WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING

Thursday 7th March 2024
10:00 – 13:00
Venue: The Skills Show, Sixways Stadium, Warriors Way, Worcs, WR3 8ZE.

PRESENT:

Paul Walker	(PW)	Chair Worcestershire LEP
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
Jeremy Cielisk	(JC)	Non-Executive Board Member
Nigel Hall	(NH)	The Digital Consiglere
Cat Lewis	(CL)	Principal, Kidderminster College.
Cllr Beverley Neilson	(BN)	Cabinet Member for Economy (rep for the S Districts)
Judy Gibbs	(JG)	Director of Skills WLEP

IN ATTENDANCE:

Luke Willetts	(LW)	Deputy CEO, Worcestershire LEP
Alex Price	(AP)	Communications & PR Manager, Worcestershire LEP
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council
Helena Augousti	(HA)	Executive Assistant WLEP
Alison Dickinson	(AD)	Project Manager WLEP.
Jennie Humphries	(JH)	Research Manager WLEP.

APOLOGIES:

Carl Arntzen	(CA)	Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group
Cllr Dan Morehead	(DM)	Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & the Green Agenda (Rep for N Districts)
Sue Jordan	(SJ)	Non-Executive Board Member
Jane Britton	(JB)	Director of Communications & Participation, University of Worcester
James Speller	(JS)	Managing Director, Speller Metcalfe
John Dillon	(JD)	Managing Director, GJS Dillon

1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	**ACTION**
1.1	**PW** welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any new declaration of interest.	
1.2	No new interests declared.	
2.	**Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**	
2.1	Matters Arising **JG** asked for a clear picture on how the different schemes are put together. Agreed to be forwarded for a future meeting. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.	

3.	**<u>Feedback from The Big Conversation 2024</u>**	
3.1	**AP** fed back to the Board on the above event, main points being: • There was a combined audience of 200 attendees. • 130 were in the room and 70 attended online. • All sessions were recorded and are available on our YouTube channel. • There was positive feedback, attendees enjoyed the speakers and content. • 'Partnerships' was mentioned a lot. There were a few challenges too, the main ones being: • Venue – there were issues with the food and service-related issues - these will be fed back to the venue. • Tech issues. • These are all lessons to be learnt for future events.	
3.2	**AP** is currently reviewing the Q&A's and the breakout sessions etc. to pick up on any points/questions that need addressing and to use as research and wider county feedback. The meeting was then opened for a discussion:	
3.3	Various members of the Board who attended the event, gave feedback on their experience at the event.	
3.4	**PW** asked what percentage of attendees engaged with feedback. **AP** estimated that around two thirds engaged.	
3.5	**GW** thought the event helped to get the message out that the WLEP is still here, the main positive being the partnerships the LEP has forged, but need to keep the conversation going.	
3.6	**SiG** suggested that for a future event, to take the pressure off, to ask someone to compere, would also help the event run to time.	
3.7	**PW** fed back that he had spoken to an attendee who owns a local business, who was so inspired by the event, that the next day he went to his local school to enquire about mentoring.	
3.8	**CL** fed back that the branding may need to be more obvious, as attendees might not have been clear on who's event it was.	
3.9	The Board then discussed ways more businesses might be engaged in the future, main ideas being: • Challenge businesses who attended to send the information to 5 businesses that they know didn't.	

3.10	• Cases studies of businesses that have been helped by WLEP and they come to talk at the event. This agenda item was finished by suggesting that it might be a good idea to let the attendees know that we've heard them, and not leave it too long before getting back to them. Maybe feedback the answers to their questions slowly, to help keep engagement going. Sending videos out once a month, with a link to WGH, to get in touch with an Account Manager if they want to be talked through anything. **Action**: Full report to be sent to the Board.	**AP**
4.	**Innovation progress update**	
4.1	Whilst the presentation for the Innovation agenda item was loaded, there was a discussion about The Skills Show (which was in the same building as the Board Meeting)	
4.2	JG updated the Board on the following: • This is the second post-covid show. • Was a one-day event and is now a two-day event. • The two days, allows more schools to engage and means that the students/attendees can engage more with the stall holders. • The two days however is a bigger commitment for the stall holders, so some have only committed to the one day. • Day one of the event, there were 1,326 attendees and day two there were 1,344 expected. • There were 73 exhibitors over the two days.	
4.3	**JG** finished by commenting that it would be good to know which schools attended and the ones that didn't, so we know which schools we need to engage with going forward. What worked on the day and what didn't to make sure we are always moving with the times and putting on the most effective event. Possible barriers to attendance are transport and some schools want to push their students into their own 6th form and therefore aren't always open to showing them other options. **Action**: All this data to be collected and fed back to the Board. **LW** presented to the Board on Innovation. The meeting was then opened to a discussion.	**JG** **GW**
4.4	**BN** suggested that all FE's, Universities etc, need to be added to 'the current picture' and that when thinking about what good looks like, it can be important to remember not just the buildings, but also the people. Hooking these professors etc and transferring their knowledge to an eco-system.	

4.5	**JL** commented that Tech companies are also important to the overall picture, as some candidates won't consider university because they want to earn money. There was then an update from JL on a possible Microsoft Academy in Worcestershire, which would help to put skills on the ground on a commercial level.	
4.6	**PW** suggested to **JL** that she let Microsoft know that WLEP have the business links and can provide value.	
4.7	**NH** stressed to the Board that WLEP isn't sure what it wants yet, the current landscape is still being assessed, and the gaps being identified and then where WLEP fits within those gaps. The priorities need to be identified and added to the map.	
	Action: Update the board on the Academy at the next meeting. **Action**: 'As is' landscape needs to be filled in and updated.	**JL** **LW**
5.	**LEP Capital Programmes Report & Economic Summary Report 2024 and KPIs** **AD & LW** presented to the Board. The meeting was then opened to a discussion.	
5.1	**SiG** wanted it noted to the Board that the reports that go back to Government should include the indirect benefits. The example used was the Parkway Station, which was the project, however because of this project 5,000 houses are to be built around it. This secondary impact needs to be reported.	
5.2	**PW** noted that although the Rural Connectivity project is complete, it is still not adequate, as fed back by the RFU, being a barrier to farmers from being innovative. Work in this area is still needed. **JH** then presented on the dashboards. Agenda Item 7. The meeting was then opened for a discussion.	
5.3	The board were unsure why the dashboard showed that the Storage and Transport industries particularly, had dropped in Worcestershire, disproportionately to other industries.	
5.4	**PW** noted that although it's good to have the information from the dashboards, the lag in data being available doesn't help the thinking or direction of the board.	
5.5	**PW** also suggested that for future presentations, there is a focus on trends, so the board can know where it might be going and then how that compares to National/County data. Graphs might show this more visually.	

	Action: Data on Transport and Storage industries to be sent to board.	**JH.**
6. 6.1 6.2	**LEP Integration Plan update** **GW** provided a verbal update to the Board, main points being: • Had conversations with the LEP network. • Only LEP in the West Midlands left, but there are more nationally. • Preparing papers to be taken to WCC. • March see's the transfer of functions to upper tier. The meeting was then opened to discussion. **NH** asked if there were any concerns. The reply was no major concerns, as the financial function of WLEP is with WCC anyway. This makes the transition easier. Also of the remaining LEP's, there doesn't seem to be a consistent model. **Action**: Papers to be seen by the Board.	**GW** **LW.**
	AOB: None**.** **Dates of Next meeting** **17 May 2024 10:00 – 13:00** **19 July 2024 10:00 – 13:00** **20 Sept 2024 10:00 – 13:00** **29 Nov 2024 10:00 – 13:00**	