



**WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**10:00 – 13:00**

**Venue: Steatite, Acanthus Road, Ravensbrook Business Park, Redditch, B98 9EX.**

**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
Carl Arntzen	(CA)	Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group
John Dillon	(JD)	Managing Director, GJS Dillon
Cllr Dan Morehead	(DM)	Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & the Green Agenda (Rep for N Districts)
Nigel Hall	(NH)	The Digital Consiglere

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Luke Willetts	(LW)	Deputy CEO, Worcestershire LEP
Ian Smith	(IS)	Assistant Director West Midlands and Department for Business and Trade
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council
Alex Price	(AP)	PR, Marketing & Communications Manager WLEP
Judy Gibbs	(JG)	Director of Skills , WLEP
Helena Augousti	(HA)	Executive Assistant, WLEP

**APOLOGIES:**

Paul Walker	(PW)	Chair Worcestershire LEP
Sue Jordan	(SJ)	Non-Executive Board Member
Jane Britton	(JB)	Director of Communications & Participation, University of Worcester
Cllr Tom Wells	(TW)	Leader of Malvern Hills District Council (SW LA rep)
James Speller	(JS)	Managing Director, Speller Metcalfe
Jeremy Cielisk	(JC)	Non-Executive Board Member

<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Welcome and Apologies &amp; Declarations of Interest,</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
1.1	<b>JL</b> will be chairing the meeting on behalf of <b>PW</b> (Chair) today.	
1.2	Apologies were received and noted from <b>PW, SJ, JS, JB, Cllr TW &amp; JC.</b>	
1.3	New attendees introduced themselves to the board.	
1.4	JL & NH Declared Interest for Betaden Advisory Board and Midlands Cyber.	
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Minutes of Last Meeting, Matters Arising and Correspondence.</u></b>	
2.1	From last meeting, <b>NH &amp; SJ</b> formed a sub-group, looking at Inclusive Recruitment of Board Members.	<b>GW</b>



2.2	Away Day 16th June: <b>PW</b> reviewed strategy for 2024.	
2.3	BetaDen cohort recruited information on this announced in September.	
2.4	<b>NH</b> will update at next Board Meeting on Innovation.	
2.5	WhatsApp group (for the board) up and running. If anyone wants adding who hasn't been please let Luke know.	<b>LW</b>
2.6	JL updated on FE seat on WLEP Board which had been vacated since Stuart Laverick's retirement. FE Principals have discussed and proposal is FE will rotate their rep on annual basis. Cat Lewis (Kidd College) to represent in 2023/24 and Michelle Dowse (HoW College) to attend for 2024/25. 2025/26 TBC but likely to be new WGC Principal once appointed.	
2.7	Board approved proposal and look forward to welcoming Cat Lewis to WLEP Board and Michelle Dowse in due course.  <b>ACTION: WLEP Exec to feedback to FE Principals and arrange inductions and send meeting invites / papers etc.</b>	<b>LW</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>WLEP Board Strategy Session Feedback,</u></b>	
3.1	<b>LW</b> presented to the board, on where the focus should be in the future. In these 4 key areas: Innovation, Skills, Business Environment and Infrastructure.	
3.2	<u>Innovation</u> : a discussion was had by the board, around County businesses and their methods, acc, appetite to innovating, the Board posed the question, does information around R&D need to be made clearer? And the data doesn't really give us a lead into a series of interventions.	
3.3	Further to this the board discussed furthering the development of the factors around businesses, so the eco-system around them is supportive and encourages ideas/ collaboration, possible funding options. The feeling was WLEP needed to use the business intelligence gathered by the Growth Hub to help us understand businesses approach to innovation.	
3.4	<b>NH</b> stated he would work with <b>GW</b> and <b>LW</b> to create a model of what good innovation looks like.	
3.5	<u>Skills</u> : Board discussed the need for information on the benefits of Apprenticeships and updating the skills and careers information to key stakeholders: parents, teachers, employers.	
3.6	<b>NH</b> & <b>DM</b> discussed that historically apprenticeships were mainly for 16 – 19-year-olds and suggested that the message could be that anyone at any age can do an apprenticeship.	<b>GW/NH</b>



3.7	Board discussed the need to make apprenticeships simpler, and therefore more appealing to both the potential applicants and businesses.	
3.8	The board also discussed the need for flexibility in the workplace to allow women who wish to come back to work, a higher need for part time jobs post covid, an older workforce and encouraging more women & young people in STEM areas.	
3.9	<u>Business</u> : the board discussed the need for more flexible leases and co-working spaces to encourage entrepreneurs and sole traders back to city centres.	
3.10	The board also identified the barriers that might be slowing progress. They identified issues such as high prices, lack of available real estate, rigid leases etc. The board agreed that the WLEP could look to fill this gap using their pooled resources.	LW/JL
3.11	It was agreed that a presentation on the business environment covering business engagement, business support and advice and guidance should come to the next board meeting.	
3.12	<u>Infrastructure</u> : <b>SG</b> stated that the County Council valued the WLEP input on local needs as they can then use it to help guide funding priorities etc. WLEP can be the co-ordinator of the voice of local business by convening other partners such as the Chamber. Identifying and supporting investments that are required to improve the transportation of goods and employees, the connectivity to wider markets, digital and mobile connectivity, energy and infrastructure resilience is still an essential role.	LW
3.13	<b>JD</b> said that commercial estate agents need to know what the local businesses want, and asked if the LEP can pose these questions, and feedback to them? With a focus on looking to the future of where the businesses want to be in 3-5 years' time.  <b>ACTION: WLEP needs to gain this information. LW suggested WGH standard q's are bought to next Board meeting for review to ensure Account Managers are capturing required intel.</b>	
4.	<b><u>WLEP Conference and Comms Update.</u></b>	
4.1	<b>AP</b> presented the plan for the WLEP Conference to the board at the end of November.	
4.2	<b>AP</b> asked the board for their view on a hybrid model, with approx. 150 delegates in physical attendance and another approx. 300 in attendance remotely. The board agreed to this approach given venue constraints.	
4.3	<b>AP</b> then presented the costs of the different options offered for the remote side of the conference.	



4.4	<p>The board discussed the 'Message' of the conference, possible venues and how the day might look – recognising the need for stating the future of the LEP in Worcestershire, A key speaker to draw business leaders and a two-way feedback process as part of the conference.</p> <p><b>Action: AP to continue to plan and feed back to the board over the summer.</b></p>	<b>AP</b>
5.	<p><b><u>Skills (CEC Review).</u></b></p>	<b>CA/JG</b>
5.1	<p><b>CA</b> and <b>JG</b> presented information on County skills programmes and their focus on connecting schools and businesses.</p>	
5.2	<p>Board agreed that WLEP is a trailblazer in this area and praised upper quartile performance on careers activity.</p>	
5.3	<p><b>JG</b> discussed the change in funding and the challenges that come with these changes to staffing and resources etc.</p>	
5.4	<p><b>SG</b> asked for a gap that is created between the changing in funding processes and the resource required to maintain the existing level of service.</p> <p><b>Action: Review on whether the WLEP/Board network can help to keep the programmes funded.</b></p>	<b>JG</b>
6.	<p><b><u>WLEP 2023/24 Q1 finance report.</u></b></p>	
6.1	<p><b>SS</b> reported to the board that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2023 was better than predicted.</p>	
6.2	<p><b>SS</b> fed back that at last board meeting it was agreed that WLEP might need to draw on their reserves, this doesn't now look like the case. Which means there might be more flexibility to invest more in the conference.</p>	
6.3	<p><b>SS</b> reported that there is enough money to fund WLEP until March 2025 and depending on Government announcement possibly until March 2026.</p>	
6.4	<p>Social value contract with the cricket club has received positive feedback and is going well. There is the opportunity for free meeting rooms with car parking passes.</p> <p><b>Decision: Board approved Q1 finance report.</b></p>	
7.	<p><b><u>WLEP FAR Committee appointments.</u></b></p>	
7.1	<p><b>LW</b> presented to the board on the FAR committee, members that are stepping down and asked the boards opinion on who should be replacing them.</p>	
7.2	<p>The board agreed to ask Chris Walklett to stay on for 12 months, reduce the number of FAR members from 7 to 5, in recognition that reduced capital funds are flowing via LEP.</p>	



7.3	<p>Board acknowledged that three seats are filled, and that 2 vacancies exist. One of which needed to be filled by an existing Board member. Option to co-opt to the second seat if a second Board member was unable to take seat.</p> <p><b>Action: Ask Chris to continue. Political member and FE member possibilities. Email to be sent out to the board to find 2 remaining members for FAR.</b></p>	<b>LW</b>
8.	<p><b><u>AOB.</u></b></p>	
8.1	<p><b><u>NH</u></b> shared that he recently attended an Innovation Accelerator event. There is £30M funding available, is this something the WLEP can tap in to? NH will share the link to the website with the rest of the board.</p>	