

Annex 6: Meeting Note template

Worcestershire LEP Annual Performance Review 2020-21

Location: Online- Microsoft Teams

Date: 3 February 2021

Time: 930-1130

Please note – this formal record is not intended to be lengthy and can focus on any arising action points

Actions from 2020-21 Mid-Year Review

Action #	Action Point	Date completed	Resolution
1	Business Board refresh to be completed	Ongoing	Progress on this action delayed, will now be progressed in 2021/22 through thematic online workshops with local businesses.
2	LEP to consider further on implementation of Programme Delivery Sub-board or a similar mechanism.	Completed January 2021	Programme Group established January 2021 to monitor LGF and GBF, first meeting due to take place in February 2021, plan to meet quarterly.
3	Engage with LEP diversity champion on practical ways to monitor and increase diversity within LEP and in terms of Board Membership	Completed January 2021	Discussions have taken place with Diversity champion and ideas will be brought forward to Board in Q2 2021. This is also being considered as part of current Board recruitment
4	Produce formal succession plan for LEP Chair to appoint successor.	Ongoing	At APR meeting, Chair confirmed that he had agreed to stay on for an additional 12 months, so this action no longer urgent but will need to be taken forward in 21/22.
5	Produce updated SEP or LIS, utilising work undertaken on LIS	Ongoing	Work is ongoing on this, now likely to publish a SEP/LIS in April/May 2021.

Annual Performance Review

Governance

- No current Board membership spaces, but recruitment ongoing for 2 private sector board members who are due to stand down at end of March.
- As per above, to provide certainty in short-term, Mark (chair) confirmed that he has agreed to stay on as Chair for a further 12 months following the end of his 6-year term which is due at end of March. Although this now less urgent, work is still ongoing on succession planning for new Chair and across Board in general. **Post-meeting note:** CLGU assumption is that this will need to be formally agreed at the March Board meeting to confirm extension on an exceptional basis.
- Plans for improvements on Diversity due to be put before Board in Q2 2021 following discussions with Diversity champion. Gary is also part of national LEP network group looking at Diversity. LEP also looking to address diversity through current Board recruitment, including recruiting new sub-Board members where appropriate.
- New Business board structure delayed due to focus on Growth Hub transfer from Chamber to LEP (now complete) and Covid. However, clear focus on using online delivery targeting SMEs on a thematic basis now planned. Business engagement has also happened through Growth Hub and online annual conference and an innovation sub-board is being created.
- Whilst no scrutiny meetings have happened in last 12 months due to COVID, the LEP have submitted a written report to Committee.

Delivery

- LEP reported that over £6million out of £12million awarded on GBF has been contracted, with remainder due to be contracted by end of February. However, delivery has already started at risk on 10 out of 12 projects, with remaining 2 projects (Kidderminster College and Rural Gigabit) starting in 21/22 based on spend profile agreed. LEP have no concerns about spending £6million GBF this year and have contingency plans to use freedoms and flexibilities using land purchase for Shrub Hill GBF project should they be needed.
- It was noted that CLGU need to approve Change Request to include Rural Gigabit project, to enable this to be contracted (Post meeting note- this has now been formally agreed by CLGU).
- On LGF, LEP confident that spend target of £10.36 million, utilising freedoms and flexibilities if not possible.

- County Council seeking major projects funding on A38 project to complete this, requested from CLGU any information on when DfT likely to decide on this.
- Growth Hub transfer now complete from Chamber to LEP in January 2021. Whilst this has taken longer than expected, Growth Hub has continued to deliver, although activity has been pushed into Quarter 4. Benefits already apparent for LEP as Growth Hub staff less focused on Chamber commercial agenda. Delivery of peer network programme challenging; LEP has fed back concerns over eligibility of companies for programme to BEIS.
- Other ongoing delivery work continues, for example on 5G testbed, Betaden programme and River Severn Partnership

Strategic Impact

- Last few Board meetings have focused on taking forward long-term economic strategy for Worcestershire, building on draft Local Industrial Strategy work. Focus has been on identifying the right priorities. Draft version to go to LEP Board in March; LEP now expect to publish strategy in April/May, also adapting based on any announcements made at Budget in March. In tandem, LEP have been developing a pipeline of projects to support the strategic priorities identified.
- A separate property strategy is also being developed- as a result of Covid impact this focuses on SME market rather than large firms.
- LEP also involved in helping co-ordinate Worcestershire economic recovery group- this is more focused on immediate recovery in next 3 years, compared to longer term (20-30 years).

LEP Feedback

- Levelling Up Fund - what is the role for LEPs in managing local inputs / administration to this funding stream?
No final decisions have been made, but further details should be set out in prospectus for fund, due in March.
- National IS Refresh - are major changes expected and understanding how these will impact on local economic strategy?
New BEIS SoS re-considering all of this and looking at long term economic plans for country. Now likely that focus in immediate term (and outlined at budget in March) will be on setting out a plan for economic growth to recover from impact of Covid-19.
- National R&D Strategy - what is the latest thinking in this area, recognising that increased R&D and innovation across the county is a particular focus for WLEP?
CLGU understand that the national R&D strategy is still to be published later this year by BEIS, following publication of the Roadmap last year.

- Local Recovery and Devolution - as you'd expect, local partners have already begun collaborating and local recovery plans are already taking shape but need to be clear on national interventions to prevent duplication and also understand future support expected for local delivery / implementation.
On recovery, further plans should be set out at budget, this is more likely to be at a higher level but should provide direction of travel. On future funding, further detail should be set out in prospectuses for LUF and UKSPF pilots in March as per above. On devolution, White Paper is still planned but now expected later this year, not before local elections.
- LEP Overlaps - are we any closer to resolving these?
In current circumstances LEP overlaps is not a priority for Ministers/CLGU to intervene or resolve. Worcestershire LEP would ideally like a decision to be made by CLGU/Ministers post local-elections to resolve this, but stated that this is not currently hampering local relations operationally.
- Capacity - linked to above, and a greater shift into delivery than when the LEP concept was originally conceived, is additional capacity on the horizon to align with increased remit and responsibilities?
LEP core funding confirmed for 21/22 confirmed at £500K each as per previous years.
- Growth Hub - likelihood of add'l funding / progs continuing into 2021/22?
As discussed at recent business support workshop, BEIS core funding for Growth Hubs is likely to be at similar level to 20/21, with final allocations for each LEP to be confirmed shortly. In addition, BEIS planning for Peer to Peer Network funding to be allocated in 21/22 as per recent emails.

AOB

- N/A

Action Points

Action #	Action Point	Owner	Date to be completed	Date completed	Resolution
1	Business Board refresh	Worcestershire LEP	During 21/22		Programme of thematic online events for SMEs to be rolled out in 21/22 by LEP

2	Chair extension	Worcestershire LEP	At March 2021 Board meeting		Extension of Chair to be formally agreed at March Board. Succession planning for Chair to continue in 21/22.
3	Board recruitment	Worcestershire LEP	By end of March 2021		Recruitment of 2 new Board members to be completed to replace those whose term is due to expire
4	Diversity improvements	Worcestershire LEP	At Q2 2021 Board meeting		Initial ideas on improvements to be set out at March Board meeting.
5	Long- term economic strategy	Worcestershire LEP	By end of May 2021		LEP to publish long term economic strategy by end of May.
6	GBF contracting	Worcestershire LEP	By end of February 2021		LEP to contract remaining GBF projects by end of February
7	GBF change control request- Rural Gigabit project	CLGU	By end of February	10 th February	CLGU confirmed formal agreement to change request to replace Superfast Worcestershire project with Rural Gigabit project

Attendees:

Mark Stansfeld- Chair, Worcestershire LEP
Gary Woodman CEO, Worcestershire LEP
Luke Willetts Director of Operations, Worcestershire LEP
Steph Simcox Accountable Body & S151 Representative, Worcestershire County Council
Ollie Hindle Area Lead, Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU- Chairing the meeting)
Clare Hannah Deputy Area Lead, CLGU