



WORCESTERSHIRE LEP BOARD MEETING

Friday 20th May 2022
09:30 – 11:30

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 Simon Geraghty	(SiG)	Leader of WCC and Cabinet Member for Finance
Jane Britton	(JB)	Director of Communications & Participation 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
Stuart Laverick	(SL)	Principal & Chief Executive, Heart of Worcestershire College
Julie Snell	(JS)	Non-Executive Director of Hereford & Worcestershire Health & Care Trust

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr Helen Dyke	(HD)	Leader for Wyre Forest District Council
Luke Willetts	(LW)	Director of Operations, Worcestershire LEP
Phoebe Dawson	(PD)	Director of Business Engagement, Worcestershire LEP
Vic Allison	(VA)	Wychavon District Council
Steph Simcox	(SS)	Head of Finance, Worcestershire County Council
Alison Dickinson	(AD)	Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Karen May	(KM)	Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
Jeremy Cieslik	(JC)	Chief Operating Officer, Mettis Aerospace
Carl Arntzen	(CA)	Managing Director, Worcester Bosch Group
Ian Smith	(IS)	Assistant Director West Midlands and BEIS
Cllr Marc Bayliss	(MB)	Leader Worcester City Council (Representing Southern DCs)

1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u>	ACTION
1.1	Mark Stansfeld (Chair) welcomed the Board to his last board meeting and thanked all for the working that both the executive and Board members had undertaken during his time as chair.	
1.2	Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Karen May, Cllr Marc Bayliss, Jeremy Cieslik, Carl Arntzen and Ian Smith.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
2.1	MS asked the Board if there were any declarations of interest.	
2.2	None were raised.	



3.	<u>Minutes of WLEP Board Meeting on 05th April 2022.</u>	
3.1	The previous meeting minutes were agreed as a correct record.	
4.	<u>Matters Arising and Action List from 05th April 2022 Meeting - Correspondence.</u>	
4.1	Action list	
4.2	Matters Arising	
4.3	GW informed that meeting that further work would be undertaken at a future meeting on stakeholder mapping,	
4.4	The item regarding the budget for 22/23 was actioned and is picked up in agenda item 6.	
5.	<u>WLEP Finance Report Q4 2021/22 – Steph. Simcox.</u>	
5.1	SS presented her report to the board on the update for Q4 2021/22.	
5.2	SS noted the underspend on the WLEP core budget in 21/22 and the transfer into reserves. The Growing Places Fund was in a healthy position with much of the funding allocated, although loans were still gradually being paid off.	
5.3	The Growth Hub budget position had been a strong one in 21/22, but changes to Government funding and ERDF had meant a significant change is being prepared for 2022/3	
5.4	Chair asked regarding the progress on the Malvern Hills Technology Park under the Getting Building Fund and good progress had been made on site related to onsite infrastructure and soil and drainage preparation which LW pointed members of the Board to the GBF budget.	
5.5	The Board approved the end of year accounts, and the Chair thanked the executive team for the informative report .	
6.	<u>WLEP / WGH Budget 2022/23 and Value Proposition – Luke Willetts / Phoebe Dawson.</u>	
6.1	LW provided an overview of Worcestershire position on the devolution letter and outlined the future role of the LEP and WGH identified in pathway 2 of maintaining the LEP until a devolution deal is agreed.	
6.2	LW noted letter gave guidance on areas of responsibility and role of the LEP in this pathway – equally this could be translated into how the Growth Hub needed to evolve to support greater business intelligence	



	into the local levelling Up agenda and funding streams of UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up bids.	
6.3	Executive team to consider the detail of the devolution letter of the 31 st March including the views of partners to work up a budget and activity for 2022/23 for the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership & Growth Hub. Working closely with all the district councils currently. This has been with very positive feedback.	
6.4	VA added that he was satisfied with the proposals presented within the paper on the role and the join between the District Council's role given they manage national funding.	
6.5	LW outlined the reduction in core funding for the LEP of 25% and the mitigating action that the executive team had taken to deliver a budget from core funding, with proposal to utilise underspend in 21/22 to mitigate forecast deficit in 2022/23.	
6.6	The budget is based on the assumption that Local Authorities continue to match fund at 2021/22 levels.	
6.7	PD provided an overview of the Growth Hub funding position. Also referenced end of ERDF funding in March 2022 and a 50 percent reduction into 22/23 and therefore we had implemented a restructure of the team.	
6.8	PD outlined the risk of lower capacity within the team to still deliver the outputs and outcomes given annual leave and sickness.	
6.9	PD explained the opportunity to add additional resources from reserves to support the work of business engagement, signposting and gathering intelligence. The options in the table on 6.8.9 of report build up a range of approaches to add additional capacity.	
6.10	LW concluded the report to the Board by highlighting the work that the executive team are undertaking to work in a partnership manner across the West Midlands, LEP network and other partners to consider other opportunities. Plus feedback messages to Government on the operational, partner and economic challenges in Worcestershire.	
6.11	SL asked about the LEP role in skills and confirmed that he was having discussions with Chamber on further skills strategies for the county, as DFE had identified Business representative organisations as having a role in engaging businesses into explain their skills needs. Yet the LEP GH was acknowledge as having the capacity, expertise and contacts to support this. SL felt that greater capacity in the growth hub would be beneficial to delivering across many agendas.	
6.12	SG supported Option 4 and increasing the capacity of the team, as the wider economic challenges were going to get harder and therefore we needed to step forward not reduce our resources. SG asked SS to confirm the future funding position of the LEP from reserves.	



6.13	JS added in agreement with SG statement to the board. There is a serious need on skills issue within the county and to be creative and collaborate with additional funding on support.	
6.14	JL contributed that better co-ordination of business needs in relation to innovation, skills and finance needed to be delivered within the county. A communication portal option 4 is a better option overall was noted.	
6.15	JD added the value in supporting start up businesses. Staffing issues overall were noted. Support of option 4 was noted.	
6.17	MS brought the Board back to the recommendations of the report. The Board agreed the core LEP Budget for 2022/23. Agreed the role of the LEP and Growth Hub in light of the letter of the 31 st March, Agreed to use budget underspend from 21/22 to balance the budget for 22/23. Agreed the development of option 4 to support the development of the growth hub and improve business engagement and intelligence.	
6.18	MS thanked the team for a through report and presentation of the options for the Board to consider.	
7.	<u>WLEP Chair Recruitment Update – Gary Woodman.</u>	
7.1	Gary presented the board on the updates regarding the Chair vacancy.	
7.2	The deadline for applications is 31 st May.	
7.3	Adverts have been placed in publications including Business Desk and Business Innovation magazine. Timelines have been extended to end of May.	
7.4	Recruitment pack is currently on the WLEP website.	
7.5	Two courses of action planned depending on how many applications we receive and a small number of the board to action this next meeting.	
7.6	Chair happy to work with new Chair on the process and inductions.	
8.	<u>GBF Progress Report – Ali Dickinson.</u>	
8.1	AD provided an update to PDG on the GBF Programme with the following headlines:	
8.2	Vale Business Park have reported that all the 10 GBF funded units have been let to 7 new business occupiers. Details on the leaseholder for the final unit are expected by the end of the month.	
8.3	Hoobrook Island has spent all their GBF and delivered all their outputs. Will be developing an evaluation report with the Project Team.	



8.4	In total, 9 Projects have expended all their GBF by end Q4. Programme has spent 91% of the GBF Fund as planned, with the County Council accommodating 9% through Freedoms & Flexibilities (8.64%)
8.5	The Change Control Notes covering changes to Funding Agreements for the 3 Projects requiring Freedoms & Flexibilities have been signed & returned with copies held by County Legal team.
8.6	Projects report that Worcestershire based businesses currently account for 26% of the contractors on the GBF programme (125 total contractors/32 Worcs based) 63% of Apprentices involved in the delivery of the GBF Programme, are reported to be Worcestershire based. (19 total Apps/ 12 Worcs based)
8.7	On track to submit the BEIS Q4 Return by the deadline next week. Future BEIS Returns post Q4 will be on a bi-annual basis and will focus on the delivery of outputs. The next BEIS Return is due in late November.
8.8	AD provided an exception report on the GBF programme, using slides previously circulated.
8.9	WLEP will continue to monitor the three projects which have yet to spend all their GBF allocation and the funding position for Flood Resilience -Tenbury Wells to ensure that GBF funded outputs can be delivered.
8.10	SiG reported that WCC are looking at all funding opportunities and with all constituent partners to meet the identified shortfall in funding for the Flood Resilience -Tenbury Wells scheme. Recognised that the cost increases were not unexpected as many schemes are experiencing cost inflation. SG and VA emphasised the importance of the Flood Defence scheme for Tenbury Wells, for the community and businesses.
8.11	AD responded to VA to confirm that the EA has spent all their GBF on the preparatory work for the Flood Resilience -Tenbury Wells scheme. The GBF remains to be spent by three projects: Construction and Automotive Skills Centre, Malvern Technology Park and Redditch Transport Interchange will be safeguarded and carried forward under the Freedoms & Flexibilities mechanism as County Council funding in this fiscal. All remaining GBF to be spent by end March 2023. Change Control Notes reflecting these changes to Funding Agreements in place.
8.12	General Board consensus that an approach to BEIS should be made to ascertain if there was any residual uncontracted GBF across all LEPS that could be reprioritised in order to provide a funding boost to local projects.
8.13	JD asked about the commercial plans for the Malvern Technology Park (WCC and QinetiQ joint venture) development. It is understood that a Market Consultancy will be undertaken later this year to inform the



	<p>Master Plan strategy for the Technology Park and type of commercial development to bring forward. JD expressed a wish to be included in the Market Consultancy planning for the Malvern Technology Park, in an advisory capacity. AD to convey request to WCC Malvern Technology Park Project Team</p>	
8.14	<p>Matt Bough from Bromsgrove District Council has offered to host a visit for the WLEP Board in June/July to see the GBF funded Low Carbon Housing – Burcot Lane development in action. AD to provide possible dates for the WLEP Board.</p>	AD / NM
8.15	<p>No further questions were raised and all are happy. Chair thanked AD on her informative presentation and feedback.</p>	
9.	<p><u>AOB.</u></p> <p>No other AOB were raised. Chair thanked all and has made many good friendships and will always be available to help and assist Worcestershire whenever required.</p> <p>SG, SL and other Board members offered their thanks to Mark for his dedication and support whilst in office.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Dates for 2022 –</u></p> <p>21st July 2022 09:30 – 11:30 22nd September 2022 09:30 – 11:30 24th November 2022 09:30 – 11:30</p>	