

MINUTES OF WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

**Thursday, 28th November 2013 3.00pm – 5.00pm
Sixways Stadium, Warriors Way, Worcester**

PRESENT:

Peter Pawsey (Chair)	(PP)	Chairman Robert West and Director Midland Heart
Cllr Simon Geraghty	(SG)	Deputy Leader Worcestershire County Council
Cllr David Hughes	(DH)	Leader, Malvern Hills District Council (rep Southern DCs)
Carl Arntzen	(CA)	MD Worcester Bosch Thermotechnology
Roy Irish	(RI)	Managing Director, FP Support
John Callaghan	(JCal)	Principal, North East Worcestershire College

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Woodman	(GW)	Worcestershire LEP
Claire Bridges	(CB)	Worcestershire LEP
Jan Bailey	(JB)	Worcestershire LEP
John Hobbs	(JH)	Worcestershire County Council
Tim Johnston	(TJ)	AMION Consulting
Graham Russell	(GR)	AMION Consulting
Kim Rowlands	(KR)	BIS
Paul Heaven	(PH)	Blue Sky Finance
Wendy Stock	(WS)	Note taker Worcestershire LEP

APOLOGIES:

Cllr John Campion	(JC)	Leader, Wyre Forest District Council (rep Northern DCs)
Alan White	(AW)	MD Malvern Hills Science Park
Dean Attwell	(DA)	MD Oakland International

1.	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>Peter Pawsey (Chair) welcomed the Board and he noted the apologies of Cllr John Campion, Alan White, and Dean Atwell.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes from the Board Meetings 26 September 2013 and 12 November 2013</u></p> <p>The Minutes were signed off as a true record by the Board.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Action List</p> <p>It was confirmed that an Extra Board Meeting had taken place to review the informal Government feedback on the draft EU</p>	

	<p>Investment Strategy. PP confirmed that the Worcester City Plan discussions were ongoing. PP said that he had approached Sheffield and Preston City deals and a meeting was to be arranged. PP confirmed that discussions had taken place at the University of Worcester about the relevance of the medical/care sector to the SEP. PP was still actively seeking a 'heavyweight' as Chair of the Independent Panel but would welcome any suggestions.</p> <p>Approvals and Letters of Support</p> <p>Feedback from the Draft EU Investment Strategy was positive. Public Works Loans Board (Game Changer sites): Confirmation had been received from HM Treasury that the application for the discounted rate loan from PWLB had been approved.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Access to Finance</u></p> <p>Paul Heaven of Blue Sky Finance presented a case to the Board for collaborative working amongst the West Midlands LEPs to support small or early stage companies (i.e. SMEs of £0-2 million pounds value) with funding. He confirmed that research had identified gaps in the market that the private sector doesn't provide for and therefore there is a case for public sector intervention. He then outlined a number of options on possible AWM Legacy Funds and other potential funding options such as JEREMIE.</p> <p>There were some key components of the fund of funds. Each LEP's monies would be ring-fenced and then matched by the JEREMIE fund to create £2 return for every £1 invested. Each LEP would have one vote on any holding company. The WCC, as accountable, would need to commit the £1 to establish the holding company. This would need to be discussed with WCC finance.</p> <p>RI confirmed that integrating other LEPs was straightforward but. Collaboration with the West Midlands LEPs was seen as a 'must', but the flexibility was present to engineer the addition of other LEPs at a later stage.</p> <p>SG asked PH whether he had other LEP sign-ins and PH confirmed that he was in the process of visiting other West Midland LEPs.</p> <p>CA asked that if funds were secured whether there would be more relaxed regulations about deployment of the funds and PH confirmed that the terms and conditions were preferable to other types of funds.</p>	<p>Action GW</p>

	<p>DH asked if there would be any financial risk associated with these funds and PH confirmed that there is no financial risk associated with these funds.</p> <p>The Board agreed to pursue to the next stage cross-LEP working in the West Midlands with AWM Legacy Funding in principle with final confirmation in January 2014 and the EUIS final draft.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>SEP + EU Investment Strategy Update</u> <u>Technical work – Inward Investment Lead Generation</u></p> <p>GW updated everyone on progress to date as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and analysis complete. • Consultations are ongoing. • WLEP aspirations - the smart efficiency and growth option selected. • Draft ESI Funds Strategy and Programme submitted. • Draft SEP being prepared before Christmas. • Work is underway to develop Funding Strategy. • High level identification of projects are required to develop the WLEP vision. <p>GW outlined the vision and objectives further by stating that the WLEP had chosen Transformational actions of the Gamechangers, Centres of Excellence and Growth sectors programme; in order to deliver 25,000 jobs by 2025 and increase GVA by £2.9 billion.</p> <p>The three keys sectors plus one will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering • Agriculture/Horticulture • Cyber/Defence • Tourism <p>GW confirmed that discussions had taken place at The University regarding Med-Tech and Health and although encouragement of the University to pursue this sector it would not feature in the SEP.</p> <p>There would be additional support for growing companies within the three + 1 sectors.</p> <p>SG said that the WLEP must be specific and resist taking on more than 3 + 1 sectors and this was agreed. Further discussion took place around Tourism and its potential to create jobs.</p> <p>GW concluded the discussions by outlining the WLEP's commitments in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of an ambitious and multi-year Strategic Economic Plan and ESI Funds Strategy. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering enhanced efficiency and accelerated growth. • Set a pace of decision-making. • Engagement in under-developed areas e.g. social inclusion and innovation. • Tackle difficult decisions e.g. Housing, Governance. • Working collaboratively and pooling resources on delivery both public/private and cross-LEP working. <p>The Direction of the SEP was agreed and drafts submitted in December would be circulated to the Board at the appropriate time.</p>	Action GW
6.	<p><u>Governance Review Scope</u></p> <p>WLEP has established governance and organisational arrangements that were suitable for its original purpose. As the Government has significantly extended the role of LEPS, the WLEP has commissioned a review of its governance arrangements, as part of Phase 2 of the AMION work.</p> <p>Therefore, TJ said that he would be look at the governance arrangements of the LEP Board through observation, reviewing associated paperwork and he would be arranging to interview Board members separately. He would then report back to the Board with a balanced view on his findings.</p> <p>JC asked TJ about the policy of the Strategic Board with an accounting officer and use of funds. PP confirmed that TJ would be talking separately to the accountable body. CA asked for clarification regarding private companies allocating public sector funds. TJ confirmed that the WLEP Board is legally informal and therefore liability lies with the accountable body.</p> <p>GW confirmed that this process will be completed by the next WLEP Board Meeting, on the 23rd January 2014.</p> <p>PP said that the three year terms of office will shortly be coming to an end for Board Members and the refreshment process would shortly be underway.</p> <p><u>WLEP Annual Conference feedback and plan for 2014</u></p> <p>7. JB presented details of the WLEP Annual Conference 2013 attendance - 243 delegates attended (310 registered, with 67 'no shows' (22%). This was a pleasing turnout even though some who registered for the event did not attend. PP commented that there were a lack of production businesses attending.</p> <p>JB said that post-conference feedback was small (37) but very positive with some good suggestions for next year's conference.</p>	Action GW

	<p>The WLEP Board was requested to note that the provisional date for the Annual Conference is set for Friday 10th October 2014. Invitations to Tender were live on the WCC Portal. This tender includes two workshop events - one in February/March on Manufacturing and one in May/June on Agricultural/Food and Green Energy, of which will feed into the Annual Conference.</p> <p>JB said that the Chateau Impney, Droitwich had been provisionally reserved for separate exhibition stand and 'tweet up' to be used and welcome any further suggestions from the Board.</p> <p>SG stated that only 21% of the business delegates were from the from north Worcestershire, and that efforts should be made to increase this next year. He also felt that some break-out sessions would be good rather than a continuous run of speakers and this was agreed.</p> <p>PP said that Emma Ward's office had suggested we invite Greg Clark MP, a Cabinet Minister, as soon as possible and PP would follow this up.</p> <p>The WLEP Board confirmed that they were happy with these recommendations to commission the Conference and workshops for 2014.</p>	ACTION JB
8.	<p><u>LEP Funding and Accounts</u></p> <p>GW said that despite the likelihood that the Capacity Fund will be incorporated into the LEP core funding, we have decided to make a claim of £13,596 at half year.</p> <p>GW confirmed that Bromsgrove District Council had not approved a financial contribution to the WLEP in line with the other Local Authorities.</p> <p>SG Local Authority contributions need to reviewed as core funding has to be matched by local contributions and this was agreed.</p> <p>TJ asked whether 'Growing Places' was a separate pot and if the surplus can be rolled forward and GW confirmed that this was the case.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <p>PP outlined changes to the National LEP Network Fund to the end of the financial year with a proposal for the continuation of a collective light touch support service that brings the 39 LEPs together for agreed and specific purposes. This arrangement would</p>	

	<p>be accountable to the LEPs with a part time notional executive sitting on a revolving Board with a revolving seat in the West Midlands. PP would welcome any Board Members who would like to attend.</p> <p>It is proposed that the support service would operate by taking a financial contribution of £5000 from each LEP and this would be matched by Central Government. The Board agree to these arrangements.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Executive Director's Report</u></p> <p>GW updated the meeting on staffing of the Executive Team. Ian Edwards had recently joined the team in the role of Growth Plan Project Manager on a 2 days a week contract for 6 months. A modern apprentice is shortly to be recruited – 4 candidates have been put forward for this role.</p> <p>Luke Willetts, a project manager within the CEO Department of Worcestershire County Council, has been seconded for a 12 month period to support Ian Edwards and Clare Bridges in the role of Business Delivery Manager.</p> <p>GW confirmed that he was working with CMCA to reconfigure the office space at Brindley Court.</p> <p>GW reviewed the actions from the April LEP Away Day highlighting the focus of identification of the 20% of Worcestershire businesses that provide 80% wealth and jobs to identify growth aspirations and barriers. The other focuses were Roles and Responsibilities, Buy-in and Commitment, and Communications.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p><u>Sub Groups</u></p> <p>DA was unable to attend this meeting but RI gave an update from the Access to Finance Sub Group to say that a 'Dragon's Den' live form event had recently taken place at The University in order to help businesses to find investment, and was a success.</p> <p>CA confirmed from the Employment & Skills Sub Group that the Connecting Schools and Businesses Programme is progressing and is due to start in January 2014. CA expressed concern over the reliability of the Apprenticeship statistics from the Skills Funding Agency and needs validation.</p> <p>CB confirmed that there would be a Developers Forum taking place in January 2014.</p>	

<p>12.</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>PP informed the Board that he had been made aware that the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council had written to Government to request the extraction of the district from the WLEP area. This was in relation to monies with regard to the development of Bromsgrove Town Centre. PP confirmed that he had met with the 5 Worcestershire MPs in Westminster last week to discuss this issue. The outcome is still to be determined but a draft application will be drawn up under the 'Growing Places Scheme' of £700K. GW to follow up with further facts by the next Board Meeting (23rd January).</p>	<p>ACTION GW</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Dates of Meetings in 2014</u></p> <p><u>LEP BOARD:</u></p> <p>23rd January - Coomers 20th March - Mazak 22nd May - TBC 24th July - Mazak 25th September - TBC 20th November – Mazak</p> <p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING:</u></p> <p>9 December 2013 (Additional Board Meeting)</p>	