

Item 4 - Strategic Communications Update

WLEP BOARD RECOMMENDATION

- The WLEP board are asked to review the purpose of the conference plans and understand the potential risks.
- The WLEP board are asked to confirm the delivery format for the conference.
- The WLEP board are asked to outline future items they would like featured within strategic communications updates.

4.1 Purpose of the 2023 Worcestershire LEP Conference

4.1.1 Following the localised announcement around the future of the Worcestershire LEP until at least March 2025, a conference event has been requested to raise awareness of the delivery and partnership work of the LEP.

4.1.2 The proposed purpose of the conference will follow the three key delivery areas outlined within the localised plan for Worcestershire LEP from 2023 to 2025, these are, business support, innovation and skills development.

4.1.2.1 The Worcestershire LEP will work with partners to outline current delivery projects and programmes in these areas, discuss the future projects and programmes for these areas and then engage with attendees to gather intelligence on business desires in these areas.

4.1.3 However, whilst this purpose has been identified, there is also a risk that the purpose may need to change pending the nature of the anticipated central Government announcement about the future of LEP funding for 2024-2025.

4.1.3.1 The announcement is expected to be made public before the parliamentary summer recess period, 20 July to 4 September.

4.1.3.2 The outcome of this announcement could impact the plans for the conference event. If the announcement is negative in nature, the conference will need to address this and reinforce the message of the localised plan for the Worcestershire LEP.

4.1.4 Recognising the Worcestershire business event calendar, an ideal timeframe for the conference has been outlined, this would be within November 2023.

4.1.4.1 This delivery window allows enough time to plan and promote the conference to gather attendees, whilst also avoiding any potential clashes with planned partners events. This timeframe will also allow the Worcestershire LEP time to react to the pre-summer recess announcement from Government about the future of LEPs.

4.2 Format for the Conference

4.2.1 Following feedback from the May Worcestershire LEP board meeting, a proposal for the conference has been created utilising a hybrid delivery style, incorporating both physical and virtual attendees.

4.2.1.1 Physical attendees would be between 100-150 and would consist of strategic businesses and partners from across the county.

4.2.1.2 Virtual attendees would be able to join via a digital system, virtual attendee numbers would be targeted at 300 with the ability to exceed this.

4.2.2 Engagement during the conference would combine both the physical and virtual audiences, involvement would be within the Q&A sections. Physical attendees would be selected by the host and virtual attendees would be able to submit questions for approval, once approved, questions would be shared with the host.

4.2.2.1 The conference would run from 8:30am until 2pm and would be split up into sections with breaks in between. The breakdown for the format for the conference can be found below.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
8:30am – 9:00am	Arrival networking and refreshments
9:00am – 10:10am	Session One: 'Innovation in Worcestershire'
10:10am – 10:20am	Break
10:20am – 11:30am	Session Two: 'Business Support in Worcestershire'
11:30am – 11:45am	Break
11:45am – 12:55pm	Session Three: 'Skills in Worcestershire'
12:55pm – 1:55pm	Networking Lunch
1:55pm – 2:00pm	Conference Finishes

4.2.2.2 Each section would feature an update on current delivery utilising key partners, a discussion around the future projects in that area and then a Q&A with the audience to gather intelligence on business feedback and ideas.

4.2.3 The physical conference venue would also have an exhibition space where key LEP programmes, i.e., Worcestershire Growth Hub, Careers Hub, can exhibit for attendees to engage.

4.2.4 Venue for the hybrid conference is being explored with the Cricket Club, Sixways Stadium and the University of Worcester Arena being the leading options.

4.3 Cost for the Conference

4.3.1 A hypothetical cost proposal has been put together to assess the feasibility of delivering a hybrid conference. Market research has been conducted using a local supplier to create the proposal.

4.3.2 A 'bottom level package' has been created which is deemed as meeting the requirements for the hybrid conference with the scope to improve on certain items if more budget were available.

4.3.2.1 The bottom level package comes out at **£26,315**. The table below breaks down this package for a Hybrid conference.

Item	Cost
Project Management support for the Conference	£6,050
Registration process, both onsite and virtual	£1,664
*Venue costs, stage and catering	£5,712
AV Crew & Equipment	£8,193
Digital Venue, interactive virtual lobby	£3,050
Post Event Content support	£1,650

4.3.2.2 The cost associated with the venue has been highlighted as this cost may be reduced or removed depending on the venue chosen for the conference.

4.3.3 The market research identified that an extra £10,000 could be added to this cost to improve the digital attendee experience, venue branding and stage equipment.

4.3.4 Sponsorship opportunities could be generated for the hybrid conference which would allow the Worcestershire LEP to recuperate some of these costs back.

4.4 Future Strategic Communications Updates

4.4.1 The Worcestershire LEP board are asked to outline any additional items they would like to be featured within future strategic communications updates.

Alex Price

Marketing and Communications Manager