

**West of England LEP Board
 Board Meeting**
Wednesday, 30 March 2022, 9.30 am

Via Zoom

AGENDA

	Subject	Presenting	Pages
1.	Welcome from the Chair <i>Apologies received in advance from Chris Grier</i>	Richard Bonner	
2.	Minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2022 <i>To approve minutes from the previous meeting.</i>	Richard Bonner	3 - 6
3.	Declarations of Interest <i>All Board members have a responsibility to treat all proposals/projects equally and impartially and must therefore declare whether they or their organisation has either a direct or indirect interest in any of the projects to be considered by the Board.</i>	Richard Bonner	
Items for Discussion			
4.	STEP Fusion <i>To provide members with the opportunity to discuss the Severn Edge STEP Fusion Programme with Andy Bates from Nuclear South West.</i>	Andy Bates/ Stephen Bashford	7 - 8
5.	Levelling Up White Paper <i>An opportunity to discuss the government's proposal for LEPs</i>	Patricia Greer	
6.	UK Shared Prosperity Fund [UKSPF] <i>An opportunity to discuss the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund</i>	Rachel Pykett	9 - 10
7.	Appointment of LEP Business members <i>To consider the recommendations from the Business Nominations Committee following the recent LEP recruitment exercise.</i>	Richard Bonner	11 - 12

	Items for Information		
8.	Papers for April Committees <i>Feedback to LEPChair@westofengland-ca.gov.uk in advance of the meeting on the 8th April 2022.</i>		
9.	Any Other Business		

West of England LEP Board

Wednesday 19 January, 9:30am
Meeting held “virtually” via Zoom

Present:

Richard Bonner, Arcadis (Chair)
Katharine Finn, PwC (Vice Chair)
Prof Sue Rigby, Bath Spa University (Vice Chair)
Christopher Grier, Airbus
Joanne Rumley, Foot Anstey
Margot Day, Arup
Natasha Swinscoe, WEAHSN
David Brown, The Bristol Port Company

Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations
Zoe Metcalfe, Atkins
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Don Davies, North Somerset Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council
Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority

Officers in Attendance:

Patricia Greer, West of England Combined Authority
Jess Lee, West of England Combined Authority
Stephen Bashford, West of England Combined Authority
Mike Jackson, Bristol City Council

Dave Perry, South Gloucestershire Council
Ben Mosely, Bristol City Council
Jo Walker, North Somerset Council
Melissa Houston, West of England Combined Authority
Malcolm Coe, West of England Combined Authority

Also Present:

Cllr Winston Duguid, Chair of Scrutiny Committee
George Margesson, West of England Combined Authority (item 4 only)
Rebecca di Corpo, West of England Combined Authority (item 5 only)

Jon Rattenbury, West of England Combined Authority (item 6 only)

Apologies:

Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset
Will Godfrey, Bath & North East Somerset

Minutes

1.	<p>Introduction from the Chair Richard Bonner welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Cllr Duguid, Chair of Scrutiny Committee who will be attending LEP Board meetings as an observer.</p> <p>Apologies were noted.</p> <p>Members were then given a brief update on the LEP recruitment - 23 expressions of interest for the LEP business positions were received. We are currently looking at these applications and screening them against the criteria set to create a shortlist for the Business Nominations Committee to consider and take forward to interview.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting of 6th October 2021 Richard Bonner noted that Chris Grier had commented during AOB on work around the decarbonisation plan for aviation. Stephen Bashford confirmed that he and Chris Grier have been working together in compiling a membership list for the working group to take this forward.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 6th October 2021 were then agreed as a correct record.</p>
3.	<p>Declaration of Interest</p>

	<p>The Chair reminded Board members that they had a responsibility to treat all proposals/projects equally and impartially and must therefore declare whether they or their organisation had either a direct or indirect interest in any of the projects to be considered by the Board.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
<p>Items for discussion</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Implications on the region At the end of last year Government announced a return to work-from-home guidance in England, in response to rising COVID-19 infection rates and the increasing prevalence of the Omicron variant.</p> <p>In the lead up to December the general consensus was that the economy was showing strong signs of recovery at a regional level and confidence was coming back. However, the effects of Plan B have impacted some sectors, particularly those customer facing services - hospitality, culture, tourism.</p> <p>Observations made by the members were centred around recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are challenges around the availability of specialist staff leading to lengthy vacancies due to issues in finding suitable candidates for interview. ▪ High turnover is making recruitment a challenge and there are concerns that the pay packages being offered are not sustainable. ▪ In terms of wage pressures and competition there is a national issue to recruit into social care - this is the biggest impact on wages in Local Government as people choose less stressful, demanding, and flexible employment. <p>During an open discussion the following points were also noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No significant uplift in activity from the Growth Hub [compared to 18 months ago] but hearing from businesses/network organisations that the level of debt in the economy is significant- Providing support around financial resilience and medium plan planning will be key. ▪ Within insolvency the national stats were at their lowest in some time suggesting that the Government support in place had been successful, but businesses are concerned about increased energy prices, competition for employment, contracting levels being uncertain - a lot of “what if” questions. ▪ Air traffic out of the UK is lower than other European cities. This is a UK wide, not regional issue and from a connectivity and inward investment view this is a concern - Are we missing out? Is this due to our travel restrictions?
<p>5.</p>	<p>West of England Cultural Plan Richard Bonner introduced the item and invited Sue Rigby to update members on the draft summary of the Cultural Plan which has been developed by the West of England Cultural Compact.</p> <p>Members were reminded that the purpose of the Cultural Compact is to focus and amplify the role of culture in the region, as a driver for economic success, placemaking, community cohesion and personal wellbeing. The structure of the Cultural Plan is through four areas of focus and three cross cutting themes to help turn strategic ideas into deliverables which will influence and attract further investment.</p> <p>The West of England cultural offer is unique - we have everything and it’s clustered. We need to work hard to ensure everyone has access and to ensure that culture is not seen as an optional extra but something that is essential in our covid recovery and bringing money into the region.</p> <p>Additional observations made by the LEP Board were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pleased to see the importance of inclusion and recognising the barriers to culture within the plan - Access for all isn’t just about geographical space and physical distance. ▪ The pandemic has shown we cannot just hold cultural activities inside. How do we take culture outside and work with local communities to make it more inclusive?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With regards to freelancers there is value in continuing to think about how we sustain their development and build an infrastructure for future support. <p>North Somerset informed members of an exciting opportunity. SEE MONSTER will be the world’s first and only repurposed North Sea offshore platform and the largest outdoor installation ever seen in Weston-super-Mare, located at the Tropicana site. There is inequality in parts of North Somerset, the challenge will be how we utilise culture in its broader sense to maximise the benefit of the installation for all the residents.</p> <p>Overall, the LEP Board continues to support the proposed direction of travel and next steps which includes the launch of a high-level prospectus to help implement the Cultural Plan.</p>
6.	<p>Increasing Investment and Scale of Net Zero Energy Projects</p> <p>With COP26 taking place last year and the vital work around our green recovery, Richard Bonner felt it would be helpful for Jon Rattenbury to come and talk to the LEP Board about the South West Energy Hub and to share headlines.</p> <p>The Energy Hub is hosted by the West of England Combined Authority and LEP but operates across a much wider area across the South West - A partnership of 7 LEPs [soon to be rebranded as Net Zero Hubs]. The purpose of this initiative is to support the identification, development, and implementation of energy projects and the programme has six core objectives aimed at stimulating local investment.</p> <p>Jon took members through a short presentation to showcase the Energy Hubs services and programmes, along with its challenges and project highlights.</p> <p>During an open discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is one of the most significant issues for the region and we need to consolidate all of our thinking to leverage public and private sector funding towards the big investment propositions. ▪ Access to investment is a key challenge. Does existing private money have the ability to work with cities? It was suggested the LEP could play a key role in developing a pipeline of potential investments. ▪ Bristol City Council were involved in the Catapult work with Greg Clark [UK Cities Climate investment Commission] and Jon was advised to speak with officers to link up the work. ▪ South Gloucestershire Council informed members of recent success with an innovative renewable energy scheme with The Wave. Using investment funds set aside to partner with organisations and share risk to bring forward projects that support renewable energies. ▪ Being ambitious and driving change behaviour [not just declaring an emergency] is vital in reaching net zero. <p>LEP Board members expressed an interest in engaging further with the Energy Hub activities and to work with Jon to help bring to scale, speed and investment to place-based energy projects to achieve the region’s Net Zero ambition.</p> <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energy Hub and officers to consider how LEP Board members can continue to be involved in this work, potentially via a sub-group of members. ▪ South Gloucestershire Council to present the Step Fusion bid at a future meeting.
7.	<p>Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund</p> <p>Malcolm Coe gave a brief update on the Local Growth Fund [LGF] and Getting Building Fund [GBF].</p> <p>There is still some residue with the GBF [just over £6m] but the LGF concluded in March 2021 [£202m] and the full amount was spent - we did not need to return anything to Government. The team will continue to report on the LGF in terms of the outcomes it has delivered and Appendix 3 within the papers gives an overview of where we are.</p> <p>Richard noted brilliant progress against skills and transport but with regards to housing and jobs we’re</p>

	further behind and wondered whether there were any lessons learnt from the programmes we can reflect on for future success?
Items for information only	
8.	<p>Subgroups Summary Within the papers the LEP Board were provided with an update on the progress of organisational subgroups (Business Insights Panel, Skills Advisory Panel and Cultural Compact)</p> <p>No discussion needed</p>
9.	<p>Papers for June Committees Richard Bonner will be attending the WECA Committee and Joint Committee on the 28th January. Business members were asked to provide any feedback to Richard by Wednesday 26 January.</p>
10.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ben Mosely has circulated a paper around a proposed Governance review - This is moving at pace and contains a timetable of engagement. A report will be taken to Joint Committee in March. ACTION: Richard Bonner will convene the LEP business members to discuss. ▪ Stephen Bashford gave a brief update on the Digital Connectivity Bid to DCMS. ▪ Jess Lee informed the LEP board that a draft copy of the LEP Delivery Plan will be circulated for feedback. The Plan is a summary on LEP delivered projects and will be a useful resource when showcasing what the West of England LEP has achieved.

Next LEP Board meeting: Wednesday 30 March.

**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
Board meeting – 30th March 2022**

Severn Edge - STEP Fusion Programme

Purpose of the report

At the meeting of 30th March, colleagues from Nuclear South West will present an update on the Severn Edge STEP Fusion Programme.

Recommendation

To note background ahead of presentation at the LEP Board meeting

Background

1. The Western Gateway Partnership is spear-heading a bid to bring the UK's prototype fusion energy plant (STEP) to the Western Edge site in Berkeley and Oldbury. If successful, the bid would create £3.5 billion of economic output and over 30,000 jobs for the area.
2. STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) is the UKAEA's ambitious programme to deliver a prototype fusion energy plant putting the UK on a path to being able to use this clean, green and safe fuel.
3. Severn Edge is one of 5 shortlisted bids to host the UK's first STEP fusion prototype plant. UK Government is expected to announce the successful bid in December 2022.

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**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
Board meeting – 30 March 2022**

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Purpose of the report

1. This report provides the LEP Board with an overview of the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Recommendation

It is recommended the LEP Board:

- Note the contents of the report
- Note that further information on UKSPF (including funding allocations) is due to be published prior to the LEP meeting (but was not available at the time of writing this report).
- Highlight priorities that could be factored into the development of an investment plan.

Background

2. UKSPF is positioned as the UK Government's successor to EU structural funds. This £2.6bn, three-year fund (2022/23 – 2024/25) will be targeted in building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training and supporting pay, employment and productivity growth.
3. The Levelling Up White Paper confirmed that in areas with a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), UKSPF will operate across the MCA footprint and that MCAs will be the nominated lead authorities responsible for development of an investment plan, management of funding allocations, approvals and monitoring of delivery.
4. Ministers and officials have been clear that there is an ambition for funding to be more flexible than EU structural funds, enabling greater integration or alignment with other funding streams.
5. Funding allocations will be determined by funding formula rather than competition. The West of England will therefore have clarity on a funding profile and be able to plan accordingly. At the time of writing, the formula for determining allocations has not been published – and Government has noted that allocations in some areas may not be equivalent to previous EU structural funds.
6. Funding over the three-year programme will be backloaded and the national priorities we will need to deliver against will shift over time. Figure 1 provides an overview of the

national funding profile. UKSPF will make available a mixture of both revenue and capital funding for places to invest in local priority projects.

Figure 1: National UKSPF funding profile

Funding year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
National funding allocation	£400m	£700m	£1.5bn
National funding priorities	Boosting pride in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities and place • Local business interventions 		Increased focus on investment to support people and skills

- Further information on investment priorities, local allocations and the process required to develop investment plans is expected to be published alongside the Spring Statement (23rd March). It is anticipated a regional investment plan will need to be submitted to Government over the Summer (timing TBC).
- £560m of UKSPF has been topsliced to fund the DfE-led Multiply programme, which is focused on boosting adult numeracy. This will be focused on adults without level 2 maths and routes to addressing this position. Again, funding will be allocated to places and an investment plan will need to be submitted to Government. MCAs are also the nominated lead authorities for Multiply.

Next Steps

- Once local allocations and full guidance have been published, work will progress to undertake engagement with a wide range of regional partners to ensure our investment plan reflects the needs of local people, communities and businesses. Further engagement with the LEP Board will form part of this process.

Author: Rachel Pykett

**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
Board meeting – 30.03.2022**

Appointment of Business members for West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

Purpose of the report

1. To elect new business members for the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

Recommendation

To note the process for appointing new LEP business members and to discuss and formally approve the recommendations made by the Business Nominations Committee (a sub-group of the LEP).

Background

2. The process to appoint new business members for the West of England LEP is set out in the LEP Board Terms of Reference and Local Growth Assurance Framework.
3. This paper sets out the process undertaken and the recommendation of the Business Nominations Committee.
4. At the meeting on 30th March 2022 all LEP Board Members will be given the opportunity to comment on the recommendations made by the Business Nominations Committee before there is a vote.

Process

5. Adverts for the vacant business positions went live via LinkedIn and other social media channels on Wednesday 17 November inviting applicants to submit expressions of interest no later than **Friday 17 December**.
6. The LEP Business Nominations Committee (BNC) is a sub-board of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and was formed of the current Chair and Vice Chairs.
7. The LEP BNC met on **Thursday 27 January** to discuss the 23 expressions of interest received and compiled a shortlist for interview. Successful applicants must meet the following criteria:
 - Work within the West of England region
 - Sector expertise
 - Demonstrable experience of leadership
 - Credibility to champion the region
 - Ability to convene and represent collective views

8. 5 candidates were invited to interview, and these interviews took place between **Tuesday 15 February and Monday 11 March 2022.**
9. The LEP BNC convened on **Friday 18 March** to agree the recommendations to take to full board.
10. LEP Chair to speak with recommended candidates to confirm their interest during the week commencing **Monday 21 March** to ensure recommendations can be brought to full board on Wednesday 30 March.

Decision:

The LEP Board are asked to formally approve the recommendation of the Business Nominations Committee and to confirm that the successful candidates will join the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board for a term of 3 years.

AUTHOR: Lynda Bird, Head of Operations & Performance

CO AUTHOR: Melissa Houston, Project Officer (LEP & Business Engagement)