



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Strategic Economic Development Board Meeting

Wednesday, 17 June 2020 at 12.00pm

Minutes

Members

Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP
Black Country LEP
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP
Cabinet Portfolio - Economy &
Innovation
Solihull MBC
Warwickshire County Council
West Midland Growth Company

Tim Pile (in the Chair)
Tom Westley
Sarah Windrum

Councillor Ian Brookfield
Councillor Karen Grinsell
Councillor Peter Butlin
Matthew Hammond

Officers in Attendance

Black Country LEP
Black Country LEP
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP
City of Wolverhampton
Energy Capital
Solihull MBC
West Midland Combined Authority
PWC
PWC
PWC
PWC

Sarah Middleton
Prof Delma Dwight
Paula Deas
Katie Trout
Tim Johnson
Matthew Rhodes
Perry Wardle
Julia Goldsworthy
Lisa Hamilton
Ian Martin
Tim Martin
Rebecca Riley
Jonathan Skinner
Jodie Townsend
Mark Ambler
Vikki Holland
Tara Shrestha Carney
Jing Teow

**Item
No.**

64. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Nick Abell, Prof John Latham and from Councillors Adrian Andrew, Ian Courts, George Duggins, Angus Lees, Izzi Seccombe and Ian Ward.

65. Declarations of Interest

Matthew Hammond declared his interest in Minute 71 Economic Recovery Plan, as Chairman of the Midlands Region and Senior Partner at PWC, as PWC had been commissioned to lead on the work.

No other declarations were made.

66. Notes of the Strategic Economic Plan Board Meeting held 20th May 2020

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting held on the 20th May 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

67. Forward Plan

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan be updated and noted.

68. Terms of Reference

The Chair advised that the CA was currently updating their Assurance Framework and that the Recovery Plan was the current priority.

Katie Trout advised work had been taken to refresh the Board's Term of Reference in light of the focus on economic recovery and to review the membership of the Board.

Primarily the amendments included an increase in private sector membership and an increase in academic sector representation to include two universities and FE College. The aim was to retain that membership at 20, in line with the National Assurance Framework provisions, however if there was to be an increase in political membership then the size of the Board would need to be greater than 20. She advised that the Board would meet as regularly as required. It was noted that these proposed revisions needed to be undertaken in the context of a wider CA review of their Assurance Framework and all Theme Boards.

Jodie Townsend advised that the CA were working with central Government to provide a revised Single Assurance Framework (SAF), the theme groups would have a series of core roles to support the SAF, Annual Business Plan priorities, as well as a continuing management and advisory role for their portfolio area.

Tim Martin added that he felt that this had been a useful exercise to provide for discussion. He commented that a Board of 20 was already quite a large number.

The Chair advised that the Board already received a large number of apologies thus his view was that a slightly larger Board provided the opportunity, especially with the right balance of members would ensure better attendance.

Cllr. Karen Grinsell queried what the proposed numbers Katie Trout advised that for elected Members it was proposed to have 2 members per LEP geographical area, 1 member from a non-constituent borough and the Portfolio lead at the CA.

Julia Goldsworthy queried the mechanics of appointing the private sector members such as ensuring key sectors were represented, the business base and diversity. She stated that the agenda was fast moving and related to the wider recovery in the region, highlighting other groups involved to include the Mayor's Business Advisory Group.

The stated that he wanted to ensure that the SED Board remained for purpose and in regard to membership advised that his view was that it should reflect the geography and sectors represented. Whilst Matthew Hammond represented the WM Growth Company, there was a need for greater representation from the Business and Professional Service sector. He stated that the 3 LEP Boards had a mix of private sector representation.

Councillor Peter Butlin stated that in respect of the private sector representation, the big companies had direct access to Government thus his view was that representation should come through the SMEs, utilising the Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of commerce etc. It was noted that there should also be consideration of the number of employees a representative company had.

Sarah Windrum, attending as alternate for Nick Abell, echoed the comments of the Chair in that each LEP knew their geography's strengths and thus the representatives could come through LEPs and the Growth Hubs. She noted that Create Central were on the Screen Industry Body and suggested that they could be used as business representation.

Katie Trout stated that the LEPs had a good geographical and business split plus the university sector representatives on LEPs also had links with sectors.

Councillor Ian Brookfield welcomed the review as a start but commented that there were too many proposed changes at present with new people and new businesses to come onto the Board.

Jodie Townsend stated that her role in the overall SAF review was emerging and that this report and suggestions represented a good background to her work.

Whilst the Chair recognised that, he highlighted that the SED Board was already established differently to other CA Boards, in that as well as business representation the Board had included University representation.

Julia Goldsworthy suggested that the emerging governance review work for the CA be shared with the Chair and noted that further discussions could be undertaken with Jodie Townsend, to inform the final SAF.

Resolved:

- 1) That the update be received and noted; and
- 2) That officers of the CA keep the Chair and LEP representatives apprised of the work being undertaken on the SAF and, more specifically, the SED Board Terms of Reference work.

Economic & Innovation Portfolio

69. West Midland CA Covid Economic Monitoring – WM Redi weekly monitor and the updated SED Board Economic Dashboard

Prof Delma Dwight and Rebecca Riley were in attendance to provide economic monitoring reporting.

Rebecca Riley advised that the WM Redi weekly monitor was published each Friday and asked that Members review the issues the information focused on and if there was anything else felt to be required. She advised that in 2008/09 the WM had taken the biggest economic hit but had also come out of their recession the quickest and the current data coming out was that WM was again the worst hit region with the higher education, automotive and supply chain sectors all taking a hit. A lot of people were furloughed and there was a lot of uncertainty, with a number of redundancy announcements imminent. She agreed to send the updated dashboard when published.

It was noted that detailed mapping was being undertaken on furloughed employees, which equated to 0.5million across the CA region, representing 26.9% of people in employment.

The Chair expressed concern for youth employment and hoped that the region could drive a strong economic recovery.

Councillor Peter Butlin referred to his experience and advised that Warwickshire County Council had seen a large increase in planning applications, highlighted that there had been a spike in patent registrations and new business start-ups. He commented that he felt there was confidence across businesses.

The Chair welcomed the optimism and stated that whilst he hoped the region would come out stronger, it would be different.

Resolved:

- 1) That Officers and PWC the WM Redi weekly monitor and the updated SED Board Economic Dashboard be circulated to Members; and
- 2) That the data submitted and comments thereon be noted.

70. State of the Region - Approach

Rebecca Riley outlined the paper and what the team were trying to achieve in a compressed timescale. She highlighted the sources of data and that given the 3-month time-lag, at present did not assist with the current situation. It was noted that horizon scanning would be necessary to consider the impact of the crisis and what outcomes would be required. She advised that the local authority data collated at a regional level would be helpful.

The Chair noted the aim was to publish the document in July and asked that the first draft be shared with him and the Board.

Resolved: That the Board receive a draft of the State of the Region report.

71. Economic Recovery Plan

- **Overall approach**
- **Immediate proposition to Government**
- **Roadmap**
- **Sub-regional activity**

Julia Goldsworthy advised that there was a Fiscal event scheduled on 7th July, which would require immediate propositions ready for Government but also a developing road map to mobilise support for a longer-term recovery.

Mark Ambler, PWC, referenced the focus on Propositions and Packages, highlighting that the initial pipeline of projects grew to 170 projects. Thus, there had been a need to consider which projects were ready to go with tangible activity; the material impact of a project; and did they provide a coherent transformational package to help the WM recover from the pandemic.

He referenced the following three Recovery Drivers: -

- 1) Green Growth and Electrification
- 2) Making the most of Our Assets
- 3) Data driven health and life sciences and a healthy workforce

The following three Enablers: -

- 1) Digital and physical connectivity
- 2) Housing
- 3) People, Skills and Employability

Mark Ambler advised that each of these were cross cutting themes and that draft business cases were being produced for the identified interventions and referenced the outputs being produced for Government and Local Authority audiences.

The Chair advised that there was a need to see the scale and ambition of the recovery plan.

Cllr. Karen Grinsell highlighted the need for early wins, such as HS2, but also the need to target youth unemployment. It was noted that a detailed text version had been shared with Members for comment.

Sarah Middleton asked what aspects of the programmes had been picked up, referencing Very Light Rail as an example. She stated that there was a need to understand what was included and what was excluded, so that local authorities' and LEPs could identify the gaps and consider other funding packages available, if required.

The Chair agreed that it would be good for all to understand and asked if there was a process for feedback. Julia Goldsworthy advised that there was a draft content and design for each key package, with a two-page underlying summary. The Chair understood it represented a start but stated that for local authorities, LEPs and the university partners, there was a need for them to see the detail.

Councillor Peter Butlin stated that Germany had provided €134BN for their recovery and commented that whilst £3BN appeared to be a lot, given what the region contributed to the economy, there was a need to be ambitious with the recovery plan.

Councillor Karen Grinsell referenced the plans for the older unemployed and Jing Teow advised that there were three strands to the plan – Young People; WM Back to Work – helping older workers back into work through retraining i.e. logistics and the health and care sector; and Future Jobs i.e. upskilling workers for green growth, construction and digital.

The Chair advised that the Health and Care Sector alone had 1.5million employees across the region and asked about the next steps. Julia Goldsworthy advised that the Plan would go back through to the Economic Impact Group, incorporating the comments of the Board. The Chair advised that the more information shared with the Board would in turn enable the Board to be more supportive for officers.

In respect of the longer-term recovery road map the meeting was advised that Vikki Holland at the PWC had been leading on this element of the overall plan for the region.

On a question posed regarding what success would look like in delivering economic recovery, the Chair advised that in respect of delivering the carbon zero agenda, success would feature a strong sustainable element. He added that Members should provide feedback off-line through Julia Goldsworthy on the Roadmap slides.

Matthew Hammond and Julia Goldsworthy referenced the scale of support and ambition in the plan but advised that the plan also needed to be credible. Thus, there was a balance regarding maximising the scale of the plan against the speed of access to necessary resources.

The Chair commented that there was a need to be ambitious and be seen to be ambitious for the fiscal event on 7th July and also for the Autumn spending review.

Sarah Windrum advised that she would wish to see more emphasis on capital investment in place i.e. housing.

Julia Goldsworthy advised that the CA were working closely with LEPs and local authorities for the longer-term ambitions and impact. The Chair advised that he would welcome a “heat map” to understand the economic impact across the region of the proposals thus far.

Julia Goldsworthy advised that another impact would be the latest economic data and the impact on jobs. The Chair advised that jobs need to be the number one deliverable for the region. Mark Ambler advised that for construction the interventions should provide for 75,000 jobs, whilst non-construction would be between 55-65,000 jobs.

Resolved: that the PWC and officers consider the comments of the Board Members detailed in the above narrative and incorporate them into the Economic Recovery Plan.

72. Notes for WMCA Energy Capital Board held on 4th March 2020

The Chair noted that Matthew Rhodes had joined the meeting. Matthew Rhodes advised that the Minutes of the WMCA Energy Capital Board held on 5th March 2020 were submitted for the Board’s information.

Resolved: that the minutes of the WMCA Energy Capital Board held on 5th March 2020 be received and noted.

73. Notes for WMCA Innovation Board held on 5th March 2020

The Minutes WMCA Innovation Board held on 5th March 2020 were submitted for the Board’s information.

Resolved: that the minutes of the WMCA Innovation Board held on 5th March 2020 be received and noted.

74. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: that it be noted that the next meeting would be held in the next month 23rd July 2020.

The meeting closed at 1.25pm

Chair