

**GREATER BIRMINGHAM & SOLIHULL LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29th October 2014**

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs R Cox (Lichfield), M Oates (Tamworth), F Oborski (Wyre Forest), C O’Kane (Solihull) and J O’Shea (Birmingham).

Witness: Katie Trout, Executive Manager, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)

Support Officer: Roy Eaton, Senior Scrutiny Officer

Also in attendance: Clare Flanagan, Principal Solicitor, Bromsgrove and Redditch; Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services, Birmingham City Council

Apologies: Cllrs B Gamble (Cannock Chase), R Grosvenor (East Staffordshire) and P Witherspoon (Redditch)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Cllr R Cox be elected as Chairman of the Joint Scrutiny Committee (JSC) for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Cllr C O’Kane be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the JSC for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

3 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY OR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None submitted.

4 QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None submitted.

5 THE GREATER BIRMINGHAM & SOLIHULL LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The JSC received a presentation from the Executive Manager to the GBSLEP on its background and role.

The key elements to the presentation were: -

- The strategic context of the GBSLEP, how it came into being and its increasing powers, funding and influence.
- Its Mission, Vision and Key Strategic Enablers and Key Performance Indicators seen to be challenging targets.
- How this was being delivered on the ground through various Funds and projects, highlighting how these were spread across the sub-region.
- Details on the Growth Fund and European Structural Investment Fund.
- Its future plans in terms of delivering the Growth Deal: the launch of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Growth Hub; delivering the Enterprise Zone Investment

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Plan; publishing the Spatial Plan for recovery and Growth; developing the skills asks for future Deals and developing a pipeline of projects.

- The Governance arrangements, in particular the GBSLEP Supervisory Board and the scrutiny arrangements through this JSC.

Following the presentation the following issues were raised: -

- Clarification was given on the potential spend of the £2.5m of the Growth Fund allocated to research activity associated with HS2. This was targeted particularly at issues of connectivity with and inward investment associated with HS2, development of the two stations and ensuring the regeneration benefits are maximised. The studies will also explore funding models required to deliver agreed ambitions.
- Further explanation was given of the £56m Mezzanine Fund intended to provide loan support to businesses.
- The witness explained that the Supervisory Board would meet 7/10 days after the GBSLEP Main Board to endorse, or otherwise, the decisions taken by that Board. At present little tension was seen between the two bodies as a number of the Supervisory Board Members also sat on the Main Board.
- Copies of the GBSLEP Annual Report 2013/14 and the Delivering Growth Strategic Framework were made available for Member perusal.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be received and the role and terms of reference of the GBSLEP Supervisory Board be noted.

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JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The JSC considered its own terms of reference.

Members noted the quorum for the JSC and questioned its robustness, given that to be quorate the Member from Birmingham and Solihull had to be present. Although it was the intention that Solihull's Constitutional Rules would apply the JSC which would allow for substitutes, that wasn't the case in the majority of authorities represented and it was suggested that in the interests of continuity each Member Council should also appoint an alternate Member.

RESOLVED

That the submitted Terms of reference for the JSC be approved except that provision be made for each Council to appoint an Alternate Member.

7

CALL-IN PROCESS

The JSC considered the proposed Call-In process.

Members noted that the suggested process was modelled on Solihull's arrangements and it was clear from comments made that practices varied from authority to authority.

Members concluded that, given the nature of the JSC and the role of the body being scrutinised, the requirement for a call-in to be effected by 3 signatories (3 separate authorities) (para c) was excessive and that two signatories was seen as being more reasonable.

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The JSC felt that the signatory to the Call-In request should not be barred from sitting as a Member of the JSC when it considers the Call-In (para d).

The Scrutiny Support Officer (SSO) tabled a template document that could be used by representatives to effect a Call-In which, subject to an amendment to reflect the required number of signatories as discussed above, was agreed as being suitable for use. The SSO stated that he would circulate this electronically to each Member and their Support Officer.

Also tabled was the latest contact information for Committee Members and their Support Officers. Again this would be supplied electronically.

RESOLVED

That the submitted Call-In Rules be approved except that: -

- i) Call-In be effected by two authorities rather than three, and
- ii) The signatory to a Call-In not be barred from sitting on the JSC as a Member when considering the Call-In.

8 MEETING LOGISTICS

The JSC considered logistics for future meetings.

From the JSC Terms of Reference, Members had noted that the Scrutiny arrangements were intended to be light touch, the Committee being required to meet at least once a year with Call-In meetings as necessary.

The JSC noted that GBSLEP Board in June each year would publish its Annual Report and, as such, it might be appropriate to scrutinize that soon after, say in July. It would then be appropriate to meet mid year, say January, to monitor progress.

It was confirmed that whilst currently the GBSLEP did not have a firm forward plan, if such a document was developed it would be made available to the JSC.

Members agreed to Solihull's offer to physically host future JSC meetings and affirmed that the suggested 1.30 pm start time was acceptable.

The SSO advised that the agenda for this meeting had been published through the Council's Moden.Gov and therefore it would be possible for those Members with suitable mobile devices to access the agendas through those devices. Those Members wishing to use such devices would need to contact the SSO to be set up through the Council's systems.

RESOLVED

- i) That two meetings each year be scheduled in July and January, and
- ii) That future meetings be held at Solihull to start at 1.30 pm.

The meeting finished at 2.35 pm.