

Scrutiny and Performance Panel

17th October 2012

**Agenda
Item No. 11**

The Walsall Economic Board

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr A Andrew – Deputy Leader, Regeneration and Transport.

Executive Summary:

Introduction

The Walsall Economic Board (WEB) held its first meeting in October 2012 and is now recognised as one of the formal Partnership Boards for the borough, which also includes the; Health & Well Being, Safer Walsall and Children and Young People's Partnership Boards.

The role of the Economic Board is to place the private sector at the heart of: direction setting, action planning, on-going consultation and scrutiny of performance against agreed priorities. Its membership is drawn from the private sector (majority) together with representatives from the public sector, including the: Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Transportation.

To create the Economic Boards initial membership, representatives from Walsall's 100 strategically important companies together with those important to our economy as niche providers of goods and services were invited to a set of Economic Forums, chaired by the Chief Executive and Deputy Leader of Walsall Council.

From these forums and through a selection process that ensured that the board membership was representative of our employment sectors and at the appropriate levels, members were invited to join and took up their places.

A full list of the current membership is attached as Appendix 1, individuals who wish to join the board go through an application and selection process, as set out within the Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix 2.

The Economic Boards work is intended to include a mix of:

- Targeted actions as agreed by board members
- Short term quick wins, and medium term actions to demonstrate progress
- Longer term strategic development and positioning that supports Economic Development.

It has an agreed Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix 2, setting out its principals, outcomes and behaviours and has agreed its aim and set of key supporting priorities for 2013/14 and 2014/15, which includes:

The Walsall Economic Board Aims to:

Develop and Drive Activities that Support Businesses to Form and Thrive and Support Local people into Work.

In the delivery of this Aim, the following **Key Objectives** have also now been agreed by the Board:

- ***Developing a Workforce with the Skills Employers Need***
- ***Creating an Infrastructure Capable of Supporting Business Growth***
- ***Improving Business Sustainability & Growth***
- ***Improving External Perceptions***

Its agreed Working Groups and Key Actions to aid in the delivery of these Key Objectives are set out within Appendix 3.

To support the work of the Economic Board, the following key public sector agencies are being invited to come together to form the: ***Economic Partnership Executive Group (EPEG)***

- Walsall Council (representing Directorates key to Economic Development)
- Walsall Partnership
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
- Walsall College - Walsall FE sector
- Walsall Adult & Community College – Walsall Training Network
- Walsall Housing Group (WHG) – Representing the Social Housing Providers
- Voluntary / Social Sector – The Vine Trust
- Third Sector Representative – Walsall CVS
- Walsall Economic Board Member – As elected by the board
- Walsall Chamber – Council Representative

The Economic Partnership Executive Group (EPEG) which is planning to hold its first meeting in late 2013 brings together these key Public and Voluntary Sector agencies, so they are able to play their role/s in supporting the work of the Economic Board in the delivery of the above objectives.

Together with providing governance of funding delegated to it and the co-ordination of their own individual resources, and where possible combining their effect and focus to maximise the positive impact for our employers and people. This will also include assisting with the design and implementation of key strategies, including the European Union Investment Strategy for 2014 – 2020.

In support of this work;

Walsall Economic Forums are called to secure further involvement of the private sector in support of its work, achieved through themed workshop sessions that bring together private sector representatives to discuss key issues and discussion points etc. Feedback from these forums will be essential to aid the work of both the Economic Board and EPEG.

Two sub groups are to be formed in support of this work, to develop the supply side (local people with the skills employers require) the **Employability Skills Group**, and to encourage the demand side to grow (new local jobs) the **Think Walsall Group**. Their membership will consist of local agencies, bodies, colleges, training providers and employers.

A flow diagram setting out the relationships between these groups is attached as Appendix 4.

Reason for scrutiny:

The Walsall Economic Board and its supporting structures (see Appendix 4 for the flow diagram) have been established to support the on-going sustainability and development of the Walsall Economy.

Scrutiny Panel members are asked to note the work so far in the development of these structures and take part in its on-going development, by understanding its direction and the content of its action plans, adding value and scrutinising as appropriate.

Recommendations:

That Scrutiny Panel members;

- 1. Note the progress that has been made in the development of the Walsall Economic Board and its supporting arrangements, commenting and scrutinising as appropriate.**
- 2. To support the on-going development of its work and direction, by agreeing how the panel and its membership may wish to contribute.**

Background papers:

Appendix 1 – Walsall Economic Board, Membership Details (organisational)
Appendix 2 - Walsall Economic Board Approved Terms of Reference
Appendix 3 – Working Groups and Key Actions 2013-15
Appendix 4 - Walsall Economic Board Overall Structure Flow chart

Citizen impact:

None

Environmental impact:

None

Performance management:

None


Equality Implications:


No

Consultation:

Consultation in the development and formation of the Economic Board included a number of dedicated Economic Forums, emails to local Private sector employers from our CRM data base and the Walsall Chamber, together with targeted consultation through Business Support and Employment Growth teams.

Contact Officers:

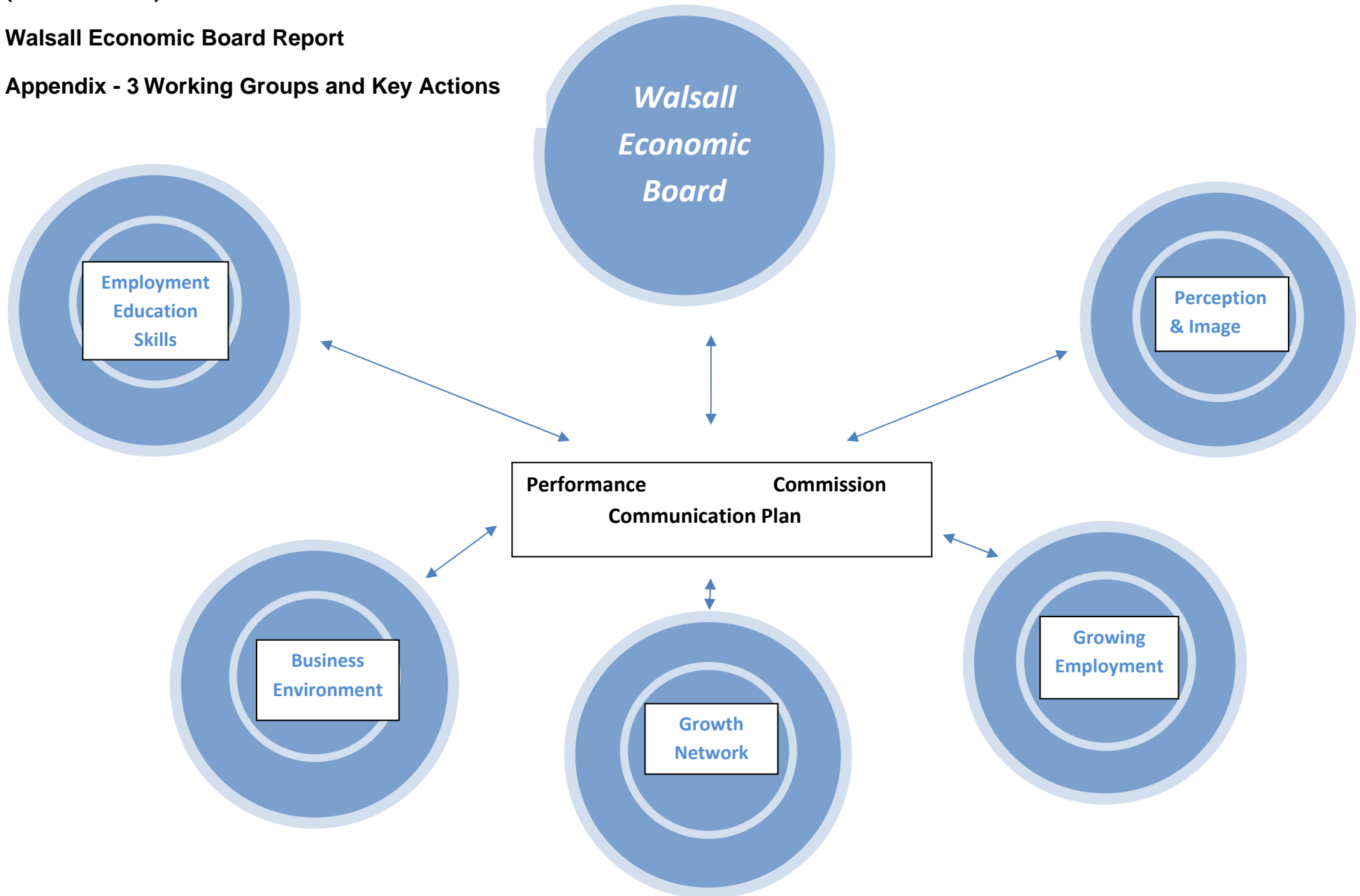
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**Regeneration Scrutiny & Performance Panel
(October 2013)**

Walsall Economic Board Report

Appendix - 3 Working Groups and Key Actions



Proposed - Working Groups - Priority Areas and Key Activities

Employment Education & Skills

Leads – Jat Sharma, Manjit Jhooty, Mike Hew

Support – Jane Kaur Gill, Liz Connolly, James Norris

- Undertake a gap analysis of the current service by mapping out the current provision against the needs of employers
- Looking at the agreed Employment Growth Sectors for Walsall, set out their potential for growth and the likely demand for skills and how this demand could be met - in conjunction with the Growing Employment Levels Group.
- Education Business Partnership (EBP) – Examine the Need and content for a future service that meets employers needs
- Champion local programmes supporting local employment – Work experience, Apprentices, Walsall Works
- Quarterly employment trends and activity report
- Communication articles

Business Environment

Lead - Sat Nijjer, Chris Wooldridge

Support – Isobel Woods, Jo Nugent, Wayne Langford

- Establish the scope and nature and availability of Employment Sites in the Borough
- Work to support the Invest Black Country (IBC) Service Development and Delivery
- Work to support the development of the Enterprise Zone (Walsall sites)
- Establish a sites / premises online search facility
- Produce quarterly Investment trends and activity report with a focus on the EZ
- Communication activity articles

Business Issues - Manufacturing

Lead – John Tildesley, Chris Woolridge, Terry Somerfield

- Look into the Issues facing the manufacturing sector in Willenhall
- Present the findings and key actions / requirements to the Board for Consideration and requests for Action by Key Organisations

Infrastructure Network

Lead- Stuart Bone, Sat Nijjer
Support – Matt Crowton

- Regular progress report updates on key transport projects – Junction 10, Darlaston, A461, Aldridge Station
- Support the development and publication of Walsall's Transport Strategy
- Ensure effective links to the Local, Black Country and National agenda's
- Understand and report back on the development of the Black Country Transport Strategy and Walsall's inclusion
- Shape future transport priorities for consideration by the Economic Board
- Develop Communication articles and messages

Growing Employment Levels

Leads- Ninder Johal, Gurdeep Singh Bath, Anne Ward,
Manjit Jhooty, Terry Somerfield
Support – Isobel Woods, Liz Connolly, Wayne Langford

- Support the development of a BC International Trade service through the new EU Programme with UKTI
- Undertake a gap analysis of business support services against the needs of business
- Understand and map out the Financial packages of Support Available for Employers
- Establish the potential for growth in identified key sectors; links to the Education, Employment & Skills Group
- Quarterly performance report on business employment levels, trends and GVA etc.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – its role in supporting employment Growth and combating Social Exclusion
- Developing active Supply Chains that support Economic Growth linked to key / sustainable opportunities (JLR etc.)

Perception and Image

Lead- Ninder Johal

Support – Isobel Woods, Akshay Parikh

- Develop a suite of marketing collateral
- Produce a Communication Action Plan
- Quarterly performance report on communication activity and response
- Proposals on how the Board communicates its key messages effectively.

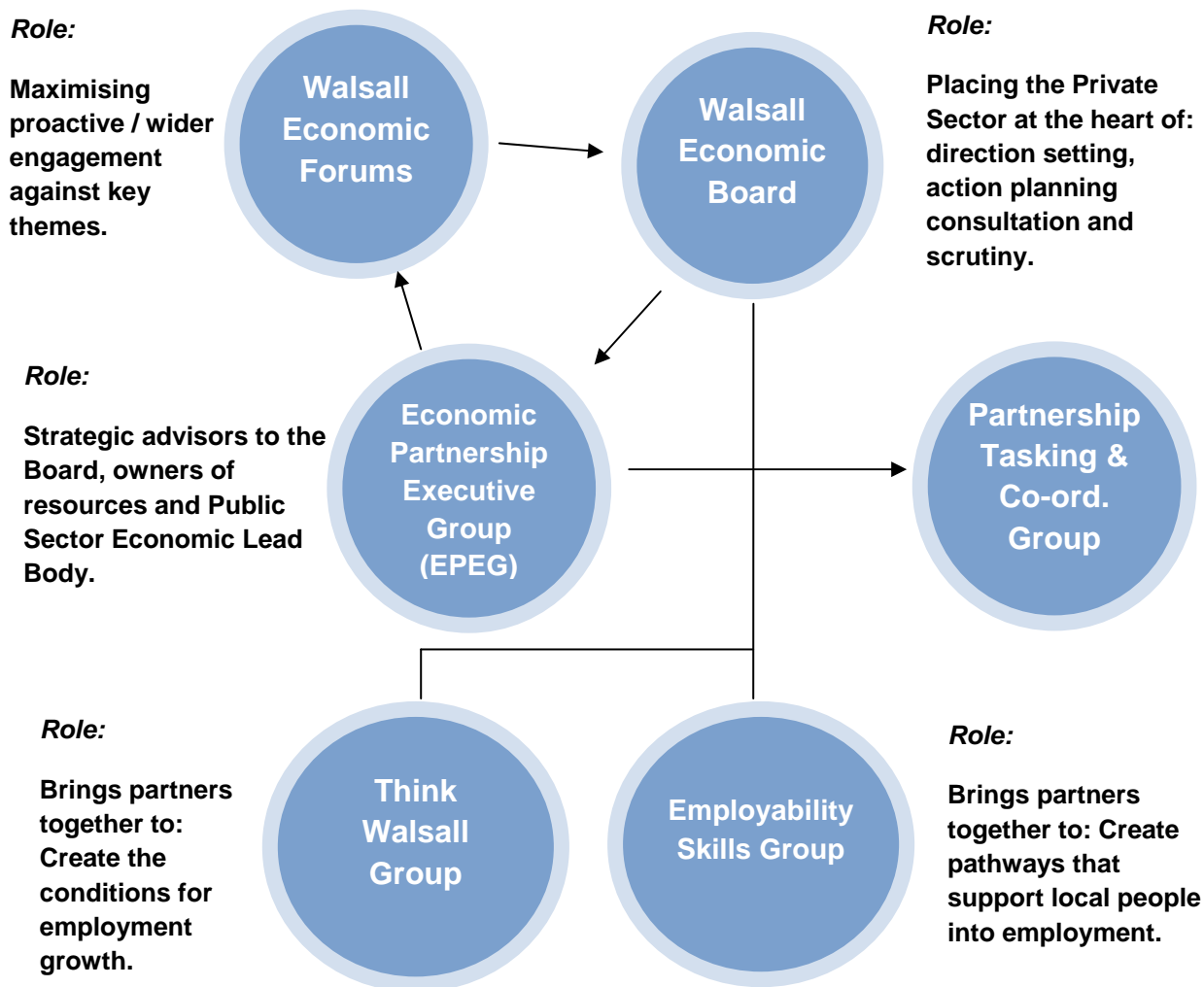
Regeneration Scrutiny & Performance Panel (October 2013)

Walsall Economic Board Report – Appendix 4

Economic Board Flow Chart

The following diagram details the partnership arrangements for the development and delivery of the Economic Theme, together with the co-ordination / delivery of any agreed priorities for the Borough of Walsall.

Principally there are two key groups tasked with this role; the **Walsall Economic Board (WEB)**, which aims to place the Private Sector at the heart of consultation and decision making and the **Economic Partnership Executive Group (EPEG)**, which will allow the public and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate their activity. Both supported by **Economic Forums** to widen active participation.



Two proposed partnership support groups will assist with this work, co-ordinating partners' activities against key actions that maximise our collective abilities in the creation of:

- demand (Jobs) and business sustainability / growth through the **Think Walsall Group**
- supply (people) with the skills employers demand through the **Employability Skills Group**

Regular reports will be taken to the **Partnership Tasking and Co-ordination Group**, which brings together and co-ordinates the work of all recognised Borough Partnerships.