners in order to facilitate economic growth.

The Chairman advised that the public and private sector would continue to have a relationship with Brussels but he would want to wait until the landscape was clearer before committing.

In regard to a Black Country context it was noted that a Brexit Group had been established to consider on a sector by sector basis the business perspective.

**Agreed:**

- (1) That the SEP Board note the update; and
- (2) That the WMCA Business Advisory Group be asked to make representations to Government regarding Departments who were not co-operating.

84/17 **West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) Three-year Business Plan**

Richard Hutchins provided a brief on Business Plan and advised that the business plan was approved by the WMGC Board at its meeting on 2nd October 2017. Since then further consultation had been undertaken with the LEPs and the Chairman of the SEP Board and amendments made to strengthen the explanation of the link between the business plan and the WMCA's Strategic Economic Plan, specifically, an additional paragraph in the executive summary:

“Analysis to understand the relationship between the WMGC's work and the delivery of the SEP has commenced with the support of the Black Country Consortium (see section 2.4). Further guidance and advice on this is being sought via the SEP Board on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, it is recognised that strong partnership working and collaboration across the region will maximise the impact that the WMGC will have on SEP delivery.”

He also stated that two explanatory diagrams had been incorporated.

The Chairman highlighted the need for the Growth Company to change its ethos from a Service Provider to deliver ambitions, as currently the focus appeared to be delivering Service Level Agreements instead of the SEP regional growth ambition to deliver uplift in Gross Value Added (GVA).

The Chairman referenced £700,000 funding from partners, which the SEP Board's view was in order to deliver the growth agenda.

Richard Hutchins advised there were specific deliverables against the 7 headers for the WMGC – Regional marketing; Attracting inward investment; Attracting capital investment; Account management; Promotion of the Visitor Economy; Business Support Co-ordination; and Market Intelligence.

Deborah Cadman suggested that the WMGC should engage with Chairman given the concern at what the delivery of the WMGC was.

The Chairman advised that the 20 SLAs were detailed tasks that did not drive growth and there was a need to ensure there was a balance between tactical/general work. He asked that the alignment to the £700,000 be clarified, and it was noted that the Total income £25M over three years – could detail distribution of budget rather than be expressed per client. He emphasised that the WMGC represented the biggest lever to deliver the WMCA SEP ambitions. Richard Hutchins advised that the WMGC had inherited the former Marketing Birmingham contracts to deliver. It was commented that the WMGC was a new company.

Tim Pile acknowledged that an important role was to market the region however he stated that there was a need to provide a clarity of purpose and understand what the WMGC was doing as well as not doing. Richard Hutchins advised that there had been discussion of having a trading subsidiary but that at present the Business Plan was as written and presented.

**Agreed:**

- (1) That the WMGC engage with the Chairman to:
  - (a) Evidence of funding available and how it is aligned;
  - (b) Focus on how Business Objectives and Governance will work.
- (2) That the SEP Board's comments, to include the meeting with the Chairman, be reported through to the WMGC Board on 22 November 2017.

**85/17 Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism**

The Board noted the request for a “pause” and that SEP Board comments be submitted to WMCA Programme Board.

Paula Deas highlighted the report and its focus on Cultural economy, Creative Industries and Tourism.

The Chairman commented that the focus of the sector in many respects dealt with the quality of life and strength of communities. He advised that he would welcome the ability to evaluate development in this sector as other sectors.

It was noted that the three LEP geography covered media, sport, creative and digital and that whilst the GVA had been identified there was a need to refine what metrics were used and broaden out the sector for the Board.

It was suggested that smaller scale projects be undertaken to demonstrate the importance of the sector in economic activity.

Deborah Cadman advised that the cultural sector provided the “glue” for communities and advised that the WMCA had appointed a Director of Inclusive Growth (Henry Kipping) who would work with LEP Executives to commission projects.

The Chairman advised that the WMCA leadership team needed to connect with the work commenced and take through to the next level of engagement, through:

- (i) Scoping the focus in relation to creative and tourism, to include broader elements of media and sport, as part of package.
- (ii) Methodology undertaken – evaluate quantitatively and qualitative.
- (iii) Need to identify trail blazing pilot(s) to commence delivery imminently.

**Agreed:**

- (1) That the SEP Board welcome further work to be undertaken by LEP Executives and the Director of Inclusive Growth, outlined above; and
- (2) That the WMCA Programme Board be advised of the SEP Board’s comments.

**86/17 Local Sector Strategies**

The Local Sector Strategies slide (Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering) was submitted and the Chairman welcomed the adoption of a common framework.

Deborah Cadman advised that Greg Clarke MP’s view was that the WMCA to deliver the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) outside of London, which would be reflected in Devo deal and reiterated the need to get Civil Servants on Board to deliver LIS.

**Agreed:**

That the SEP Board adopt the format and that each LEP use it to develop their respective approaches to the LIS and report back into the SEP Board.

**87/17 Date of Future Meetings**

It was noted that the meeting schedule for 2018 would follow the WMCA Municipal Year, with dates being set bi-monthly through to early June 2018.

Following the WMCA AGM a schedule would be produced for meetings in the 2018/2019 Municipal year.

The meeting ended at 11.25am