



WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Board Meeting

Date	19 August 2016
Report title	Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) Engagement Update and Plan
Cabinet Member Portfolio Lead	Councillor John Clancy – Economic Growth
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Report to be/has been considered by	N/A

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

1. Note the progress of the development of the Engagement Plan for the CA SEP.
2. Approve the Stakeholder Identification Plan (Attached as Appendix 1) and the proposals for a Peer Support programme (as set out in the briefing note attached as Appendix 2).

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Board on the progress of the development of stakeholder engagement on the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) by the SEP Board.
- 1.2 Submit a Stakeholder Identification Plan and Peer Support programme for Board's comments and approval
- 1.3 The paper was considered by the SEP Board at its meeting on 22nd July when the proposals were supported. The Board emphasised the need for this work to be properly resourced and co-ordinated and to reach sections of the community (in both the constituent and non-constituent member areas) that have not so far been engaged

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The WMCA's vision, objectives, strategy and actions – articulated in its Strategic Economic Plan – are ambitious. Although people will begin to see some positive changes quickly, it will take many years for some benefits to be fully realised. That brings a real challenge in engaging with partners and residents so they can play an active role in developing, co-designing and delivering work programme and – when it makes sense – take ownership of engagement work.

3.0 Engagement Principles and Commitments

- 3.1 The complexity of engagement across a number of platforms, audiences and locations presents a series of unique challenges to the WMCA. In order to focus resources and expertise in the right places the following commitments and principles have been developed.

3.2 Principles:

- Effective engagement over the next year is a key priority for the WMCA so that partners and residents understand more clearly the purpose, relevance, vision, objectives and strategies of the WMCA and its SEP
- Engagement will not always be easy, will not always work but will be most effective when partners and stakeholders are involved in the developing and delivery of engagement
- All members of WMCA should use existing resources, networks and skills in their individual organisations to support the delivery of effective engagement
- The WMCA will use outside expertise and support where and when appropriate to support delivery of effective events and engagement to all audiences

3.3 Commitments:

- Devolving and developing an open data approach, using the power of digital to engage directly with communities positively and pro-actively across sectors, boundaries and audiences

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- Supporting and engaging with partners and communities to use data to develop ideas and solutions that will help deliver the WMCA's vision
- Developing a national and international reputation for innovation and creativity in the use of open data and digital communications in engagement activity
- Underlining the WMCA's commitment to openness and transparency and focusing on the importance of two way conversations with audiences to develop trust and deliver more effective engagement activity
- All communications material will be jargon free, written clearly, concisely and accessibly and available to anyone who wants it
- The WMCA will provide appropriate resources to help partners and other organisations engage effectively with their own networks

3.4 **Developing the Engagement Strategy**

The three local enterprise partnerships will play a key role in supporting this programme – using the expertise and commitment from LEP board members across the combined authority to work closely with the private sector. A specific programme of engagement will be developed to focus on key sectors, using appropriate channels and communications tools to ensure the most effective engagement:

- Engaging specifically with businesses to understand in detail the barriers to business growth
- Focusing on small, medium and large businesses, working closely with Chambers, FSBs, CBI and trade bodies and using their communications channels where effective (taking account of the fact that only around 5% of businesses are members of these organisations)
- Focusing on the top 250 businesses across the WMCA through the work of the growth hubs

Detailed work is already underway on a number of priorities that support the engagement strategy. These include:

- Stakeholder identification plan (appendix one)
- Peer engagement brief (appendix two)
- Resourcing update – detailed costings for engagement activity
- Timetable for engagement activity in specific work streams – developing milestones and key events to May 2017

4.0 **Financial implications**

- 4.1 As noted at Para 3.4 work is underway to establish the resourcing requirements for this activity and it is envisaged that a further report on this aspect will be submitted to the next SEP Board and then on to the CA Board.

5.0 **Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The SEP Board has emphasised the need to engage with all sections of the community particularly those who have not so far been part of the SEP development process.

7.0 Other implications

7.1 The SEP Board has emphasised the need for the engagement activity to be co-ordinated and dovetail with other communications and engagement activity around the CA generally as well as specific pieces of work around other areas of activity e.g. the Commissions and individual LEP's activity

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 None attached