

**Birmingham Science City Innovative Low Carbon Working Group (ILCWG)
 Notes from 7 December 2016**

In attendance:

Name	Initials	Organisation
Alan Carr	AC	Birmingham Science City / Sustainability West Midlands
Andrew Todd	AT	University of Warwick
Gareth Deakin	GD	Advanced Propulsion Centre
George Constantinou	GC	Enterprise Europe Network
Ian Madley	IM	Keele University
James Bowles	JBo	Sustainability West Midlands
Jenni McDonnell	JM	Knowledge Transfer Network
Joanna Fletcher	JF	Aston University
John Wright	JW	Green Jace Energy
Jon Bloomfield	JBI	Climate-KIC
Judy Lambourne	JL	Enterprise Europe Network
Keith Budden	KB	Cenex
Mark Smith	MS	D2N2 LEP
Matthew Rhodes	MR	Encraft
Mike Woollacott	MW	Greenwatt Technology
Pam Waddell	PW	Birmingham Science City
Rachael Biggs	RB	Sustainability West Midlands
Rachel Melvin	RM	Staffordshire County Council
Ruth Corral	RC	Worcestershire County Council
Sarah Watson	SW	Coventry City Council
Suzanne Curtis-Coles	SC	Climate-KIC

1. Chair’s Welcome and Introductions

MR, Chair, opened the meeting and introductions were made.

2. EU European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) update

PW and AC provided an overview of the current state of play in relation to European Regional Development Funds, part of the ESIF programme, in terms of Priority 1 (innovation) and Priority 4 (low carbon economy). Key points were:

- For both Priorities 1 and 4, there will be a limited call this month (closing in February) in Greater Birmingham and Solihull (GBS) LEP which will only focus on the transitional areas (East Staffordshire, Tamworth, Lichfield and Cannock Chase) as there has been an underspend in these areas.
- In relation to this, the objective is to support businesses that operate in these areas, although the support can come from institutes outside the geography.
- A [workshop is taking place](#) in Cannock on 13 December to stimulate project ideas.



- Most ERDF projects have a £500k ERDF lower limit for projects with an intervention rate up to 50%, however in these areas projects can be £250k ERDF minimum and 60% intervention.
- There will then be a main call for all West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) LEPs against Priority 1 (and likely for Priority 4) in March, most likely.
- In terms of the WMCA LEPs, the calls will come out simultaneously for Priority 1 and will seek projects consistent with the Science and Innovation Audit (SIA).
- There is also likely to be another Priority 1 workshop for all three WMCA LEPs before the main call comes out in March.
- There is an underspend against Priority 4 in many LEPs, largely due to a lack of capacity and complications around the guidance, which has changed quite often. So far, no 'whole place solutions' projects (Priority 4e) have been identified nationally. It is emphasised that if anyone has any innovation based low carbon projects to try to allocate them against Priority 4 rather than 1, where there is less money remaining.
- There is also a pipeline of projects, including those related to ERDF, collated by AC which is circulated prior to each ILCWG meeting; AC emphasised to ILCWG members to update this whenever possible to make it useful for partners to identify collaboration opportunities.

3. Science and Innovation Audit (SIA): Next Steps

PW gave an overview of the recently published [Midlands Engine SIA](#) and outlined next steps in relation to developing a supplementary SIA for the WMCA geography; see [accompanying slides](#). A few points arose following the presentation.

- There will be workshops taking place in January to involve stakeholders; one of these is likely to take place on 19 January at the forthcoming Innovate UK event. ILCWG members can let PW know if their organisation is not represented on the invitation list to these workshops, but feel that it should be (**ACTION**). SC suggested Climate-KIC ought to be represented; PW expected that they would be, but recommended that a specific individual from the organisation is identified to ensure that the invitation goes to the right person.
- The timing of the development of the WMCA SIA will also benefit potential projects to be developed under Priority 1 of the ERDF programme.
- IM outlined that there has been a similar piece of work carried out in Stoke and Staffordshire which may be helpful to align; IM can circulate this to AC (**ACTION**). GD stated that the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) has recently published a technology based study; GD to send link to AC (**ACTION**). PW requested ILCWG members to let AC know if they are aware of any other sector or area specific reports that may help to inform the WMCA SIA (**ACTION**).
- This work also fits with Innovate UK's new push to promote innovation regionally, hence the link with their forthcoming workshop, about which JM will send information in the next couple of weeks to AC who will circulate to the ILCWG (**ACTION**).



4. Innovate 2 Succeed

JL provided an overview of the [Innovate 2 Succeed](#) initiative and GC followed on by outlining current funding opportunities being provided by the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) team; see [accompanying slides](#). A few points arose following the presentation.

- To engage with the various programmes, contact [JL](#) or [GC](#) initially or contact the [national contact centre](#).
- The EEN team works with SMEs that have <250 employees and prefer to work with companies rather than individuals.
- The Innovate 2 Succeed initiative is free to the SME; only their time is required.
- JL outlined that the EEN team is beginning to work with the Growth Hubs.
- In addition to the slides, GC outlined that the EEN team can fund Intellectual Property (IP) audits for businesses, with only a £400 cost to them. The company gets strategic professional opinions on all of its assets. Places on this programme are limited but there is an allocation to the West Midlands region. Businesses have to be eligible for the Innovate 2 Succeed scheme first.
- The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) also wants to engage with local areas and the GBS Growth Hub is jointly funding a post with the IPO, which is about to be advertised. The post will work with other Growth Hubs across West Midlands; there may be benefit in the EEN team linking up with them.

5. Smart Energy Network Demonstrator

IM provided an overview of the [Smart Energy Network Demonstrator](#) project at Keele University; see [accompanying slides](#). A few points arose following the presentation.

- Supplementary projects could be plugged into this project, for example Priority 4 ERDF bids.
- This project will be linked up better with the [Energy Research Accelerator](#) following a meeting that will take place in January.
- The initiative will focus on both product and service development and this includes the more social aspects for example electric car sharing.
- KB outlined that Cenex is currently working on seven vehicle to grid projects emphasising that the technology exists, but a large scale demonstrator is needed, for example for 150 vehicles. It could be of benefit for Cenex (KB) and Keele University (IM) to link up to discuss further (**ACTION**).
- Clarification around the role of Siemens was sought; it was to provide a report which was much like a quantity surveyors report, but nothing further.

6. Innovation and the Autumn Statement

PW provided an overview of the implications on innovation of the recent Autumn Statement. A blog will be written on this subject courtesy of Innovate UK in the coming few days; AC will circulate (**ACTION**). Headlines are as follows:

- A new [National Productivity Investment Fund](#) (NPIF) was announced although this is not a fund you can apply to and rather is a collection of policies. However, there is some information in this that is relevant, for example around transport and R&D.



- An [Industrial Challenge Fund](#) is to be set up which will be focusing more on the R&D end of the spectrum.
- A Midlands Engine strategy will be developed and will include innovation.
- £5m will be allocated to the West Midlands Rail Hub and smart ticketing trials are going to be commenced in major cities.
- There will also be a [Midlands Engine Investment Fund](#) launched in spring 2017, which will allow SMEs to bid into a £250m pot to develop proof of concept ideas onwards. It is a loan based fund to encourage growth and is under the umbrella of the British Business Bank.
- Local Growth Funding availability has not yet been broken down into individual LEP areas. There are projects in the pipeline which at some stage will be funded.

7. New partnerships and funding opportunities

A roundtable update was convened:

- IM and JL referred to a Leadership for Innovation scheme which is ERDF money for mentoring management for businesses.
- GD outlined that the [APC7 fund](#) (*link is to APC6*) will open in January 2017 until March 2017. This is open to SMEs and focuses on building collaborations within the automation space.
- The [Technology Development Accelerator Programme](#) is also to be re-launched just before Christmas. This is an 18 month support programme for business case support to improve technology.
- JM provided an overview of current funding opportunities open courtesy of Innovate UK; see [accompanying slides](#) for more information.
- JF outlined the [Innovation Vouchers](#) scheme which was approved in June and is being run across the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Marches and Black Country LEPs; it is led by Aston University in collaboration with Birmingham City University and University of Wolverhampton. The project will deliver innovation workshops (£2.5k) to help the company innovate and increase market potential. Workshops involve scenario planning and development and will run between now and June 2019. There are 190 vouchers to distribute in total and the University is currently looking for companies to apply via the simple application process.
- JM provided an overview of Green Jace Energy which focuses on property care packages twinned with asset management.
- KB outlined a new Department for Transport fund called [T-TRIG](#) which is 100% funding for innovation in the transport sector and is straightforward to access.
- Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) has also released two new funds; 1) a [work place charging initiative](#) where organisations can obtain £300 towards the cost of an electric vehicle charging plug for up to 20 plugs in total. 2) There is also £20k funding for [larger vans](#) which is time limited.
- There will be an event at iCentrum on 31 January focusing on local case studies related to such initiatives; KB will send the link to AC for circulation (**ACTION**).
- MW outlined the recently concluded [Warwickshire Rural Electric Vehicle](#) project; an event was run and a report developed outlining the successes of the scheme. 25



companies in rural areas benefitted from the scheme especially in terms of the social benefits of electric vehicles.

- Greenwatt, with Warwickshire County Council, is also looking to undertake research around helping to provide young people with alternative modes of transport. Intelligence around any similar pieces of work would be welcomed (**ACTION**).
- RC outlined that using ERDF funding, Worcestershire County Council is helping SMEs to implement renewable energy and to develop low carbon products; this includes two days of business support followed by capital and revenue grants. Any Worcestershire SMEs are open to the scheme.
- MS outlined that D2N2 LEP has launched two SME support programmes; one is a mix of engineering and innovation support and the other is similar but more focusing on R&D. The LEP is also planning on spending its ERDF Priority 4 money; an event was convened three weeks ago which identified some potential projects. MS is happy to share what the LEP is doing around this.
- PW gave an update on the [CDIS project](#). A £40m proposition is currently going through the fourteen stage WMCA funding application system. The first phase is for £5m and will focus on brokerage, feasibility and pilot work. The second bid will come later for the second phase of the project. The aim is to develop large scale demand-led demonstrators across the themes of transport, energy and health. No funding is likely until 2018. BSC is developing the proposal but an accountable body has yet to be determined.
- The [BSC blog](#) site has also been re-launched with the most recent blog focusing on funding for SMEs, written by the BSC Chair, Norman Price. The next blog will focus on the Innovation and the Autumn Statement.
- IM outlined that Keele University is looking for anyone who has had experience of securing a long term energy supply (**ACTION**).
- JM outlined that BEIS is running a [renewables support competition](#) inviting applications for feasibility studies to test heat recovery technology.

MR announced that he will be stepping down as ILCWG Chair after this meeting due to other commitments. On behalf of the ILCWG, we would like to thank Matthew for his contribution and hard work during his tenure as Chair for the past two and a half years. A new Chair will be sought over the coming weeks.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

Wednesday 1 March 2017, 14:00 – 17:00

Wednesday 7 June 2017, 14:00 – 17:00