



West Midlands Combined Authority

Strategic Economic Development Board Meeting

Thursday 19 November 2020 at 11.30am

Notes

Members

Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	Tim Pile (in the Chair)
Black Country LEP	Tom Westley
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	Sarah Windrum
WMCA Deputy Mayor	Councillor Bob Sleigh
Cabinet Portfolio - Economy & Innovation (City of Wolverhampton)	Councillor Ian Brookfield
Dudley MBC	Councillor Angus Lees
Redditch BC	Councillor Matthew Dormer
Sandwell MBC	Councillor Danny Millard
Solihull MBC	Councillor Ian Courts
Warwickshire CC	Councillor Izzi Seccombe
WM Growth Company	Matthew Hammond
WM Universities	Prof John Latham

Officers in Attendance

Black Country LEP	Sarah Middleton
Black Country LEP	Prof Delma Dwight
City of Wolverhampton	Laura Collings
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	Paula Deas
Coventry City Council	Andy Williams
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	Katie Trout
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	Kate Fulcher
West Midlands Combined Authority	Julia Goldsworthy
West Midlands Combined Authority	Adam Hawksbee
West Midlands Combined Authority	Rebecca Riley
West Midlands Combined Authority	Jonathan Skinner

Energy Capital Board

Chair	Matthew Rhodes (Chair)
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Major New Market Opportunities – Health Technologies

Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	Kathryn Wagstaff
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Major New Market Opportunities – Logistics

Chair	Peter Ward
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	Katie Hughes

**Item
No.**

129. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adrian Andrews, George Duggins, David Humphreys and Ian Ward.

130. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

131. Notes of the Strategic Economic Plan Board Meeting held 20 October 2020

Resolved:

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

132. SED Board Tracker Log

Resolved:

That the SED Board Tracker Log be received and noted.

133. Forward Plan

The Chair noted the Forward Plan and referenced 17 December and the need to develop a draft protocol for developing a regional pipeline in response to new reactive funding opportunities. He advised that this needed to be agreed prior to any new funding announcements, which could be through the Spending Review to be announced next week and asked that the draft protocol be circulated to Members to be agreed by written procedure. Katie Trout advised of the work that had been undertaken with colleagues across the West Midlands and officers were comfortable with what was proposed. It was noted that the document could be circulated to SED Board members.

In respect of the overall Forward Plan the Chair was content with the development and noted that only one Major New Market Opportunities remained to be scheduled.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Forward Plan continue to be reviewed and updated to provide for a planned future work programme of the Board; and
- 2) That the Regional Pipeline Protocol be circulated through to Members of the SED Board.

Economic & Innovation Portfolio

134. Membership

Katie Trout provided an overview of the work officers had undertaken on membership since the adoption of the revised Terms of Reference on 14th September 2020, the Board had agreed that the membership would be refreshed to include:

- WMCA Portfolio Holder for Economy & Innovation
- Mayor of the West Midlands
- Constituent Members – 1 Representative per Constituent Council
- Non-Constituent Member – 1 Representative
- LEPs – Representative from each of the 3 LEP Areas
- West Midlands Growth Company Representative
- West Midlands Combined Universities Representative
- West Midlands Higher Education Representative
- West Midlands Further Education Representative
- 6 post to cover key sectors.

Whilst Katie Trout noted that the public sector and LEP appointments were provided, as well as the WM Growth Company and Combined Universities, she stated that WM Higher Education representative would be drawn from Aston or Birmingham Universities and the WM Further Education representatives had a regional body and they would be asked to nominate. It was noted that Metals and Materials was represented by the BC LEP Chair, and that in respect of consideration of the 6-sector posts, the following sectors had been identified - automotive, construction, creative industries, life sciences, logistics/transport technologies and low carbon tech and services, with the following principles to be applied:

- Sector leads to be drawn from existing sectors boards/groups/cluster organisations to enable strong connections with sector work;
- Good geographical mix of members; and
- Broad diversity of membership, including size of business, gender and ethnicity.

Sarah Windrum advised that the three LEP geography was known best by the LEPs and being mindful of diversity LEP members could assist with advising potential new members of the commitments required, what benefits they could bring to the Board and what benefit the Board brought to them and the region. The Chair agreed that potential new members would need clarity of the expectations for their participation.

Matthew Rhodes, Chair of Energy Capital Board, advised that the Boards reporting up to the SED Board already included a good breadth of knowledge across energy infrastructure, digital and 5G, culture etc. and it was noted that these bodies would continue to report through to the Board.

Councillor Ian Courts commented on the lack of representation from the retail and visitor economies, whilst automobile was one of the big pillars in the WM economy and would always have opportunity to be represented.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe referenced the visitor attraction sector which was a different type of business with different dynamics but provided for lifestyle choices, making the wider business offer more attractive. She queried if there was a risk of losing the balance with the exclusion of arts, culture etc.

Julia Goldsworthy advised that there were other areas where sectors could be represented to include the sub-board covering energy, culture and tourism which all fed upwards to the SED Board. She stated that in increasing the private sector representation there was a need to ensure the diversity of membership, including size of business, gender and ethnicity and seeking members from sectors not covered by existing CA structures. She advised that there would always be an opportunity to review the membership.

Councillor Ian Brookfield advised that he would not wish to see any one sector excluded and advised that the SED Board should be considered a core membership, who could all upon experts from other sectors as and when required. He stated that he would wish to see officers work hard on recruiting on a geographical and diversity basis.

The Chair agreed that the SED Board should be a core group with the ability to call in other sector representatives as and when required and if it was felt moving forward that other sectors, such as retail, were more relevant to the work programme then the membership could be reviewed.

The Chair asked that Katie Trout be advised of any nominations with the next 10 days to enable new members to commence at the December Board.

Julia Goldsworthy added the Economic Impact Group would also consider the representatives to the SED Board on the terms outlined.

Resolved:

That the SED Board request all Members and officers through their respective organisations provide Katie Trout with nominations on the terms that have been outlined, being mindful of the requirement for a broad diversity of membership, including geography, size of business, gender and ethnicity.

135. West Midland CA Covid Economic Monitoring – WM Redi weekly monitor (13 November 2020) and the updated SED Board Economic Dashboard

Rebecca Riley was in attendance to provide an update on the economic monitoring reporting. She detailed the monitoring report was contained in the agenda highlighted the following statistics:

- GDP – 1/4ly monitor was -3.5%, thus heading into the pandemic the economy was already in a weakened position and a lot of forecasts were predicting a reduction greater than 10%;

- Skills Impact 1 – Jobs and Recruitment – detailing the numbers still enrolled in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) – now extended through to the end of March. The region was therefore still at risk of a steep increase in unemployment once the scheme ends.
- Skills Impact 2 – Claimant Count (DWP) - The October figures continue to show an increase in claimants albeit at a much slower pace than between January and July. The increase continues to be faster for 16-24-year-olds than the general workforce.
- Skills Impact 3 – Employment Rate - whilst the West Midlands Figures had not been quite as heavily impacted as the UK average, though this may simply reflect a greater proportion of people still enrolled on the furlough scheme and thus there was the potential for a greater impact in this region once the furlough scheme had been lifted.
- Skills Impact 4 – Education and training – there was an impact on stated school attendance figures and a decline in apprenticeship figures in comparison with the previous years.

Whilst noting the presentation the Chair observed that a number of presentations had been submitted close to the meeting which had not enabled a pre-circulation of them and asked that for future meetings presentations be submitted in good time. Rebecca Riley noted the comment but observed that her presentation was an addendum to the pre-circulated Economic Performance Dashboard and provided the Board with the very latest data.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) note the data submitted; and
- 2) request officers, where possible, to provide all presentations being submitted to the Board to be circulated in advance of the meeting, ideally with the distribution of the agenda.

136. Policy Context and Developments

Julia Goldsworthy provided a verbal update on the Policy Context.

- **Support to businesses during lockdown and in tier system**

She advised for business support there were three emerging proposals to be considered by the CA Recovery Forum who were meeting tomorrow:

- Equity Fund Proposal - Detail being further developed and questions addressed, in conjunction with project sponsors.
- Intelligence Proposition- intelligence and data scoping proposal led by ODA and Black Country Consortium Ltd.
- Aligned business support – scope to be worked up.

She stated that further reports on the Equity Fund and Intelligence Proposition proposals would be reported back through the SED Board.

- **Comprehensive Spending Review**

She advised that Government announcements were already in process to include environmental, zero carbon and defense. Lobbying had taken place to seek clarity on the core revenue asks, which had been the back bone of economic delivery to date. There were significant revenue asks around construction, Gigafactory and UK.

- **Local Recovery & Devolution White Paper and Industrial Strategy Refresh**

She advised that the Devolution white paper had been deferred and would be superceded by the industrial strategy refresh.

- **EU Transition period ending**

She advised that the exit from the EU would be finalised in early December and the deal holding position looked good although acknowledging there was work to do in this space. It was expected that there would be a Brexit support fund; briefings had been provided to West Midland MPs on issues in relation to the Rules of Origin; discussions with Cabinet Offices Field Force team had taken place because of the WM high level of exports - challenges remained with businesses identified and those they had engaged with, as they did not share the data who they had reached out to, thus we cannot help with the gaps, which was a concern.

Councillor Ian Courts stated that he hoped there was a green economy focus on the motor industry now, to include the supply chain and asked if the CA had the right focus. Julia Goldsworthy advised that they were reviewing the sector action plans and considering electrification, the Gigafactory etc.

The Chair stated that the team when they considered the recharge and sector work streams, should do through the lense of the green economy and reposition the recharge ask in light of the 10 Point Plan for a Green economy.

Councillor Ian Brookfield agreed with the comments and welcomed the proposal.

Matthew Rhodes advised that the CA had just undertaken the work being referenced and highlighted the prospectus - Proposal to HM Government: A regional partnership approach to the net zero transition and a green industrial revolution – attached the minutes of the Energy Capital Board.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) That the Board receive and note the Policy Context and Developments in respect of

- Support to businesses during lockdown and in tier system
- Comprehensive Spending Review
- Local Recovery & Devolution White Paper
- EU Transition period ending
- Industrial Strategy Refresh

2) That it be noted that the SED Board's request on a focus on the sector refresh to reposition the recharge ask in light of the 10 Point Plan for a Green economy, had commenced with the Prospectus published in the pack - Proposal to HM Government: A regional partnership approach to the net zero transition and a green industrial revolution.

137. Future Research Focus

Rebecca Riley highlighted delivery thus far on the following 6 priorities, contained in the report:

- Priority 1 - Review of regional priorities
- Priority 2 - Review of the key international, national trends (Megatrends),
- Priority 3 Scenario planning and purchase of a Regional Economic Forecasting Model – RFQ is finalised and with WMCA procurement.
- Priority 4 Outputs/Outcomes framework – DREAM have looked at this and have developed an exemplar approach on the Business Support theme. A logic model has been developed to illustrate how the evidence is turned into action and delivery.
- Priority 5 Development of business case, evaluation and monitoring guidance
- Priority 6 Update of the State of the Region

She advised that one of the asks in the CSR had been to extend the capacity of the external research programme, which included priorities not funded to date but advised that the shift to a one-year investment programme would delay or constrain some of these and Dream would therefore revisit these asks to look at other delivery mechanisms or interim work, to include:

- A regional business database which would provide consistent analysis and evaluation evidence to be generated. Alongside consistent surveying of businesses for monitoring purposes
- Lack of capacity and expertise across the public sector as highlighted in the ODA report for data, analysis and evaluation skills.
- Lack of indicators in some specific areas, especially around social impacts and monitoring, which makes understanding the impacts difficult to monitor.

In respect of other regional research work she advised that WMREDI – projects were now being launched and partner engagement had commenced and advised that the wider programme details would be made available at the December SED board.

She presented the development of the logic chains - output of outcomes which all sectors could use this tool and the last slide provided an exemplar of how it worked for the Health Technologies sector. The work also underpinned green book assessments and provided for business confidence.

She advised that experience from previous recoveries showed that the region's main tradeable assets could boost a quick recovery, so it was vital they were protected and highlighted that the region's universities were also at risk.

Julia Goldsworthy welcomed the logic chains as a useful tool to help pull out new ways of working for major new market opportunities and the Chair commented that they provided a useful structure.

Rebecca Riley asked if Members to advise her if they were aware of research practitioners who would be appropriate to be involved in the programme.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) note the work undertaken on the logic chain tool; and
- 2) ask Members to advise Rebecca Riley of research practitioners who would be appropriate to be involved in the programme.

138. Economic Strategic Milestones

Julia Goldsworthy stated that the core activities had been mapped and the report was to agree the broad milestones for how partners across the region would update the economic strategies, building on the outputs of the research programme and relevant national and regional events.

Jonathan Skinner highlighted the national contextual positions, that is that the Governor of the Bank of England and economic forecasters had emphasised the unprecedented degree of uncertainty about the UK's economic trajectory and status of government policy, to include trade, public spending, sector policy. He advised that the table in the report linked together major milestones, research output and the plan to develop the region's shared priorities, strategies and programmes, and reminded Members that in May it had been agreed to embed all recovery activity linked in with future research projects to include the state of the region, megatrends. The contents of the table set out the proposed flight plan for the next 12 months and asked for comments.

The Chair welcomed the table but asked officers translate the big milestones into a strategic plan that could be incorporated into the Forward Plan on a monthly basis.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) agree the broad milestones for how partners across the region would update the economic strategies, building on the outputs of the research programme and relevant national and regional events; and
- 2) request that the broad milestones be translated into a strategic plan for incorporation into the Board's Forward Plan.

139. Major New Market Opportunities – Health Technologies

Kathryn Wagstaff provided an overview of the sector to include, that the sector:

- 400 life sciences businesses in the WMCA area.
- 11,000 employees.
- Generating approximately £4bn turnover.
- Mostly small businesses with a few big names and some major assets. such as the universities in the area.

With reference to the Major New Market opportunity, she highlighted that the sector was known for the four “Ds” - Data, Devices, Diagnostics and Digital Health and that the Recovery Plan was centred around 5 key activities:

1. Develop an attractive and supportive regional cluster offer to industry and investors.
2. Support the development of the Precision Health Technologies Accelerator.
3. Audit of space and support – to confirm levels of demand and that the Sector was fit for purpose in light of Covid plus mapping business support.
4. Develop a dedicated life sciences and healthcare, employer driven work academy – linked to the issue of the need for relevant skills being raised by respondents.
5. Review of the supply chain capacity within the West Midlands Data Driven Health and Life Sciences sector.

The key challenges facing the sector were:

Covid-19, with a consequent change in priorities to focus on the short term; whilst not without impact, but areas of priority intervention remain consistent; and the need to accelerate the innovation led interventions were a key impact for policy team; and
EU transition – to include Regulation; the Supply chain; and the unknown.

In regard to the priorities and next steps she advised that there was a need to deliver the 5 key activities; Develop a pipeline of projects and scope future needs of the sector, to include - expand the supply chain work, support the Health Tech Cluster; funding options for businesses in the sector, capitalise on 5G opportunities and unblock the perceived regulation issues; and the opportunity to develop Inward Investment working with Department of International Trade (DIT) and through the Commonwealth Games and City of Culture.

In respect of Asks of the SED Board, she advised

1. Note the very variable business situations that different parts of the Data Driven Health and Life Sciences sector is facing as a result of Covid-19 and impending EU Transition.
2. Note progress to date in delivering the Data Driven Health and Life Sciences Recovery Plan and endorse the on-going interventions.
3. Agree to share intelligence from engagement with businesses in this sector to help further develop the plan.

Councillor Courts referenced the opportunities around HS2 to develop a Health Campus and stated that the region should promote ourselves given a large population and a number of health assets required rebuilding. In regard to the UK Central he stated he would wish to see more support, highlighting that 70% of the UK population were within 2 hours of the area.

Kathryn Wagstaff advised that she was in regular contact with Katie Judge and in respect of DIT it was important to get the UK Central offer right.

Julia Goldsworthy noted the opportunity for health in the region, noting that health outcomes also needed to improve. She suggested that Kathryn Wagstaff contact Ed Cox in order to be clear how the inclusive growth ambitions could be developed. It was commented that there were 100,000 people that did not work because of ill health, so there was an economic impact through improved health outcomes.

The Chair welcomed the comments and advised that in respect of the MNMO for the sector it was not clear whether it had in its scope the integrated care system requirements. He noted that UK Central represented a terrific offer and stated that there should be more businesses approaching the region. He asked that these two elements be developed.

Sarah Windrum referenced the opportunities in gaming developments for comparisons of space, business support, scaling etc. she also advised that she assumed they would already be linking in with the WM Health Clusters but asked that she have a conversation off-line in regard to opportunities in gaming, life sciences and 5G.

The Chair noted the benefits of the health economy and the broader health issues to solve. He advised that attracting new businesses to the region and developing the health technology industry would provide for measurement of success.

Paula Deas noted that the Mega Lab for Covid19 testing being located at Leamington Spa provided an opportunity and there was a need to connect in with them. The Chair observed that it was great news for the region and for jobs.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe noted that the NHS were undertaking their recruiting and highlighted the further opportunities for the supply chain, to include the universities' medical schools.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) receive and note the update on the Modern Services Sector Major New Market Opportunities;
- 2) note that the offers to link into the MNMO review, as outlined in the above be followed up.

140. Sector Plans – Logistics and Transport Technologies

Katie Hughes and Peter Ward.

Katie Hughes provided an overview of the sector to include that logistics accounted for 7.2% of WMCA total enterprises; 4.8% of WMCA total; 5.9% of WMCA total jobs; £46,116 average GVA per worker; and highlighted the Midlands Engine region was the “Golden Triangle” location for major hubs and SRFIs (M1, M6, M69) e.g., Hams Hall, Birch Coppice, new WM Interchange (Magna Park, Leicestershire; East Midlands Airport) within 4 hours of ports and 90% population. The industry was dominated by road-borne freight (78%) and retail (65%).

She highlighted the challenges and opportunities for the region, which had given rise to the Priority actions around the Foundations of Productivity: -

- Ideas and Innovation - Develop regional Centre of Excellence for academia-industry and cross-sector cooperation and collaboration on research and innovation.
- People and Skills - Deliver sector skills review, mapping future skills requirements.
- Business Environments - Provide focused business support programmes to develop technology adoption strategies.
- Place - Provide analysis and evaluation of models for urban and rural logistics for local pilots.
- Infrastructure - Work with transport infrastructure organisations and decision-makers, planning, highways, rail and air authorities to better integrate the needs of local and national networks.

Peter Ward, UKWA, advised that logistics was seeing phenomenal growth at present with the rise in e-commerce and it was anticipated that the sector would grow by 25k FTE year on year. Covid-19 had accelerated the growth and on-line sales were running at 30/40% of business for retail. He noted that some of the challenges had been advised to include infrastructure, power, automation, charging points for commercial vehicles. He advised that the UKWA welcomed being more engaged with LEPs, as it was important that the public and private sectors were brought together to bring young people into the industry. He added that they were working with DWP to focus on bringing young people into the sector and advised that the exploitation of EU workers over the last 20 years with relatively low wages was no longer sustainable; which would lead to a need to reset consumer expectations as free delivery and free returns would no longer be a sustainable business model.

Katie Hughes advised that the next stage would be to advise how the Sector Plan would meet the challenges and it was noted that this would be available in the New Year.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) note the update on the Sector Plan for Logistics and Transport Technologies; and
- 2) note that the Forward Plan would be updated to include the next stage of reporting on the sector to the SED Board.

141. WM Business Engagement Plan

Katie Fulcher advised that the report provided an update on delivery of the plan to date, which originally provided had an activity plan running from May – October 2020, shared between the LEPs and WMGC, however some of the activities were delayed against the original timeline, and an update on progress and expected delivery dates were provided.

She highlighted that:

- Over 500 businesses had received a meaningful engagement;
- WMGC has conducted regular business surveys to ascertain overall state of the regional Visitor Economy sector and more than 200 businesses had been surveyed across the three LEP areas and more than 50 businesses had been engaged through in-depth 1:1 to phone calls, as part of WMGC account management services.
- The LEPs had conducted multiple consultation sessions with sector steering groups, sector representative bodies and wider stakeholders and partners, to include the Midlands Aerospace Alliance, UK Metals Council, Creative Industry Federation and the Chambers of Commerce.
- Local academic experts from the region's universities had also provided insights to the recovery plans.

- In addition, video presentations detailing current status of Sector Recovery Plans had been circulated with local authorities in the GBS LEP area to invite further input. The videos had been viewed 160 times to date and it was noted that BCLEP and C&WLEP were intending to do the same.

She advised on the achievements against the original plan and advised that they had created a forum where partner organisations across the public and education sectors could provide ongoing input to Sector Recovery Plans.

Recommendations for new activity required included; further investigation of business sentiment toward recovery in the current climate; more interrogation of shared West Midlands data; closer linking up with business groups to share intelligence; consideration around how to most effectively share all of the intelligence that had been gathered thus far, wider than sharing the Sector Recovery Plans themselves.

Sarah Windrum advised that the Federation of Small Businesses and local Chambers could assist with business engagement. Councillor Izzi Seccombe noting the issue of capacity advised that the local authorities business units could also assist.

Julia Goldsworthy welcomed the work done thus far and the sectoral piece coming together. She advised that how it related to different local authority activities and the Department of Trade and Industry presented the next phase of development.

Resolved:

That the SED Board:

- 1) receive the update on delivery of the Engagement Plan to inform Sector Recovery Plans across the West Midlands, coordinated by Black Country LEP, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC);
- 2) approved the development of a 'phase 2' joint Engagement Plan to inform Sector Recovery Plans and commented on further shared engagement activities as detailed above; and
- 3) note that, although the activities outlined in the plan had been completed, business as usual engagement activities to inform sector recovery planning were continuing across the LEPs and WMGC, to include continuing engagement via forums set up through delivery of the Engagement Plan.

142. Digital Strategy - Update

Adam Hawksbee advised on the work they were doing, what the identified gaps were and what had changed.

He highlighted the following 10 suggested points of focus in the report and stated that the team would welcome feedback from the Board on:

- 1) **Access** - Drive digital social inclusion and bridge the digital divide, by ensuring everyone has a device, affordable online access, and basic digital literacy
- 2) **Access** - Increase the supply of digital skills to boost productivity and drive growth, focussing particularly on young people
- 3) **Data** - Facilitate more effective data sharing across the public sector through shared frameworks, agreements, and platforms
- 4) **Data** - Increase data analytic capacity in the region, both to improve public services and to support economic growth Infrastructure
- 5) **Infrastructure** - Accelerate improvements to 4G coverage and the roll-out of full-fibre across the region, focussing on areas of low connectivity
- 6) **Infrastructure** - Further advance our 5G coverage, working with industry and the public sector to support adoption
- 7) **Infrastructure** - Improve the adoption of basic digital technologies amongst SMEs
- 8) **Digital Economy** - Introduce a nationally and internationally competitive scaleup offer for digital and tech companies
- 9) **Digital Government** - Expand the use of digital in preventative healthcare, improving wellbeing and tackling health inequalities
- 10) **Digital Government** - Grow regional capacity around using digital to make public services more responsive and human-centred, sharing examples of best practice and learning from other places

In respect of Governance and Delivery the aim was to:

- Ensure that all activity takes place at the right level, and that anything taking place regionally adds value by joining dots or filling gaps
- Balance the coordination of different strands with focussed delivery by teams and organisations that have the expertise
- Work in a way that builds capacity and independence in communities and civil society, harnessing the power of relationships.

Councillor Ian Courts commented that he was concerned to the region having the highest number of non-users in the ULK and welcomed the early reference to digital inclusion and upskilling, which he advised must be a priority.

The Chair welcomed the report and the aim to distill the Digital Strategy down into 5 Missions and asked what were the next steps.

Adam Hawksbee advised that Digital had the potential to transform the economy and stated that a further update would be provided through to the December SED Board.

The Chair referenced the EIG and noted that the users of digital were not on that Group. He advised that the Group would benefit from what that group would require.

Resolved:

- 1) That the SED Board note the update on the Digital Strategy and comment on the emerging framework and priorities;
- 2) Note that a revised Digital Strategy would be submitted through to the December Board.

143. Minutes of Energy Board – 2 September 2020 (To include Proposal to HM Government: A regional partnership approach to the net zero transition and a green industrial revolution - November 2020)

Matthew Rhodes, Energy Capital Board presented the minutes of the Energy Capital Board held on 2nd September 2020.

In respect of the Proposal to HM Government: A regional partnership approach to the net zero transition and a green industrial revolution, he advised of the offer to Government, which was to develop the West Midlands Energy Capital initiative into a central-local government partnership approach to the net zero transition and green industrial revolution, based on a regional carbon budget, and showcased at COP26.

The asks included:

- A Net-Zero Pathfinder Region - the West Midlands to be designated a 'pathfinder region'; working in partnership to achieve net zero by 2041 and deliver a green industrial revolution;
- Devolution of energy powers - Statutory duties for the WMCA to develop a Local Energy Area Plan;
- Smarter use of energy levies - allocating a proportion of energy levies to combined and local authorities to support coordinated approaches to decarbonisation locally.
- Addressing barriers to investment - Additional capability and expertise to invest in key energy infrastructure at a regional level.

The aim would be to achieve the following outcomes:

- Investment in key green industrial revolution initiatives, supporting the 'levelling up' agenda and creating a platform for green jobs and skills creation;
- Regional autonomy to decarbonise in ways most efficient for them to achieve net zero.
- Evidence of the UK as a nation leading investment in innovative net zero technologies, supporting the 'Global Britain' agenda, to be showcased at COP26
- Local implementation of Government's key net zero priorities, including EV infrastructure and heat decarbonisation.

The Chair welcomed the initiative but commented that the devolution argument may not progress with Government. Julia Goldsworthy advised that the interest was coming from the relevant Minister and there was a need for the SED Board to consider how they integrated with the work being undertaken.

Resolved:

That the SED Board note an update on the progress of the regional partnership approach to the net zero transition and a green industrial revolution submission to Government, would be submitted to the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

That the SED Board note that the next meeting would be held 17 December 2020.

The meeting closed at 1.40pm

Chair