



**Strategic Economic Development Board**

**Wednesday 6 March 2019 at 10.00am**

**Notes**

**Members**

Black Country LEP	Stewart Towe (in the Chair)
Birmingham City Council	Councillor Ian Ward
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	Chris Loughran
North Warwickshire BC	Councillor David Humphreys
Solihull MBC	Councillor Ian Courts
West Midlands Universities	Stuart Croft
City of Wolverhampton	Councillor John Reynolds

**Officers in Attendance**

Black Country LEP	Sarah Middleton
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	Paula Deas
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	Paul Edwards
Nuneaton & Bedworth BC	Dawn Dawson
Warwickshire County Council	Geraint Stoneman
West Midlands Combined Authority	Julia Goldsworthy

**Item  
No.**

**31. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Dormer, George Duggins, Abdul Khan, Paul Moore and Bob Sleight and Jonathan Browning, Matthew Hammond, Tim Pile and Graham Wynn.

**32. Notes of the Strategic Economic Plan Board Meeting held 10 December 2018**

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting held on the 10 December 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

**33. SED Board Tracker Log**

Resolved:

That the SED Board Tracker Log be noted.

#### **34. Forward Plan**

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

#### **35. Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) - Statement**

Julia Goldsworthy advised that the document presented had been approved by Jonathon Browning and Councillor Ian Ward, as SED Board Chair and WMCA Economic Portfolio holder respectively.

A final draft was awaited from BEIS but initial feedback was: -

- That the document was not a vehicle for funding;
- There needed to be a separate tranche of funding documents, for Brexit planning and the comprehensive spending review;
- Creative – the proposed pilot needed to be scaled up;

In regard to the SED Board's role, this would be to monitor progress against a LIS delivery plan; identify and gaps with the LIS; and there was a need to revisit the Terms of Reference and membership of the Board.

A standing item, once the LIS was launched would be to develop Implementation Plans. Julia Goldsworthy advised that the current priority was to publish before Purdah, which commenced on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Chris Loughran queried the enthusiasm to launch without funding in place. He was advised that it was to provide clarity of what the LIS needed to deliver for the West Midlands not solely for funding. Chris Loughran acknowledged the point but advised that once published it was the credibility of those involved in its production to include the three LEPs. He commented, as a personal view, that if the Government's ambition was for the WM LIS to be jointly signed then they should provide some resource for the ambitions set out in the document.

Julia Goldsworthy advised that throughout the Country the development of individual LIS's were at different timescales; the LEP Review had not yet concluded; and the announcement on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was awaited. She stated that the LIS document did articulate key opportunities for the region, such as automotive and stated that once published the region could push for delivery.

Councillor Ian Ward advised if the WM LIS was published before the spending review, then it could be used as leverage to capture resource for the WM.

Sarah Middleton advised that there was a need to ensure that the final version contained the original "Asks" to deliver the WM LIS ambitions. Councillor John Reynolds added that for Wolverhampton and the Black Country key was the supply chain asks and he stated that the document still needed to build in specificity around the supply chain.

Paula Deas advised the LIS team were in the final stages of updating the document and once approved by the Chair, the document would then go to Government for sign off. Julia Goldsworthy added that once Greg Clarke had signed off the document it would then go to the LIS Committee.

Stewart Towe advised that LEP Chairs covered a lot of areas of business to include the broader supply chain. With the current economic climate and uncertainty, banks were not committing on major developments and there was business stagnation, however he stated that once there was a resolution there would be a deluge of request for funding projects, as the pressure had been building up.

This was acknowledged and Julia Goldsworthy advised that the proposed WM LIS launch dates were now 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March but agreed to Members updated on developments.

Paula Deas highlighted that the Mayor had requested an opening dedication to Professor Lord Bhattacharyya.

Resolved:

1. That the Board note the update;
2. That the comments of the Board be fed into the LIS document; and
3. That the Board be circulated with a final draft of the LIS and any further comments be submitted direct to the WMCA LIS Team.

### **36. Brexit**

An update was provided on the Birmingham Brexit Commission which included officers from all WM local authorities.

The discussions included: - establishing a no deal view; capacity building and sign posting for the region's companies; a Brexit Health check for companies; there was an operational, dedicated website; a Brexit contingency fund had been pooled between the WMCA and local authorities to enable co-ordination of funds across the region. It was noted that the approach had been held up as best practice for other regions.

Whilst no new date had been set officials from Treasury would be attending next week with the Director General, BEIS attending in the future.

It was asked that when these meetings were held that updates be provided to local authorities and local businesses so that the local business issues could be fed in and resonate with Whitehall.

Resolved:

That the Board note the update.

**37. Investment Programme**

The Investment Programme Dashboard was submitted.

It was noted that the Investment Programme going forward needed to show how it impacted on the LIS and the Implementation Plan.

There was a need to show the priorities and how it was proposed to fund them, such as through local authorities, the LEP's or the WMCA.

Resolved:

That the Board note the update.

**38. LEP Review - Exemption**

The meeting was advised that within the new National Assurance Framework for LEPs, the three LEPs had been required to apply for an exemption as the outcome of the LEP review were not yet known.

Stewart Towe noted the state of flux across the Country but advised that the LEPs, WMCA and local authorities needed to be prepared for whatever outcomes.

Chris Loughran commented that the LEP Boards were made up of volunteers from the business community and the difficulties to be motivated in the current climate.

Resolved:

That the Board note the update.

**39. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 8 May 2019 at 10.00am in Birmingham.

Resolved:

That the date of the next meeting be noted.

The meeting closed at 10.50am

Chair