



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Strategic Economic Plan Board Meeting

Wednesday 4 July 2018

### Minutes

#### Present

Jonathan Browning (Chair)	Coventry & Warwickshire LEP
Councillor Ian Courts	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Matthew Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
Ninder Johal	Black Country LEP
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor John Reynolds	City of Wolverhampton Council

#### In Attendance

Paula Deas	Coventry & Warwickshire LEP
Delma Dwight	Black Country LEP
Tom Fletcher	Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP
Julia Goldsworthy	West Midlands Combined Authority
Sarah Middleton	Black Country LEP
Sean Pearce	West Midlands Combined Authority
Patrick White	West Midlands Combined Authority

#### Item No.

#### 1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George Duggins, Paul Moore and Izzi Seccombe and Stuart Croft, Matthew Hammond, Tim Pile, Stewart Towe and Graham Wynn.

#### 2. **Notes of the Strategic Economic Plan Board Meeting held 7 April 2018**

The Chair advised that a number of items from the last meeting were being reported back to the Board – State of the Region and Local Industrial Strategy. With reference to 26/18 – Regional Energy Strategy he advised that this had been added to the Forward Plan and would be reported back to a future meeting.

Reference was made to LEP 'branding' and the Chair advised that this would be a separate meeting with the West Midlands Growth Company.

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting held on the 7 June 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

**3. SEP Board Tracker Log**

Resolved:

That the SEP Board Tracker Log be noted.

**4. Forward Plan**

The Chair advised that the Forward Plan would be populated further when the 2018/19 schedule of meetings was finalised.

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

**5. Re-naming Board and Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference were submitted.

The Chair advised that the suggested name change was to the Strategic Economic Development Board, which would capture the strategic economic plan and industrial strategy programmes plus any other economic related activities the WMCA required the Board to consider.

Reference was made the abbreviation of SED (Strategic Economic Plan Board), which had replaced some of the references to the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and it was asked that this be rectified.

The Chair advised that an issue of membership had been highlighted to him, in that currently the Terms of Reference allowed for two Non-Constituent Members (NCM), one from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP NCM local authorities and one from Coventry & Warwickshire LEP NCM local authorities. At the NCM meeting, Coventry & Warwickshire LEP NCMs had requested that they had a county council and a district council representative. The Mayor had been in attendance and had agreed to this change.

It was commented that this had potential to affect the balance of the Board and it was requested that the Board's Secretariat confirm the membership with the WMCA Governance Team.

Resolved:

- (1) That Board members approve and confirm the name change of the Board to be the WMCA Strategic Economic Development Board;
- (2) That the amended Terms of Reference be circulated to Members; and
- (3) That the Secretariat confirm the Non-Constituent Membership on the Board.

## **Economic Growth Portfolio**

### **6. State of the Region**

Julia Goldsworthy reported the State of the Region and shared the design version with Members.

Councillor Ian Courts referenced the Place Making objective and stated that it did not come through the document enough.

The Chair commented that within the executive summary there needed be reference to the quality as well as quantity of build required, noting that there would need to be a balance between the ability to deliver the project with the quality and overall effect. Julia Goldsworthy agreed there was a need to consider the overall place for developments not just the quality of the housing being delivered.

On a comment regarding a typographical error, Julia Goldsworthy acknowledged that there were specific amends required to the text.

Resolved:

That the officers note and incorporate the comments in relation to place within the Executive Summary.

### **7. Local Industrial Strategy - Statement**

Patrick White referenced his report and advised that he was seeking the Board's views on the emerging priorities and actions for inclusion in the strategy. The current aim was to agree a pre-parliamentary recess progress report with Government and then publish the Industrial Strategy in the Autumn. He was also seeking approval for delegated authority for the Chair, in consultation with the Mayor and Portfolio holder to approve a pre-summer publication as it would be completed before the next meeting of the Board.

Patrick White advised that there were clear opportunities for the region as the UK's centre for mobility and transport innovation, including being the future home of electric motor and battery manufacture and emerging opportunities around life sciences and being a global centre for digitally driven health improvements and life sciences.

Ninder Johal whilst welcoming the document advised that it felt 'Black Country light' and highlighted the supply chain, the Black Country Skills Factory, Light Rail innovation, HVM, Westfield cars etc.

The Chair advised that there were a lot of examples from the WMCA geography to show inclusion for all regions, which should be incorporated into the LIS.

Councillor Ian Courts commented that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the UK was falling and commented was the LIS clear on a competitive strategy, did it highlight the critical factors to make investment happen; what was the resilience strategy; was there a list of 'unique selling points'. He advised that with the ambition for Inclusive Growth there was a need to ensure that all residents and communities benefitted, to include upskilling.

The Chair welcomed the comments and stated that the LIS needed to contain a compelling argument for businesses to locate in the region, which would then drive overall growth. On a comment regarding the West Midlands Growth Company, he noted that the LIS and Growth Company were working closely together.

The Chair referenced the national Prime Minister's National Council held with the LEP Chairs where there had been discussions on the need for LIS to be very focussed. He commented that whilst connectivity and integrated investment were key to driving productivity in the West Midlands, it was important for the sector strengths came through clearly, which would include Smart Data, Life Sciences, Big Data and Artificial Intelligence which were unique to the region.

With reference to the FDI approach it was noted that there was a need for larger industrial sites becoming available on a timely basis to attract Tier 1 companies, thus there was a need for a strategic approach to land availability.

It was noted that there were clear challenges with regard to skills.

The Chair stated that any pre-parliamentary recess statement should be something of substance and, whilst he could act on behalf of the Board he would want the proposed statement shared with all the Board for comment.

Patrick White advised that at the next Board meeting he would have a draft of the LIS that took on board these comments with the intention that is be published in the Autumn.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Board note the update; and
- (2) That the Board, subject to the pre-parliamentary recess LIS statement being shared with Board members for comment, the Chair be given delegated authority to sign off the statement with the Mayor and his office.

## **8. Investment Programme Dashboard**

Sean Pearce referenced the Investment Programme and stated that he wanted to engage with the SEP Board, as the WMCA PMO had agreed to produce a dashboard that would provide the Investment Programme with more context for the Board to consider.

The requirement for the WMCA PMO was to provide the SEP board with appropriate MI (management information) on the investment programme, in order to for the Board to make informed decisions and understand how the programme contributed to the SEP.

With reference to the slides he highlighted working examples of the types of management information reports that could be provided, which were:

Slide 4 – Benefits management indicators

Slide 5 – Risk management, gateway and financial performance

Slide 6 – Investment pipeline view

Sean Pearce advised that the format and the information contained within these examples could be used as a basis of a discussion that the WMCA PMO would wish to undertake with a smaller group of members to understand reporting requirements.

The Chair welcomed the report with the Stage 0 proposal; the reference to highlight the projects contribution to the overall gap; and the assurance to ensure business cases were developed that contributed to the ambitions of the SEP. He added that as well as the contribution to the SEP objectives there should be a connection how the investment programme contributed to the State of the Region.

Julia Goldsworthy advised that the State of the Region was a broader conversation that sat behind the SEP, which included Government policy; what constituent local authorities were doing; what non-constituent local authorities were doing; and what the LEPs were doing.

Councillor Ian Courts referenced the Investment Portfolio Dashboard report and the five Risks and stated that there was a need to build in long term commitments and essential projects. He was advised that the dashboard development was to provide a sense of how projects were progressing and that there was a need to build in a process to realign programmes, if required. There was a need to involve the Board in the discussion.

Resolved:

- (1) That the contributions be noted; and
- (2) That a working group of officers, to include LEP Executives and the WMCA establish the dashboard option to report through to the SEP Board.

## 9. Any Other Business

### (a) Meeting Status

The Chair advised that WMCA Governance Team had advised that future Board meetings should be held in public and comply with the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Whilst the Chair acknowledged the WMCA's desire to increase transparency and accessibility he questioned whether this was appropriate for this Board, as the Board deliberated and discussed working documents prior to submission to the WMCA Board and the public realm.

The Chair's view was that there should be a consistent approach across the WMCA in relation to the sub-boards but questioned how the Investment Board could conduct business in public. He asked the Executive to address the issue with the WMCA Governance Team.

Sean Pearce advised that from a Governance perspective the Board was not a sub-committee of the WMCA Board and had been constituted by the LEPs. It provided a forum for policy and idea formulation which in time would be reported into WMCA Board and so the (informal) public interest test would be met through this mechanism.

Resolved:

That the Board request the Executive to liaise with the Governance Team of the WMCA in regard to the WMCA SEP Board meeting status.

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair advised that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 12 September 2018 between 1000 - 1200.

It was noted that the remaining meetings would be held at 10.00am on 7 November 2018, 23 January 2019, 6 March 2019 and 8 May 2019.

Resolved:

That the date and time of next meeting be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.45am.

**Chair**