# WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING

## Thursday 7 August 2025
## 10:00 – 13:00

**Venue: Ice Blue, 6 Church St, Kidderminster, DY10 2AD**

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| **1.** | **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest** | **10:00** |
| **2.** | **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising** | |
| **3.** | **Central Government update – Luke Willetts**<br>• Industrial Strategy<br>• Business Growth Service<br>• Small Business Strategy<br>*(FOR INFORMATION)* | **10:15** |
| **4.** | **Business Intelligence from WGH – Darren Schrouder**<br>• Performance monitoring report – Q1 2025/26<br>• Business intelligence / insights headlines<br>*(FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION)* | **10:45** |
| **5.** | **BetaDen Business Plan (2026-2029) update – Kate Snell**<br>*(FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION)* | **11:30** |
| **6.** | **WLEP Communications Report – Alex Price**<br>*(FOR INFORMATION)* | **12:15** |
| **7.** | **AOB** | **12:45** |
| **8.** | **Close** | **13:00** |

**Future Meeting Dates** ***(all 10:00-13:00 unless otherwise stated)***

**Friday 26 September 2025**

**Friday 28 November 2025**

**WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING MINUTES FROM**

**Friday 16th May**

**Venue: Old Court, Kidderminster, DY10 1EW.**

**PRESENT:**

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| Paul Walker | (PW) | Chair Worcestershire LEP |
| Jennifer Long | (JL) | Vice Chair- Director, Ice Blue Marketing and Design |
| Gary Woodman | (GW) | Chief Executive, Worcestershire LEP |
| Michelle Dowse | (MD) | Principal, Heart of Worcestershire College. |
| Sue Jordan | (SJ) | Non-Executive Board |
| John Dillon | (JD) | Managing Director, GJS Dillon (ONLINE) |
| Carl Arntzen | (CA) | Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group |
| Jeremy Cieslik | (JC) | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Nigel Hall | (NH) | Chair/Lead for WLEP Innovation Board |
| James Speller | (JS) | Managing Director, Speller Metcalfe |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

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| Luke Willetts | (LW) | Deputy CEO, Worcestershire LEP |
| Alex Price | (AP) | Communications & PR Manager, Worcestershire LEP |
| Judy Gibbs | (JG) | Director of Skills, LEP |
| Darren Schrouder | (DS) | Worcestershire Growth Hub Manager |
| Chris Orr | (CO) | Account Manager, Worcestershire Growth Hub |
| Lorna Robinson | (LR) | Visit Worcestershire Manager |

**APOLOGIES:**

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| Steph Simcox | (SS) | Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr Sharon Harvey | (SH) | Rep for N Districts |
| Alex Collins | (AC) | Area Lead, DBT |
| Jane Britton | (JB) | Pro Vice Chancellor of Communications and External Affairs at the University of Worcester |
| David Blake | (DB) | Managing Director of Worcester City Council (Cex Rep) |

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| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies** | **ACTION** |
| 1.1 | **PW** welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were given. | |
| 1.2 | **PW** asked for any new declarations of interest.<br><br>No new interests declared. | |

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| **2.** | **<u>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</u>** | |
| 2.1 | Actions from previous meeting: | |
| 2.2 | A comment was made that the previous minutes didn't include attendance, this will be rectified going forward.<br><br>The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. | |
| **3.** | **<u>Visit Worcestershire Overview</u>**. | **<u>ACTION</u>** |
| 3.1 | **LR** presented information on Visit Worcestershire to the Board.<br><br>The meeting was then opened to questions. | |
| 3.2 | A question was asked about where the data comes from, that forms the basis of the Visit Worcestershire KPI's. | |
| 3.3 | **LR** responded that Visit England have invested a lot of money in to improving data for all Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP's) as the data currently is approx. 12 months behind. | |
| 3.4 | A question was asked regarding the crossover and marketing opportunities when Trade Delegations are in the County. | |
| 3.5 | **GW** responded that there is a clear link between tourism, cyber and investment opportunities, which also fits in with the WLEP inward investment piece. | |
| **4.** | **<u>Angel Network Update:</u>** | **<u>ACTION</u>** |
| 4.1 | **CO** presented to the Board.<br><br>The meeting was then opened to questions. | |
| 4.2 | A question was asked if neighbouring counties such as Warwickshire, have been engaged with the Worcestershire Angels Network. | |
| 4.3 | **CO** answered that there will be engagement with other angel networks such as CYNAM, who are cyber focussed, as they will signpost non cyber start-ups to us and vice versa. | |
| 4.4 | A question was asked about the governance of the Angel Network, as in, is it governed under public sector rules, which as an example has halted BetaDen's growth potential.<br><br>**LW** answered that BetaDen was initially set up using European funding, which restricted ability to generate income, but replacement funding via UKSPF, provides | |
| 4.5 | more flexibility. The Angel Network will be established with flexibility to enable it to evolve into a commercial entity if needed in the future.<br><br>A question was asked that on average investors invest in 10 start-ups for 1 success story, is there a sector that is most likely to bring about that the success story. | |
| 4.6 | **NH** answered that there are never any guarantees re: investments, but in general terms Tech normally brings about a quicker return on investment. | |

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| 4.7 | **Actions decided**:<br><br>1. Continue with proposals to establish angel network. | <br><br>**LW** |
| **5** | **Digital and Mobile Connectivity Strategy:** | **ACTION** |
| 5.1 | **SA** presented to the Board.<br><br>The meeting was then opened to questions. | |
| 5.2 | A question was asked about where the priority is for investment to make the biggest difference to rural connectivity. | |
| 5.3 | **SA** answered that data is used alongside engagement with sectors and local businesses, villages and communities. There is an eventual aim of a 'Worcestershire Network' which with a small charge will allow customers to roam across all networks, that money will then be re-invested. | |
| **6**. | **Strategic Comms update**: | **ACTION** |
| 6.1 | **AP** presented to the Board.<br><br>The meeting was then opened to questions. | |
| 6.2 | There were no questions and the recommended actions within the paper were approved by the Board. | |
| 7. | **25/26 Budget update:** | **ACTION** |
| 7.1 | **LW** presented to the Board.<br><br>The meeting was then opened to questions. | |
| 7.2 | There were no questions, the recommendations of the paper were approved by the Board. The Board thanked the executive team for all their efforts in drawing together the complex funding streams and into a comprehensive report that was clear and understandable.<br><br>**Actions decided:**<br>1. Draft a letter on behalf of WLEP Board to seek audience with the new leadership at County Council following local elections to discuss local priorities. | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>**LW** |
| 8. | **AOB**<br><br>1. A change to next Board Meeting date – availability to be canvassed.<br>2. Terms of office of SJ and JD have been temporarily extended to cover the period following change in local government administration, prior to decision on future recruitment to WLEP Board in Autumn 2025.<br>3. Reminder to complete DoI forms.<br><br>**Actions decided:**<br>1. Extension of office letters for SJ & JD | **ACTION**<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>**LW/HA** |
| | **Dates of Next meeting 2025:** | |

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| | 7th August – 10am – 1pm.<br>26th September – 10am – 1pm.<br><br>28th November – 10am – 1pm. | |