

WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING

Friday 31 March 2023

10:00 – 13:00

Venue: Midland Road Studios, Progress House, Midland Road, Worcester, WR5 1AQ

1.	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	10.00
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting, Matters Arising and Correspondence	
3.	WLEP Chair appointment – Luke Willetts	10:15
4.	Energy Strategy: Local Area Energy Plan mapping – Kerry Mashford	10:30
5.	Chancellor Budget Statement on LEPs and Data Gathering – Luke Willetts	11:30
6.	WLEP Economy Report 2023 – Luke Willetts	12:00
7.	Worcestershire County Cricket Club (GPF proposals) – Steph Simcox	12:30
8.	LGF Programme monitoring report – Luke Willetts	12.45
9.	AOB	12:55
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Performance Review outcome 2022/23• Extraordinary ‘hold the date’ meeting for budget sign-off (c. end of April)	
10.	Close	13.00

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

PRESENT:

Jennifer Long	(JL)	Vice Chair- Director, Ice Blue Marketing and Design
Gary Woodman	(GW)	Chief Executive, Worcestershire LEP
Cllr Simon Geraghty	(SiG)	Leader of WCC and Cabinet Member for Finance
Jane Britton	(JB)	Pro Vice Chancellor Communications and External Affairs University of Worcester
Sue Jordan	(SJ)	Non-Executive Board Member
Stuart Laverick	(SL)	Principal & Chief Executive, Heart of Worcestershire College
Carl Arntzen	(CA)	Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group
Cllr Karen May	(KM)	Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
James Speller	(JS)	Managing Director, Speller Metcalfe
Cllr Tom Wells	(TW)	Leader of Malvern Hills District Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Luke Willetts	(LW)	Deputy CEO, Worcestershire LEP
Phoebe Dawson	(PD)	Director of Business Engagement, Worcestershire LEP
Ian Smith	(IS)	Area Lead - West Midlands, Cities & Local Growth Unit
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council
Alex Pearson	(AP)	Net Zero Projects Manager
Kerry Mashford	(KeM)	WLEP NED for Energy
Alison Dickinson	(AD)	WLEP Project Manager
Paul Walker	(PW)	Chair-elect
Nigel Hall	(NH)	WLEP NED-elect

APOLOGIES:

John Dillon	(JD)	Managing Director, GJS Dillon
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2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 Conflicts of Interest Policy

2.1.1 Introduction

This policy exists to ensure that any conflicts of interest which may arise in the Worcestershire LEP's decision-making processes are managed and recorded properly. This protects the integrity of our decision-making processes, enables stakeholders to have confidence in our decision-making, and protects the reputation of the LEP and members of its boards.

The policy should be read alongside the Standards of Conduct Policy for Worcestershire LEP.

2.1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all members of LEP Decision Making Groups ('members') making investment decisions involving public money as identified in Figure 1 – WLEP Organisational Structure.

2.1.3 Definition

An "interest" may include employment, other appointments (including trusteeships, directorships, elected office), memberships (whether corporate or personal), investments, shareholdings, land and property, intellectual property, customer/client relationships, use of the LEP's services or anything else which could (or could be perceived to) impact on the member's ability to act independently.

This list is not exhaustive, and the presumption should be in favour of including anything which could conceivably be considered to be an interest, even if it is felt unlikely to arise.

2.1.4 Policy

The policy is in two parts:

- Maintaining a record of all interests
- Managing potential conflicts of interest

2.1.5 Maintaining a record of all interests

The LEP Executive will maintain a Register of Interests covering all Members and these will be renewed in January of each year.

Members are required to update their forms if any new interests arise during the year.

The LEP Executive will publish an up-to-date Declarations of Interests on the LEP website at www.wlep.co.uk/

WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday 03rd February 2023

10:00 – 13:00

Venue: Worcester Bosch, Cotswold Way, Worcester, WR4 9SW

PRESENT:

Jennifer Long	(JL)	Vice Chair- Director, Ice Blue Marketing and Design
Gary Woodman	(GW)	Chief Executive, Worcestershire LEP
Cllr Simon Geraghty	(SiG)	Leader of WCC and Cabinet Member for Finance
John Dillon	(JD)	Managing Director, GJS Dillon
Jane Britton	(JB)	Director of Communications & Participation University of Worcester
Sue Jordan	(SJ)	Non-Executive Board Member
Stuart Laverick	(SL)	Principal & Chief Executive, Heart of Worcestershire College
Cllr Karen May	(KM)	Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
James Speller	(JS)	Managing Director, Speller Metcalfe

IN ATTENDANCE:

Luke Willetts	(LW)	Deputy CEO, Worcestershire LEP
Phoebe Dawson	(PD)	Director of Business Engagement, Worcestershire LEP
Ian Smith	(IS)	Assistant Director West Midlands and BEIS
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council
Alex Pearson	(AP)	Net Zero Projects Manager

APOLOGIES:

Julie Snell	(JS)	Interim Chair - Non-Executive Director of Hereford & Worcestershire Health & Care Trust
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<p>1.</p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p>	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies.</u></p> <p>JL stepped in to chair today’s meeting in the absence of the Interim Chair and welcomed the Board to our first meeting of the year. The Board wished Julie Snell a well and speedy recovery.</p> <p>Apologies were received and noted from Julie Snell, Carl Arntzen and Cllr Tom Wells.</p> <p>James Speller was introduced as a newly appointed NED and members of the board introduced themselves to JS.</p> <p>James is managing director of Speller Metcalfe, a family-owned construction company that is headquartered in Malvern and operates primarily across the Midlands and Southwest regions.</p> <p>Cllr Tom Wells, the Leader of the Malvern Hills District Council has been nominated to replaced Cllr Marc Bayliss as the South Worcestershire Local Authorities representative but sent apologies for today’s meeting.</p>	<p>ACTION</p>
<p>1.3</p>	<p><u>Declarations of Interest.</u></p> <p>Interim Chair asked the Board if there were any declarations of interest.</p> <p>SL, SG and JB identified an interest linked to the River Severn heat network proposal.</p>	
<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p><u>Minutes of WLEP Board Meeting on 24th November 2022, Matters Arising and Correspondence.</u></p> <p>The previous meeting minutes were agreed as a correct record and all actions were completed from the November 2022 meeting.</p>	
<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising and Correspondence.</u></p> <p>ACTIONS LIST</p> <p>JL asked Gary to review action list from previous board meeting.</p> <p>As reported in the introduction, we had established a new South Worcestershire District Council representative. Chair updated that this is now actioned with Cllr Tom Wells appointment.</p> <p>LW reported to the board on the progress of the Commercial Property forum where last meeting took place in December, WCC rep to be invited to attend the next session at request of the commercial property agents.</p> <p>SJ asked about context of other LEP’s closing which GW responded to and explained the various pathways available to LEPs. Those LEPs closing in WM region are transitioning functions to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) but ensuring clear communication to all stakeholders about the intricacies of this can be a challenge. The Board agreed therefore that the communications around the Chair</p>	

	reinforced the future of the LEP and its structure in Worcestershire.	
3.	<u>WLEP Review of 2022/23 and Emerging Priorities 2023/24 – Luke Willetts.</u>	
3.1	LW presented an overview to the board on progress against WLEP objectives in 22/23 and to propose a list of emerging priorities for 2023/24.	
3.2	LW reported by exception on the objectives progress assessed as red and amber on the reasons for non-delivery in 2022/23. The Board recognised that some of these were down to the ongoing achievement of the task or changes in government priorities. LW also outlined a	
3.3	number of deliverables achieved by the team in 2022/23 too.	
3.4	LW then outlined the proposed priorities for 23/24 against the four overarching roles of the LEP previously agreed by the Board, as well as a number of cross-cutting governance objectives too.	
3.5	The Board were invited to comment on progress in 22/23 and proposed priorities for 23/24. Feedback was provided as follows:	
3.6	SG commented on the success of the Superfast Broadband Project Board which comprised multi-agency representation, and the need to now focus on a similar forum looking at gigabit and mobile connectivity across the county, which would bring together relevant stakeholders would be very much valued to achieve the largest possible investment from the private and public sector. The LEP has a key role in helping to coordinate this.	
3.7	KM added that digital skills should also be a key focus but referenced the ill-timing of UKSPF funding for skills not being available until Yr 3 (2024/25) and the Local Skills Improvement Plans still in development to identify local needs. LEP has a role in trying to coordinate across UKSPF to ensure skills initiatives funded by LAs align with LSIP objectives.	
3.8	SL added that the LEP continue to do fantastic work with schools and employer engagement but there is still a gap around adult careers and upskilling.	
3.9	JD made the point that in terms of business support, there is some great content out there, but it needs to be scaled up to each a larger audience. Business coaching and leadership was the example referenced. PD agreed and added that majority of businesses engaging with the Growth Hub still not able to look at their workforce needs beyond 'the here and now'. Need to support them to be able to plan further into the future.	
3.10	JL summarised the Board's views and agreed that LEP has a key role to support the skills agenda linked to UKSPF investment, digital skills and adult careers/upskilling. 'Inspire' was a key theme from the comments made by the Board and a need to tailor messages to the audience to help develop confidence amongst the labour market.	
3.11	JS referenced Speller Metcalfe's involvement with engaging with apprentices / young people and how to change their perception about the construction sector and the well-paid opportunities it provides. Also, their tactic of using younger employees to go into schools as they are more relatable to their audience.	

<p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p> <p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p> <p>3.16</p> <p>3.17</p> <p>3.18</p> <p>3.19</p>	<p>JL also added potential to link in with the work of Midlands Cyber and gave a practical example of an initiative being used to support women back into work around cyber as complemented lifestyle.</p> <p>Finally, SJ made the point that the sterling work being done by the LEP around the Energy Strategy and net zero should also feature more prominently too.</p> <p>LEP Exec to incorporate feedback into proposed business plan 23/24 and bring back to WLEP Board for approval.</p> <p>A discussion continued about the communication of this work to stakeholders in the County. LW added that there is a need to use the proposed Autumn Conference to pitch some of these messages and 'relaunch' the Plan for Growth which perhaps hasn't penetrated into the Worcestershire business psyche due to being soft launched during COVID lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>LW advised the board of the upcoming Business Forum Leaders Dinner event on 28th February at Sixways and the Innovation / BetaDen showcase event at Stanbrook Abbey next month on the 15th March. NM to ensure invites are issued to LEP Board members.</p> <p>LW sought approval from Board for recommendation that WLEP funded model be rolled into 2023/24 subject to Government funding decision. Board agreed and SG added that 12 months was too short and based on commitment to recruit a WLEP Chair on a 2 year fixed term basis, that a 2-year financial plan should be looked at to build more continuity and planning. Board agreed – The Budget building process who start for a 2 year period.</p> <p>IS responded to KM queries on national position re: LEP funding Overall Government are fully supportive of LEPs. SG referenced our excellent track record of delivery. However, at the time of the meeting government funding for 23/24 had not been confirmed.</p> <p>JL thanked LW for the informative report.</p>	<p>GW</p> <p>NM</p> <p>LW / SS</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p><u>Worcestershire Economic Observatory Proposal – Phoebe Dawson.</u></p> <p>PD presented to the board on the Worcestershire Economic Observatory proposal and sought views on whether this should be a focus for WLEP.</p> <p>SG commented that there is already a wealth of data out there, including business representative organisations, and Midlands Engine observatory, so would want to guard against duplication. However, ability to collate data and translate it into meaningful management information that can be drawn on by partners would be hugely valuable.</p> <p>SL added ability to not only look at historic data but use information to help forecast would be a useful tool too.</p> <p>LW added this is an opportunity for WLEP and Growth Hub to add value to partners/stakeholders but will need to strike the right balance between</p>	

	making smarter use of existing intelligence and using current resources as no additional funding available currently to fund new posts.	
4.5	The Board agreed for the Executive to work up the proposal and bring a work programme and action plan to the Board to a future meeting.	PD
4.6	Chair thanked PD on her informative presentation and feedback.	
5.	<u>WLEP Chair Recruitment Update – Luke Willetts.</u>	LW
5.1	LW updated the Board on progress of the Chair recruitment process.	
5.2	Quotes sought and received from the market with Faerfield appointed in mid-January to support the LEP Exec team. Advert has now gone live and closing date set of 24 th February. Interviews are scheduled for early March.	
5.3	LW asked LA's to assist WLEP by checking if opportunity could be circulated to all Elected Members so can utilise their personal and professional networks. SG and KM agreed to this. SG added on approaching the Chamber as well on this.	
5.4	JL and SG have held initial conversations with Faerfield to help inform search process. JL reported that the list which Faerfield are working on is a strong base.	
5.5	Chair thanked Luke for the update.	
6.	<u>River Severn Heat Network Proposal – Alex Pearson.</u>	AP
6.1	AP presented the River Severn Heat Network proposal to the board, seeking £40k of investment to provide match funding to an application to the BEIS HNDU for £200k grant funding to support detailed project development.	
6.2	AP added this technology whilst relatively innovative, is not untried and has been implemented elsewhere previously and is therefore relatively low risk.	
6.3	AP advised that the funding would support project development and provide advice on potential models for deployment. SG suggested making contact with Severn Trent Water re: their waste treatment facility as could be a potential anchor load on any potential network. AP advised he is in contact with STW currently.	
6.4	AP added this process could be replicated at extra towns/locations along the River Severn. This project is supported by the River Severn Partnership. SJ suggested a potential commercial opportunity to be explored with other 'places' to share the learning we have paid for doing detailed project design.	
6.5	Chair put the decision to a vote and WLEP board agreed to the £40k investment from the Project Development Fund.	
6.6	JS suggested approaching The Hive to enquire about access to live data on performance of their cooling operations which is linked into River Severn when it was originally built.	
	Chair thanked Alex on his informative presentation.	

6.7		
7.	<u>Update from Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee.</u>	
7.1	a) WLEP Finance Report (Q3 2022/23) – Steph Simcox	
7.2	Steph reported to the board on the finance report for quarter 3 2022/23. Forecasting an underspend of £26k which would be transferred to reserves at year end.	
7.3	Board discussed funding position of BetaDen and SS clarified project is funded by core grants and ERDF funding currently but from 23/24 will be utilising UKSPF (subject to award).	
7.4	GW reported third party interest around potential investment tends to be towards the cohort founders themselves rather than the BetaDen model itself.	
7.5	SS updated on the Worcestershire County Cricket Club (WCCC) Growing Places loan and the recent discussions that are continuing about a restructured repayment plan for the loan. Board agreed to WLEP/WCC exploring social value opportunities as part of the negotiations.	
7.6	SS to bring the proposal back to board later on for further decision. Action and recommendations for the board and a legal agreement drawn up.	SS
	b) WLEP Risk Register – Luke Willetts	
7.7	LW reported an update to the board on risk register profile. Risks which have been assessed as red status by FAR Committee are routinely escalated to the board.	
7.8	LW advised one risk has been assessed red associated with lack of clarity for government funding in 2023/24 due to no communication received. Board noted and agreed with assessment, asked that Board commitment to explore 2 year model is part of mitigation strategy.	
7.9	SJ asked about status of the pension scheme for LEP Exec in event redundancies become a reality. GW confirmed WLEP staff are enrolled with Chamber of Commerce scheme.	
7.10	SJ also raised risk around cyber attacks. Policies are in place across Chamber and Accountable Body. Interim Chair thanked both Luke and Steph on their feedback.	
8.	<u>AOB.</u>	
8.1	GW provided verbal update on DfE Bootcamps delivery plan as sent in the packs.	
8.2	SJ queried what was the impact and the diversity of audience engaged through this programme. GW agreed to report back	
8.3	LW referenced the Q3 GBF dashboard which aligned with the financial update provided by SS and provided additional information to the Board on GBF programme.	

8.4	<p>LW also referenced the Annual Performance Review meeting which was immediately following Board meeting. IS had communicated to LEP Exec Team that preliminary assessment by BEIS was that WLEP have met the requirements expected across the areas of Strategy, Governance and Delivery.</p> <p>No other AOB were raised.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Dates for 2023 –</u></p> <p>31 March 2023 10:00 – 13:00</p> <p>26 May 2023 10:00 – 13:00</p> <p>14 July 2023 10:00 – 13:00</p> <p>06 October 2023 10:00 – 13:00</p> <p>01 December 2023 10:00 – 13:00</p> <p>26 January 2024 10:00 – 13:00</p>	