



**WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
**10.00 – 13.00**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video Conferencing**

**PRESENT:**

Mark Stansfeld	(MS)	Non-Executive Chair
Gary Woodman	(GW)	Chief Executive, Worcestershire LEP
Nicola Whiting MBE	(NW)	Chief Strategy Officer, Titania
Cllr Marc Bayliss	(MB)	Leader Worcester City Council (representing Southern DCs)
Jennifer Long	(JL)	Director, Ice Blue Marketing and Design
Stuart Laverick	(SL)	Principal & Chief Executive, Heart of Worcestershire
Cllr Karen May	(KM)	Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
Jeremy Cieslik	(JC)	Chief Operating Officer, Mettis Aerospace
Julie Snell	(JS)	Chair of Scotland 5G
Cllr Simon Geraghty	(SiG)	Leader of WCC and Cabinet Member for Finance
John Dillon	(JD)	Managing Director, GJS Dillon

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Luke Willetts	(LW)	Director of Operations, Worcestershire LEP
Phoebe Dawson	(PD)	Director of Business Engagement, Worcestershire LEP
Linda Smith	(LS)	CEO, BetaDen / Director of Enterprise, WLEP
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council
Vic Allison	(VA)	Chief Executive, Malvern Hills and Wychavon Councils.
Ian Smith	(IS)	Assistant Director West Midlands and South West, BEIS
Jenny Rohde	(JR)	Innovate Edge (UKRI)
Sunny Claire	(SC)	Innovate Edge (UKRI)
Ian Baxter	(IB)	SLC Rail
Anne-Marie McTavish	(AM)	Head of Worcester Business School

**APOLOGIES:**

John Hobbs	(JH)	Director of Economy & Infrastructure
Carl Arntzen	(CA)	Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group
Sue Jordan	(SJ)	Non-Executive Board Member
Sarah Greer	(SaG)	Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost, University of Worcester



<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.1	<p>Mark Stansfeld (Chair) welcomed the Board and introduced and welcomed several new &amp; returning members, parting members and observers to the Board. Chair asked new members to introduce themselves.</p> <p>Apologies were made to John Hobbs, Carl Arntzen, Sue Jordan and Sarah Greer.</p> <p>New members were introduced to the board.</p> <p>Anne-Marie introduced herself from the head of the Worcester Business School standing in for Sarah Greer from the board.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b>	
2.1	<p>MS asked the Board if there were any declarations of interest.</p>	
2.2	<p>Julie declared her updated declaration of interest form for formal record as has now been formally appointed as an Associate Non-Executive Director at the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust which is a funded role.</p> <p>SG asked if we were having a new standing declaration from members.</p> <p>Simon declared his interest in the Worcester Rail on the agenda coming up later.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>Minutes of WLEP Board Meeting on 06<sup>th</sup> April 2021.</u></b>	
3.1	<p>These were agreed to be correct and the minutes were signed off as a true record. The chair asked if any points to raise and none were raised.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b><u>Matters Arising and Action List from 06<sup>th</sup> April Meeting.</u></b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Action list</b>	
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b> <p>GW stated GBH figures were out and are up on the figures, but we were on track before Covid struck us.</p>	<b>GW</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<p>Develop the Inclusivity and Diversity Action Plan.</p> <p>GW working with diversity clubs and is being monitored. Proposing we take a plan to all diversity communities. Every public board around health. Overall to take into action plan.</p> <p>NW added appreciation for this and has been working with Gary on this matter and will continue to do so. Looking at board members pictures is quite intimidating and an active welcome mat out as such as a place to be at.</p>	<b>GW</b>



4.4	LS to present at the MHSP Board meeting in February. A follow up session to be planned in a separate meeting from the board looking at the Science Park strategy and connectivity to the LEP.	<b>LW/GW</b>
4.5	Consideration of commercial property offer within the pipeline and the issue of skills to come to the next Board meeting. GW stated working on white paper on this matter and a work in progress.	<b>GW</b>
4.6	Follow up on the development of a soft-landing offer within inward investment strategy.	
4.7	Development of a stakeholder plan from a previous meeting.	
4.8	Innovation Board to be established in April 2021. The inaugural meeting was held on 06 May and the next monthly and quarterly meetings have been booked. LW added having a very good selection of members and ideas of strategy from members and an action plan. He will share with the board at next meeting the outcome.  All other issues were covered by items on the agenda.	<b>LW</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b><u>LEP Review.</u></b>  5.1 GW stated the position on the LEP review so far. He covered the issues in the Board paper and outlined the focus remained on delivery by the team whilst the review took place. The review terms of reference had been published and other discussion papers were to follow on structure, innovation, funding, role and the geography issue.  5.2 WLEP worked well with the GBSLEP and the other five West Midlands LEPs to consider the issues on a regional basis.  5.3 Achieving the ambitious timeline on this is quite challenging, as Summer recess is mid-July. He asked if the board has any thoughts over this and on the contents of the paper?  5.4 Chair asked Ian on input on this matter and emphasised the role of LEPs seeing funding in the future. Several topics in the paperwork from government do keep reappearing; these are Net zero, innovation and Growth Hubs which cement a new or existing role for LEPs.  5.5 Changes to the geography should be decision made by government as since the 2018 review, no progress had been made on the decision to remove overlaps.  5.6 MB added his experience from the 1990's economic structures and arguing about geography hamper progress then and could do the same now. We know we need to collaborate with our neighbours and having a Worcestershire LEP has allowed for a greater focus on delivery overall on economic and growth.	



5.7	It was agreed that the LEP Board would be kept informed of the LEP review as it progressed, and the impact would be considered at future meetings.	<b>GW</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b><u>Overview of Innovate Edge (UKRI)</u></b>	
6.1	Chair gave an introduction of UKRI and welcomed Sunny & Jenny.	
6.2	Presentation was shown to the board by Sunny of the UKRI – Innovate UK EDGE and Jenny was working to promote the programme in the Worcestershire region.	
6.3	Innovate Edge was building on European Innovation Network capability and work since 2015 in the West Midlands. The programme works with SMEs to provide specialists to support the development of funding and finance strategies that support their innovation and expansion for improvement. This is both within the private and public sector.	
6.4	JR stated already a number of connections within the Worcestershire region. He has reached out to Linda at BetaDen to connect and offer support to alumni cohort members to support their business development	
6.5	JR advised further on how we can work together going forward. Working closely with the Worcestershire Business Central. However, there was more opportunity to work together with the WBC, BetaDen and WLEP was added.	
6.6	Chair added how do we reposition this across the business community.	
6.7	A discussion took place on the way businesses were informed of the business support available, the way the LEP engaged with businesses and the partners who communicated through their own channels to promote these offers	
6.8	JL added the brand of Innovation within Worcestershire is now getting stronger internally within the County, but we need to build the strategy of communicating that brand throughout the business community. It is almost an unheard voice currently.	
6.9	JS raised for industries to not migrate to Bristol and make our region more favourable. Location depends a little on who is being targeted for team members too and not everyone drives younger people the sort of people flocking to Bristol area.	
6.10	JD highlighted the report on commercial property in Worcestershire all these factors played into businesses being successful, from support to the right enablers being in place.	
6.11	JR thanked the board for the invite to them both and look forward to continuing to work with the board.	



6.12	It was agreed that at the next WLEP Board we should consider a draft business engagement strategy as part of the Growth Hub's 2021/22 business plan. Therefore, identifying how we reach a greater number of businesses and business networks.	<b>PD</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b><u>Update on Worcestershire Rail Strategy.</u></b>	<b>IB</b>
7.1	a) Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy Update  IB gave his presentation to the board from SLC Rail. He gave an introduction of his background within the Worcestershire region.  Added on what the railway sells is much more than travel but economic connectivity to and from Worcestershire.	
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• North Cotswold Line Project Update.</li></ul> <p>Connectivity has grown largely over the years within the region and in a much more coherent way.</p> <p>The railway map from Birmingham onto London with other links onto Malvern and the North Cotswold Line transformation was explained. The Worcestershire Parkway has been a great success for the county creating major growth opportunities. The partnership is working well and will focus not just on infrastructure but also service improvement.</p>	
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Shrub Hill Quarter in Worcester.</li></ul> <p>The City and the County Council are pleased to refurbish the Shrub Hill development and is a great opportunity for rail connectivity. Will become a gateway to the City in the future.</p> <p>The Redditch Railway Station regeneration was also raised here and improvements to the station gives new opportunities for better services and movement of people between Redditch and Birmingham.</p> <p>Enhancement at Kidderminster Station has been a huge success from June last year on its development enhancing the community. Other potential station improvements and enhancements were also in the pipeline.</p>	
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of COVID-19 on Rail Services.</li></ul> <p>A post Covid world shows that an impact at a low growth to 18%. Worcestershire Parkway has created extra passengers and since re-opening which is very positive outlook. Looking at business as usual at Parkway further spaces will be required looking at the growth figures.</p> <p>Overall new working patterns and travel had changed but with it is requirement to look at the de-carbonisation agenda and levelling up of</p>	



	<p>infrastructure investment supporting economic recovery within the region means that an improvement to infrastructure and services was critical to the local economy.</p> <p>SG raised the question what can we do to help move forward as things move slowly within the rail industry? IB answered by saying that joint representation to government and our local MPs need to be turned into a marketing tool and positive promoters.</p> <p>JS raised to add more bike facilities to the parkway stations. IB agreed to this.</p> <p>KM raised the issue on the parking fees within the stations. IB added this is being looked at currently and are fully aware of this issue.</p> <p>Chair closed on this and thanked Ian on his informative presentation.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<p><b><u>Update from FAR Committee.</u></b></p> <p>8.1 WLEP Finance Report Year End (Q4 2020/21) SS stated a report of the figures and the board agreed end of the year was signed off for the 2020/21 financial year.</p> <p>8.2 SS expressed nothing of great concern overall. Revenue budget is under spent overall, however this was mainly due to operation savings on COVID, no physical LEP Conference and good management. Getting Building Fund (GBF) is on profile and the capacity funding for the management of GBF will be carried over to next financial year.</p> <p>8.3 Growing Places is in a positive position with repayment of loans or interest being covered on those outstanding.</p> <p>8.4 Growth Hub funding is £400 000. A minor overspend has been made but with support from Phoebe Dawson this financial position is to be commended.</p> <p>The Board agreed the end of the year accounts and MS thanked SS for her feedback and the hard work of her team during the financial year.</p>	<b>SS</b>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b><u>AOB and Close.</u></b></p> <p>9.1 Luke asked for feedback from the board on his WLEP Local Plan for Growth 2020 – 2040 (LIS) sent out earlier this week for deadline 04<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p>Thanks, were made and a possible meeting next in face to face in July instead of virtual.</p>	<b>ALL</b>



10.	<b><u>Board Meeting Dates for 2021 –</u></b>  <b><u>15<sup>th</sup> July 10:00 – 13:00</u></b> <b><u>23<sup>rd</sup> September 10:00 – 13:00</u></b> <b><u>25<sup>th</sup> November 10:00 -13:00</u></b>	
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