Establishing an Executive and Smart Board for Greater Birmingham

Purpose

This paper provides the context and overview for establishment of an Executive and Smart Board, so as to strengthen the GBSLEP region's approach to driving forward digital and smarter interventions to achieve greater impact in how we address societal, environmental and economic challenges.

Context

The current Birmingham Smart City Commission has been important in looking at how Birmingham embeds smart city approaches and solutions to address social, economic and environmental challenges particularly at a time of reduced budgets and staff. It has successfully led the development of a demand led demonstrator in East Birmingham providing a place where city leaders, businesses and citizens can co-create and test new ideas that can be repeated and scaled in other parts of the city and region. It is providing the ideal environment to demonstrate the potential of applying new and integrated ways of using technology, data and city assets to improve local opportunities and wellbeing and defining new approaches and activities through a Roadmap.

However ensuring wider impact, ownership and sustainability of the smart cities and digital agenda at a regional level will require a more collaborative and inclusive approach in its leadership and representation than has happened to date especially given the emerging priorities of this for GBSLEP. Enabling greater alignment between supporting local service priorities and city and regional priorities is necessary to drive innovation within and outside the public sector and to help maximise use of limited resources, avoiding where possible duplication in activities and effort. For example using outcome based procurement in the local authority when it commissions new products and services as a vehicle to drive innovation and cost reduction. Moving forward there needs to be better balance between 'supply-side technology' and 'user demand'.

Aim and role of a Regional Smart Board

The board will have dual purpose; firstly helping to set strategic direction and secondly to provide strategic advice and identify opportunities on the way services could be procured, developed and commissioned using innovative approaches. Representatives would be strong advocates of the principles of a smart city encompassing integration, use of digital technologies and data combined with citizen and business focussed processes, recognised as being core enablers in delivering resilient future cities capable of managing resources and budgets in an effective and sustainable way.

To achieve this it is recommended that the Board comprise:

- Core Executive Board (approx. 8 members meeting bi-monthly) who can bring strategic influence and drive to support the development of the smart agenda providing direction and overseeing delivery of the Roadmap. They will bring expertise, knowledge of sectors and establish key priorities.

- The Smart Board (max 25 senior leads across the GBSLEP region meeting quarterly), which includes the Executive Board will reflect the diversity and knowledge necessary to drive longer term implementation of smart approaches that will support regional growth and public sector reform across the GBSLEP. It will create and enable linkages as well as provide connections with and to existing networks such as Smart City Alliance, Silicon Canal and Digital Leaders and be

representative of other groups and bodies that are working to enhance the smart capabilities, innovation potential and reputation of the GBSLEP region. The Board members will have the ability to influence areas of growth, procurement, regeneration and place

- The Smart Board membership would then be further complemented by additional leads that would be invited to attend on an ad hoc basis to contribute their knowledge and expertise to discussion items. Regular standing items for the agenda would include reporting on the smart city Roadmap development and demonstrator progress plus themed discussion items to stimulate new thinking and explore future opportunities, receiving updates on emerging policies, standards and research from experts and knowledge groups. These would then be picked up by the Executive Board for further consideration and prioritising for inclusion in the Roadmap up to 2020.

- The Board would seek ensure that the needs of important subsets of the population are reflected in the board and the wider discussions e.g. facilitating:

  o A younger and more diverse membership or support of an affiliated younger members group by working with the HE sector. The aim of this is to ensure that the board 'modernises' its thinking and approach as we shift from a consumer to creator society led by our digital and increasingly tech savvy youngsters.

  o a better understanding of the 'silver surfer' economy who will become increasingly a part of our economic activity over the next 5 years and also will potentially be the source of increasing demand on our public services

- A vice-chair appointed from the private sector, acknowledged as a significant leader and influencer, would help to galvanise wider private sector collaboration and investment alongside public sector involvement.

Setting strategic direction as part of the wider network of regional partnerships and activity

The Smart Board will drive and help influence GBSLEP strategy in developing smarter approaches to how the region tackles growth underpinned by the application of data, technology and systems in an integrated approach. In doing this it will link to and shape local and regional strategic priorities enabling smart to be embedded in our approach to how we address for example skills & employment, carbon reduction (supporting Green Commission priorities), intelligent mobility (connecting to the work of the Integrated Transport Authority), healthy ageing / independent living (supporting local authority outcomes) and city planning & urban regeneration. In doing so it will:

- Utilise the assets (data, talent, location, infrastructure & people) of the region in a more connected and integrated way to tackle local and regional challenges.

- Promote greater investment in use of disruptive technologies and systems by private sector to support public sector service delivery through a user & demand led approach (as illustrated through the development of the East Birmingham spatial demonstrator)

- Drive business growth and capabilities in the use of data and technologies that will propel innovation in delivery of new applications and services, enhance business growth opportunities and export potential of the region and exploit Big Data and Internet of Things economies.

Given that the Smart Board is part of a wider network of partnerships, its effectiveness will be about ensuring greater collaboration with other active stakeholder groups already established to drive innovation and support smart city activity. This will be important in ensuring we make the most of limited resources, funding and investment.

Appendix A shows how the Smart Board could relate to the City Governance.

Strengthening the Membership

It is recommended that its membership should be drawn from:

- Representatives from project team for the East Birmingham Smart City Roadmap Demonstrator
- Future Council representative
- Academia - universities (Aston, Birmingham, BCU, Warwick) – from a specific specialism, e.g. Health, Urban science, sustainability and resilience, computer science
- FE Consortium for skills and linkages to Employment and Birmingham and Solihull Chamber of Commerce
- ITA and mobility experts
- Utility sectors
- Health sector initiatives
- Representatives from other relevant stakeholder groups e.g. Smart City Alliance; WMODF
- Strategic national experts: Open data Institute
- Industry reps – IT providers / developers; innovative users of IT (share skills and capabilities); investors
- Community groups movers and shakers
- 'Disruptive' entrepreneurs
- Citizen engagers; social entrepreneurs

It is intended to carry out a stakeholder analysis of the current membership with a core group of senior people/members to ensure that the make-up of the Smart Board is relevant.

Timeline of key activities over the next 6 months

Activity	Timeline
Approve the refreshed approach by the existing membership	January 2016
Produce paper for GBSLEP board	January 2016
Identify and establish membership of the Executive Board and set up away day	February 2016
Establish list of potential invitees of Smart Board for consideration by Executive Board	March 2016
Recruit Smart Board members	April 2016
Implement the new Executive Board	April 2016
Implement Smart Board	July 2016

Appendix A: Example of Smart City Governance