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**LLEP Board of Directors**

**3pm, Tuesday, 12 April 2022**

**Face to Face meeting: MIRA Technology Institute**

**Organiser: Sharif Chowdhury**

**Chair: Kevin Harris (KH)**

**Directors: Emma Anderson (EA), Peter Bedford (PB), Chas Bishop (BP), Lorraine Boorman (LB), Nishan Canagarajah (NC), Verity Hancock (VH), Dr Nik Kotecha OBE (NK), Ajmer Kaur Mahal (AKM), Anil Majithia (AM), Neil McGhee (NM), Cllr Jaspal Singh Minhas (JSM), Cllr Danny Myers (DM), Andy Reed OBE (AR)**

**In Attendance: Elizabeth Botmeh (EB) Sharif Chowdhury (SC), Alison Greenhill (AG), Cheryl Maguire (CM), Colin Sharpe (CS), Sue Tilley (ST), Jo Dexter (JD)**

**Apologies: Sonia Baigent (SB), Anne-Marie Hunt (AH), Clare James (CJ), Jonathon Morgan (JM), Cllr Terry Richardson (TR), Stewart Smith (SS)**

**Minutes Taken By: Sharif Chowdhury (SC)**

**CC To: All**

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**MINUTES**

<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b>	
1.1	KH welcomed those present at the meeting.	
1.2	Apologies received from SB, AH, JM, TR, SS and CJ.	
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b>	
2.1	There were no Declarations of Interest.	

Minute		Action
3.	<b><u>Minutes and Actions LLEP Board of Directors Meeting Held on 17th February 2022</u></b>	
3.1	Action Point 5.7 is part of the agenda item 5, where the LEP Review and Levelling White Paper will be discussed referring to paper C. CB circulated a paper on the Midlands Engine 10-point plan as part of Action 6.8.	
3.2	<b>Decision:</b> The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th February 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
4.	<b>Chair and Vice-Chair Appointments</b>	
4.1	KH reminded the Board that the roles of Chair and Deputy Chair had reached the end of their respective terms as he outlined his decision to step down after his first term of office.	
4.2	The Board were asked to note the outline recruitment process for a replacement Chair.	
4.3	AR confirmed that he wishes to stand again as the Deputy Chair and that he would be happy to act as an interim chair whilst leading on the recruitment of a replacement Chair.	
4.4	<b>Action:</b> AM requested for a clear roadmap including a timeline and action plan of the transition to an interim and new chair appointment in the AGM in October 2022.	<b>AR/All</b>
4.5	AR reiterated a formal appointment process will be conducted where the skills, attributes and characteristics required for new members will be considered.	
4.6	The Board <b>AGREED</b> that AR should be elected for a further 3 years as Deputy Chair and that he should be granted delegated authority to act as an interim Chair, whilst leading on the recruitment process for a replacement Chair.	
4.7	The Board noted that several members were reaching the end of the initial 3-year term of office, with the process for re-election due at the next Annual General Meeting.	
4.8	The Board <b>AGREED</b> to delegate authority to the interim Chair and authorise him to speak to each of the Directors to determine appetite to extend their board membership.	<b>AR</b>

Minute		Action
5.	<b>LEP Review – Levelling Up White Paper</b>	
5.1	KH initiated a discussion on what the directors believe the LLEP’s key role should be going forward, and how the business and private sector voice can be best represented.	
5.2	KH highlighted the only other formal voice of business is the East Midlands Chamber (EMC) so it is important that the LLEP take responsibility for ensuring all key stakeholders are included as part of the debate.	
5.3	KH informed that organisations within the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire have contacted the EMC, Scott Knowles the CEO of EMC believes the same should be done with organisations within the Leicester and Leicestershire region.	
5.4	PB informed that very high-level discussions have been held with government, however no details have been discussed until there is clearer feedback from the government on where the LLEP can support.	
5.5	PB updated the board that Nick Rushton is open to having discussions with the LLEP surrounding the devolution deal.	
5.6	<b>ACTION:</b> It was noted that Sir Peter Soulsby and Nick Rushton are willing to work together and have discussions with the LLEP. KH noted that a meeting between the City, County and LLEP would be beneficial. The discussion should include key stakeholders from the LLEP to discuss which areas can be worked on together.	AR
5.7	NK voiced concerns of the Leicestershire region’s 42,000 SMEs being disadvantaged by having a Level 2 frame rather than Level 3 as Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire are combining efforts for a level 3 within their region.	
5.8	NK noted that the Levelling Up white paper expresses this should be private sector led and the importance of engaging businesses and academics on the course of action.	
5.9	KH added further that SMEs naturally do not get involved with politics, so it is vital the LLEP voice the concerns and offer a voice for businesses by bringing the universities to engage those within the business sector who do not understand it. Along with the East Midlands Chamber who represent 5000 businesses, the role is also to create a forum and ensure there is engagement with the business sector.	

<u>Minute</u>		<u>Action</u>
5.10	JD reiterated that the LLEP will be within the framework of either Level 1, 2 or 3 and the levels are rigid with no room for example a 2.5.	
5.11	AR echoed that a few years' time period would be required before any legislation is in place. Therefore, it is important emphasis is on the priorities of Leicestershire by focusing on the strategic objectives such as previously the Local Industrial Strategy and now the Economic Growth Strategy, despite political restructures and deals.	
5.12	DM agreed with AR and noted that there is a general election due so further changes can happen so the LLEP should not be reactive to shifts in the political situation.	
5.13	DM provided the perspective that Leicestershire's political landscape is not more complicated than other regions as geographies across the country are political and not looked at in a pure economic way.	
5.14	AG summarised that the government asked for submissions in a county deal, with bids being expected before laying out a framework. AG noted the real priority and focus should be the amount of money which comes into the region, and not whether there is a level 2 or 3 deal within the framework.	
5.15	AG shared the viewpoint that the LLEP should be providing evidence of works including the growth hub to influence why the devolution money should come into the area and propose better ways of value.	
5.16	ST provided the LLEP operational team perspective. Preparatory work for the LLEP Delivery Plan 2022-2023, which has to be published before the 30 <sup>th</sup> of June 2022, has already commenced. The plan will align to the four pillars of the LLEP Economic Growth Strategy and the Levelling Up White Paper.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>LLEP Operational Budget Report</b>	
6.1	CS referred to Paper D in the agenda pack which informs the Board of the LLEP Operational Budget for 2022/2023.	
6.2	CS reported that the outturn is expected to be in line with the budget for 2021/22 and the new 2022/23 is based on the best available information.	
6.3	It was noted that there had been a reduction in funding for the Core team and Growth Hub due to the national LEP review and spending pressures	

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Action</u>
<p>in BEIS. This had been accommodated by deleting vacant posts and a reduction in delivery costs associated with the Growth Hub.</p> <p>6.4 It should be noted that the Core funding is dependant on a successful business case being submitted to BEIS, to reflect the LEP revised role and function.</p> <p>6.5 CS reported that the budget balanced for the year, in part due to the repayment of the GPF loan for the Gresham development.</p> <p>6.6 CS noted that the LLEP has significantly reduced the numbers of staff associated with the Core funding from 18 in 21/22 to 13 in 22/23. This has enabled the budget to balance whilst maintaining the reserves to deal with future uncertainties. The reserves are expected to be £1.7m at the end of the year.</p> <p>6.7 It was noted that the Accountable Body costs have reduced slightly due to the team moving to a hybrid working model with a small desk allocation at City Hall.</p> <p>6.8 <b>Decision:</b> The Board <b>AGREED</b> with the recommendation to approve the operational budget for 2022/23 noting the inherent risks and uncertainties.</p>	
<p><b>7. <u>Chief Executive Report (LLEP Team Report)</u></b></p> <p>7.1 KH noted that Mandip Rai left the LLEP from March 2022 by mutual agreement, and that this was unrelated to any ongoing uncertainty surrounding the recent Levelling Up and LEP Review. KH expressed thanks to Mandip for the contribution he had made to the LLEP over a number of years.</p> <p>7.2 KH introduced Sue Tilley, Head of Business and Innovation, who is taking temporary lead and responsibility for the LLEP Senior Management Team. ST reported on Paper E, the LLEP Team Report advising that the report had been provided to the board to give an overview of the range of varied and complex work the LLEP team delivers. ST went on to reference some of the specific activities.</p> <p>7.3 ST updated on the launch of Charnwood Molecular’s new Research Facility on Charnwood Campus which had taken place on 7th April which she had attended on behalf of the LLEP. The important addition to campus had been part-funded by £3.4m of EZ Retained Business Rates from the LLEP. which has and will continue to create large numbers of highly skilled jobs.</p>	

Minute		Action
7.4	ST noted key deliverables of the Business Gateway Growth Hub where a range of business support offers have been provided, including the Peer Networks programme which had seen in excess of 300 businesses access the program. Despite the cut in finances, operations are still in progress and key partnerships with key stakeholders are continuing to achieve key outputs.	
7.5	ST responded to LB's question on the status of peer networks going forward, with plans to engage the Peer Networks alumni via ongoing events and workshops. There are plans to re-introduce the popular LLEP/Business Gateway business breakfasts, where budget allows.	
7.6	ST highlighted the successful developments on the Innovation Board, led by Dr Nik Kotecha who have been focussed on how best to engage and providing support the SME community which make up the 97% of businesses within the region.	
7.7	ST provided an update on the Made Smarter Initiative, where a collaborative bid with partners from the East Midlands cluster has been made to BEIS. The activity had worked well and local manufacturing businesses representation at the presentation. If successful, the bid could see potentially up to £7.5m funding for digital adoption for the manufacturing sector across the East Midlands.	
7.8	ST noted that two key members of the Communications team at the LLEP have left in recent months. The LLEP had taken the strategic decision to appoint George Oliver, a previous editor at the Leicester Mercury to amplify activities and to promote and provide exposure of the work of the LLEP. ST asked the Board to note the statistics that were already illustrating the positive impact the new approach was delivering.	
7.9	LB and AM acknowledged the significant improvement in Communications via various channels in the last few weeks and the importance of representing business and getting key information into the media.	
7.10	AM emphasised the difficult circumstances the LLEP Team have been working under in the previous months and will continue to do so given the uncertainty. AM highlighted the importance of providing clear direction to the team.	
7.11	AM requested ST to email the board five brief high level bullet points on the main strategic priorities of the LLEP to provide a framework to make decisions.	ST

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7.12	LB raised concerns on the number of staff reductions and asked about the staff morale at the LLEP given the uncertainties.	
7.13	ST updated that the LLEP SMT are redeploying staff across the LLEP to work smarter, repositioning priorities and some work programmes are reducing naturally.	
7.14	ST informed the Board of a recent team away day to prepare for the 2022/2023 Delivery Plan. Kevin Harris and Andy Reed attended part of the meeting and spoke with the staff which was very well received by the team.	
7.15	NC thanked the team for the report which had been very informative and encouraged the Board to take three key points from the Team Report to crystallise a message and present to the County how without the LLEP and the key stakeholder relationships the organisation has, these activities cannot be achieved.	
7.16	AG expressed the importance for the LLEP to provide visibility on the works carried out in a visual format to get across key deliverables which has not always been present.	<b>ST/AR</b>
7.17	AG and NK thanked the LLEP Team for their efforts and successes over the last few months.	
<b>8.</b>	<b><u>Enterprise Zone Update</u></b>	
8.1	CM reported on Paper F which highlights the key achievements of the Enterprise Zones over the last ten years for MIRA Technology Park and last five years for the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone.	
8.2	CM summarised that positive progress had been made on all sites despite the challenges faced, which included uncertainty over Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and managing expectations around funding availability.	
8.3	CM updated that a completion date for the Forward Funding Agreement contract between HBBC and LLEP had been set for 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2022. This would enable grant funding of £8.75m from EZ Retained Business Rates for two projects at MIRA Technology Park.	
8.4	CM expressed particular thanks to Mark Noble and the legal team at the accountable body for their work on delivering the contract.	

<u>Minute</u>		<u>Action</u>
8.5	CM thanked NK, CB and AR for their continued engagement on the EZ Steering Groups and their support for the programme.	
8.6	The LLEP Board noted the report.	
<b>9.</b>	<b><u>AOB</u></b>	
9.1	The Board expressed thanks to KH on as the LLEP Chair and gave well wishes in the future.	
9.2	KH provided a statement on his eight years as the LLEP Chair.	
9.3	KH highlighted key successes including the Regional Growth Fund being recognised at a national level, prompting an invitation to the House of Commons.	
9.4	Other key objectives met included the LEP's role in serving the community, developing even stronger partnerships with key stakeholders, identifying, and delivering impactful projects across the city and county to impact the wider community for years to come and resolving challenges surrounding the Enterprise Zones.	
9.5	KH shared that the LLEP has created a legacy and a solid foundation for the community by developing the Local Industrial Strategy and the Economic Growth Strategy despite challenges with Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.	
9.6	KH thanked the LLEP Board, the LLEP Team and all the partners for the support and commitment to the LLEP cause.	
	The meeting closed at 16.50	