

LLEP BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the Meeting – 21 September 2021
(Microsoft Teams)

Attendance and Apologies:

Directors			
Kevin Harris	KH	Private Sector	Chair
Emma Anderson	EA	Private Sector	
Sonia Baigent	SB	Private Sector	
Chas Bishop	CB	Private Sector	
Lorraine Boorman	LB	Private Sector	
Nishan Canagarajah	NC	Higher Education	
Verity Hancock	VH	Further Education	
Anne-Marie Hunt	AH	Private Sector	
Dr Nik Kotecha OBE	NK	Private Sector	
Ajmer Kaur Mahal	AKM	Private Sector	
Anil Majithia	AM	Voluntary and Community Sector	
Neil McGhee	NM	Private Sector	
Jaspal Singh Minhas	JSM	Private Sector	
Cllr Jonathan Morgan	JM	Leicestershire District Councils	
Cllr Danny Myers	DM	Leicester City Council	
Andy Reed OBE	AR	Private Sector	
Cllr Terry Richardson	TR	Leicestershire District Councils	
In Attendance			
Sharif Chowdhury	SC	LLEP	
Mandip Rai	MR	LLEP	
Stewart Smith	SS	LLEP	
Sue Tilley	ST	LLEP	
Jo Dexter	JD	BEIS / CLGU	
Jacqui Moody	JMo	BEIS / CLGU	
Colin Sharpe	CS	Leicester City Council	
Andrew L Smith	ALS	Leicester City Council	
Apologies/Not present			
Peter Bedford	PB	Leicestershire County Council	
Clare James	CJ	Private Sector	
Alison Greenhill	AG	Leicester City Council	

Minute**Action**

<p>1.</p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p>	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>KH welcomed Nishan Canagarajah, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester to the first meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from PB and CJ.</p>	
<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Minutes and Actions LLEP Board of Directors Meeting Held on 24 June 2021</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p>	<p><u>Draft Economic Growth Strategy</u></p> <p>MR informed the Board of responses received from partners on the Draft Economic Growth Strategy, during the consultation period 1st July 2021 to 30 July 2021.</p> <p>MR presented the final version of the Economic Growth Strategy referring to appendix 1 where fifty-two responses including from the Universities, City and County Councils were received varying in the level of detail.</p> <p>Themes of responses were consolidated by the LLEP Team and sent to Cambridge Econometrics to incorporate into an overall final draft of the Economic Growth Strategy. Key areas of focus included Health and Wellbeing, Sustainability and Decarbonisation agenda.</p> <p>MR noted comments received from the County Council on the need for greater strengthening of the strategy in managing the Climate Emergency. A second comment on the national policy context in relation to the LEP review. MR clarified the challenge in incorporating national policy changes within the strategy, given the recent ministerial changes and lack of clarity about future funding and the sub-national delivery architecture.</p> <p>MR invited comments from the LLEP Board and sought approval to delegate authority to him to make final amendments to the final version before the Economic Growth Strategy is published.</p> <p>NM emphasised the importance of amending the strategy to address internet connectivity issues from the current messaging focussing on broadband.</p> <p>NM referred to page 62 on sustainability and recommended funding windfarms in a more prominent area rather than increasing in Leicester. NM highlighted the need to innovatively encourage businesses and individuals to reduce use of energy.</p> <p>NK highlighted the alignment between the Economic Growth Strategy with the agendas of the Government, Midlands Engine and CBI with the four pillars of Productive, Innovative, Inclusive and Sustainable and being key strengths of Leicestershire.</p>	

<u>Minute</u>		<u>Action</u>
4.9	NK accentuated the importance of more information on Life Sciences to include a case study for Charnwood Campus for Productive priority 4, as the Life Sciences industry is a key government agenda and Leicestershire is a prime location.	
4.10	MR outlined the Economic Growth Strategy is a broad framework aligned to the Midlands Engine and national policy and will convert to delivery and action plans once the sub-national architecture and funding landscape has been confirmed.	
4.11	Board members noted the importance for businesses to frame a consistent voice from the SMEs in the region on the needs and requirements from HE and FE institutions to support the skills deficit within the local economy.	
4.12	CB expressed the benefits reaped from the Economic Growth Strategy already which aided investment into the region noting recent discussions with the National Space Agency.	
4.13	NC noted the importance of providing a cross-sectoral narrative rather than silos by linking the various sectors including health and life sciences and ensuring beacons of growth are intertwined with enterprise and skills to provide a distinctive offer.	
4.14	<p>The Board AGREED with the recommendation to:</p> <p>i. approve the version of the Economic Growth Strategy (Appendix 2) for publication.</p>	
4.15	The Board AGREED for MR to make final amendments to the Economic Growth Strategy (Appendix 2) where required, incorporating comments at the LLEP Board Meeting and publish without reconfirming with the Board.	MR
5.	<u>LEP Review Update</u>	
5.1	KH referred to paper C which provided the Board with an update on the government led review of LEPs which summarised the current position and emerging functions of evolved LEPs.	
5.2	KH updated on Friday the 17 th of September where KH, MR, AR and NK joined a productive meeting with local MPs and their advisors where the role and achievements of LEPs was highlighted in each constituency in matters concerning jobs, business support, and funding.	
5.3	The LLEP has considerably increased engagement with local MPs over the last six to nine months, with positive comments received in support of the role of LEPs moving forward.	
5.4	KH recognised the several changes in ministerial positions and senior leadership of government departments. KH is optimistic that the government leadership includes personnel engaged with the levelling up and LEP agenda. Local MP Neil O'Brien is now heavily involved in levelling up and has a good relationship with the LLEP.	
5.5	The two appendices included a presentation from the LEP network setting out the timeline to influence the Levelling Up White Paper and Spending Review, and a core script for the campaign which was used to inform the local MPs.	

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5.6	There is no further news on when the White Paper will be published, BEIS are working closely with the partners in terms of core funding for the Growth Hub, the LEP Network are also putting forward a submission for core funding.
5.7	Four key functions for evolved LEPs have been put forward through a collaboration led by the LEP network and well received by government officials albeit uncertainty surrounding the future role of LEPs remains.
5.8	Key functions include the strategic function setting a long-term ambition and strategy for the region. Secondly, promoting the local sectors and industries utilising the local intelligence expertise and identifying areas to exploit opportunities aligning with the Enterprise Zones and the Freeport. Thirdly, tailoring business support over the last eighteen months responding to the pandemic and the EU transition. The important role of the Growth Hub has been recognized by BEIS and is being put forward as a core function for LEPs. Finally, the existing funding programmes such as the Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund and Enterprise Zones are identified as a key function for evolved LEPs.
5.9	MR updated that the LLEP is working through local authorities to advance funding for major projects on all four of the enterprise zone sites and engaging in other programmes such as the Freeport and Town Deal.
6.	<u>LLEP Finance Report</u>
6.1	MR updated on Paper D1 which informs the Board of the year-end finance position of the LLEP's operating budget for 2020/21. The Board previously agreed to use reserve the reserves to meet any deficit but and the final year-end position for 2020/21 was a surplus of £73k.
6.2	The LLEP was awarded an additional £65k capacity funding to manage the Getting Building Fund (GBF) programme, the Enterprise Adviser Network was successful in applying for £14k additional funds to target potential NEETS and £25k match funding was received from the University of Leicester to recruit a new pathways coordinator. Income streams budgeted for £100k from the Enterprise Zones were not received due to delays in agreeing the business rates contracts with the billing local authorities.
6.3	Despite budgeting for a deficit already, the LLEP spent less on staff costs due to vacant posts and underspent on running costs. The start of year £2m reserve has increased to £2.1m.
6.4	Board members noted the outturn figures and the surplus transferred to reserves as recommended. Board members acknowledged and praised the LLEP CEO and Team for delivering programmes despite the uncertainty and being under resourced.
6.5	MR updated on Paper D2 which informed the Board of the operational financial position of the LLEP, drawing on numbers at the end of the first quarter of 2021/22. The operational budget that was approved by LLEP Board in April 2021 was deficit budget of £390k, which has since improved by £91k, revising a new forecast of £299k deficit which can be accommodated through current reserves.
6.6	LLEP reserves will be reduced to £1.8 million which would still accommodate any future liabilities in the event of LLEP closure. The Accountable Body has worked closely with the LLEP on the potential implications of closures.

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6.7	The LLEP has not incorporated the current government decision to only provide half of the £0.5m core funding this year.	
6.8	The LLEP has received £250k core funding from April to September 2021, and is currently providing further financial information by the 24 th of September, for the remaining core funding to end March 2022. Within the finance report, the remaining £250k of core funding income has been assumed, however should this not be received, the current reserves of £1.8m would be utilised and be reduced to £1.5m.	
6.9	MR updated on section 5 of the report which outlines the Business Gateway Growth Hub, Enterprise Zones, Enterprise Advisor Network and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) forecasted budgets.	
6.10	MR updated on team restructuring and appointments to the LLEP team, including Stewart Smith as the Head of Skills, Sue Tilley as the Head of Business & Innovation and a new Growth Hub manager starting in October 2021.	
6.11	The LLEP is currently looking to recruit an Economic Strategy Manager and Head of Delivery and Governance post with interviews expected shortly. MR updated there is a shortage in capacity for communications with the loss of a communications and marketing officer.	
7.	<u>Sub-Group Updates</u>	
7.1	MR updated on upcoming dates and agenda items for the Innovation Board, Business Board and Skills Advisory Panel. Key themes across the groups include a focus on low carbon and the Economic Growth Strategy.	
7.2	NK updated the group on the Innovation Board including the successful Innovation Week which commenced on 21st June 2021. A key agenda item is to organise a checklist through the Innovation Steering group to guide SMEs to innovate to improve productivity, efficiencies, and job creation.	
8.	<u>AOB</u>	
8.1	LB updated on an approach from the Midlands Aerospace Alliance to query whether the LLEP would promote funding support to businesses in Leicestershire as there has been a low take up. MR updated that the programme is funded through ERDF and is Midlands wide. The programme will be promoted through LLEP communications to raise awareness of the grant funding.	
8.2	KH suggested to move the next LLEP Board from the planned for 14th of October to the Tuesday the 23rd of November to allow for updates on the LEP review over the coming weeks.	
8.3	KH welcomed the option of holding a face to face meeting for the LLEP Board, subject to Board of Directors being comfortable to attend. MR added that he had received offers to host a Board meeting from partners.	MR/SC
	The meeting closed at 16.15	