



WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING

Tuesday 05th April 2022
15:30 – 17:00

County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP / Virtual via Teams

PRESENT:

Mark Stansfeld	(MS)	Non-Executive Chair
Gary Woodman	(GW)	Chief Executive, Worcestershire LEP
Cllr Marc Bayliss	(MB)	Leader Worcester City Council (Representing Southern DCs)
Cllr Simon Geraghty	(SiG)	Leader of WCC and Cabinet Member for Finance
Carl Arntzen	(CA)	Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group
Jane Britton	(JB)	Director of Communications and Participation of University of Worcester
Jennifer Long	(JL)	Director, Ice Blue Marketing and Design
John Dillon	(JD)	Managing Director, GJS Dillon
Sue Jordan	(SJ)	Non-Executive Board Member
Cllr Helen Dyke	(HD)	Leader for Wyre Forest District Council (rep Northern DCs)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ian Smith	(IS)	Assistant Director West Midlands and South West, BEIS
Luke Willetts	(LW)	Director of Operations, Worcestershire LEP
Phoebe Dawson	(PD)	Director of Business Engagement, Worcestershire LEP
Ian Miller	(IM)	Wyre Forest District Council
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Karen May	(KM)	Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
Jeremy Cieslik	(JC)	Chief Operating Officer, Mettis Aerospace
Stuart Laverick	(SL)	Principal & Chief Executive, Heart of Worcestershire College
Julie Snell	(JS)	Non-Executive Director of Hereford & Worcestershire Health & Care Trust

1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u>	ACTION
1.1	Mark Stansfeld (Chair) welcomed the Board to his penultimate board meeting as he is coming to end of his term with a level of sadness after two terms as Chair on the Board.	
1.2	Apologies were received and noted from Jeremy Cieslik, Cllr Karen May, Stuart Laverick and Julie Snell.	



2.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
2.1	MS asked the Board if there were any declarations of interest.	
2.2	It was recognised that the Councillor representatives are linked to the government letter on integrating LEPs into local democratic institutions.	
3.	<u>Minutes of WLEP Board Meeting on 27th January 2022.</u>	
3.1	Remainder of notes were agreed to be correct and the minutes were signed off as a true record.	
4.	<u>Matters Arising and Action List from 27th January 2022 Meeting - Correspondence.</u>	
4.1	Action List & Matters Arising	
4.2	GW updated the board on conversations on closer working with the Chamber. This would be brought to the May Board meeting.	
4.3	SJ commented that in the context of the letter from government, the LEP role of business voice and business engagement. It would be helpful to consider stakeholder mapping at the next Board meeting. As the Chamber of Commerce are not the only business representative organisation in Worcestershire.	
4.4	Action agreed for the next meeting	GW
5.	<u>National LEP Review Update – Gary Woodman.</u>	
5.1	GW presented the updated National LEP Review.	
5.2	The headline conclusions are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The letter concludes the LEP review outcome this has locked in certainty for LEPs in 2022/23, as a minimum. This ends a long period of uncertainty.• Government policy is to integrate LEPs closer to local democratic institutions to create alignment at a local level.• The local Council leaders have agreed that Worcestershire will not pursue a County Deal – at this point in time. They will monitor developments elsewhere and build an evidence base further to inform future direction. It should be noted that this decision makes a County Deal at least 2 years away, as it is likely to take 6 months to negotiate a deal.	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be less Govt funding for LEPs in 2022/23 - £375k instead of £500k• The future role of individual LEPs will differ depending on local circumstances and the status of devolution locally• There are 3 integration pathways – WLEP are on pathway ii:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ i. Integrating LEPs into Combined Authorities or institutions with devolved powers for the purpose of hosting a county deal;○ ii. Maintaining LEP structure and functions until a devolution deal is agreed; or○ iii. Finding a local solution where one or more Combined Authority or devolved institution hosting a county deal covers only part of the LEP area, leaving part(s) of the LEP area outstanding.• The executive team will develop a budget and delivery plan for 2022/3 for the LEP and Growth Hub taking in feedback from various partners.• For future years, Govt will ask LEPs on pathway ii) to agree delivery plans alongside delivery and performance metrics with government in advance of publication. Current expectation is that LEPs will need to submit draft delivery plans for 2022/23 in June 2022 and for 2023/24 by the end of November 2022.• The functions of the LEP related to the Govt departments that have been asked to route money through the LEP for skills, digital, trade and investment and unemployment support.	
5.3	<p>MB asked for clarification on the overlap with GBSLEP, as the appendix in the letter reported on MCA's based on constituent members only, but it is unclear. IS answered that the appendices states that the remaining overlaps should be removed.</p>	
5.4	<p>SJ asked on how the LEP would continue to gather business voices from a diverse background and there were some best practices examples, especially in the devolved nations, that were worth looking at when considering the structure of the LEP and Growth Hub.</p>	
5.5	<p>JL highlight the various groups and tools out there for business and maybe this was an opportunity to engage them in the Growth Hub model to ensure we have a wide and varied business voice inputting into the agenda of the economic strategy for the County. This was noted.</p>	
5.6	<p>JD commented that the business voice into supporting a strong partnership in Worcestershire was the key to our previous success. He was pleased that the LEP would continue and felt we all had an opportunity to shape policy of the partners to support business grow and</p>	



	<p>opportunities, however business would need to heard in this new arrangements.</p> <p>5.7 IS added that Ministers are appreciative of all the LEP's work done. However, this was the new direction of travel agreed with Ministers and not all areas of England would have the same governance structure</p> <p>5.8 MB reported his disappointment with the Growth Hub letter received as he believes that sustaining an independent, information, advice and guidance service should be paid for by Government. However, this settlement is a backwards step in local business support.</p> <p>5.9 IS added we are back on par with funding levels pre-Covid and Ministers are still considering an Enterprise Strategy for the summer period to determine the future of business support.</p> <p>5.10 GW reported that the team are looking at reshaping the current delivery model and offering a more focused offer moving forwards. PD reported that job descriptions were being relooked at and will come out stronger overall. With a service which is focus on gather business intelligence and enhancing the business voice.</p> <p>5.11 IM asked on clarification on funding as per paragraph 13 within the letter. It was reported all LEP's must match fund the government funds. Is this correct? IS confirmed that is correct HMG will maintain the expectation that match funding of at least 50% of government's core funding grant must be secured. SS advised on funding, outlining that each district make a contribution, along with County Council (financial and benefit-in-kind) which reports to BEIS and same applies to the 2022/23 financial year.</p> <p>5.12 MB asked another question on the West Midlands geography related to the central government role in being clear on the geography, particularly between the WMCA and the surrounding area. IS reported to the board that the West Midlands Combined Authority constituent members was a red line in relation to further and deeper devolution. Local discussions are to take place.</p> <p>5.13 Chair closed on this topic and thanked the board for the informative feedback.</p>	
6.	<u>Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership Chair Recruitment – Gary Woodman.</u>	
6.1	GW presented to the board on the future recruitment strategy for a replacement Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership Chair. Proposal is to make appointment on a 2-year Fixed term role that can offer an attractive proposition to candidates, offering sufficient longevity and certainty of the partnership in the role as chair. Particularly, whilst within this period of transition nationally.	



<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p> <p>6.8</p> <p>6.9</p>	<p>Timeline proposed was –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 April 2022 – WLEP Board decision• w/c 11 April – Advertise vacancy• 15 May – Deadline for applications• 16/17 May – Shortlist candidates• w/c 23 May - Interviews <p>GW reported to the board that there is also one vacancy following departure of Nicola Whiting last year. This resulted in Diversity champion role being vacant, alongside Vice Chair private sector role following end of term of Nick Baldwin last year too.</p> <p>Proposal agreed by WLEP Board was to recruit for the Chair role first, using the pack as sent out to the board with agenda/papers. The vice chair (private sector) and diversity champion vacancies would be addressed following this process.</p> <p>GW added to the board that any existing board members would be welcome to apply for Chair role and advised to flag opportunity across their respective professional networks.</p> <p>SJ asked whether we are governed within an official process on application. No bias was noted by the board. Chair added recruitment will be conducted using same open and transparent process and recruitment principles adopted during process he had experienced during appointment. SG agreed and assured the board that WLEP will be able to utilise the Chamber and Accountable Body’s HR functions to assist with the process.</p> <p>MS outlined the secondment arrangement agreed between WLEP and Worcestershire County Council for Gary Woodman, effective from 1 April 2022, to undertake the role of Assistant Director for Economy (WCC) and CEO (WLEP) with a 3 day / 2 day split per working week.</p> <p>This joint role was reflective of the strengthening of the partnership between the LEP and County Council. This aligned to the principles of the LEP Review outcome letter and the direction of travel outlined by Governments policy.</p> <p>It was noted that this appointment provides stability of leadership and significantly reduces the call on GPF funding agreed in January 2022 and the arrangement will benefit LEP, WCC and the wider partnership. This was agreed by the LEP Board.</p>	
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6.10	It was agreed next step was for WLEP Exec Team to come back to Board in May with budget for 2022/23, informed by feedback from partners. Chair thanked GW on his informative presentation and feedback.	GW
7.	<u>AOB and Close.</u>	
7.1	No other AOB were raised.	
8.	<u>Dates for 2022 –</u> 20th May 2022 10:00 - 13:00 21st July 2022 10:00 – 13:00 22nd September 2022 10:00 – 13:00 24th November 2022 10.00 – 13:00	