

West of England LEP Board

Tuesday 21 April 2020, 9:30am

Zoom conference call

Present:

Prof Steve West, West of England LEP
Katharine Finn, PwC
Christopher Grier, Airbus
Dick Penny, Independent Consultant
Heather Cooper, Hargreaves Lansdown
Joanne Rumley, Foot Anstey
Jon Reynolds, GDS Digital
Margot Day, Buro Happold
Mohammed Saddiq, Wessex Water
Natasha Swinscoe, WEAHSN

Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations
Richard Bonner, Arcadis
Zoe Metcalfe, Arup
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
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Zoe Metcalfe, Arup
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Donald Davies, North Somerset Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire
Mayor Tim Bowles, WECA

Officers in Attendance:

Patricia Greer, Chief Executive, WECA
Shahzia Daya, WECA
Stephen Bashford, WECA
Jessica Lee, WECA
Helen Edelstyn, WECA

Nick Evans, WECA
Melissa Houston, WECA
Menna Davies, WECA
Hannah Shackelford, Bristol City Council

Apologies:

David Brown, The Bristol Port Company

Cllr Dine Romero, Bath & North East Somerset Council

		Action
1	Welcome, housekeeping and apologies were noted	
2	Preparing for next steps of managed exit and recovery Steve introduced the item and invited Patricia Greer and Stephen Bashford to update members on current activities. National Recovery Plan Patricia Greer informed members that WECA had been talking to Government [at both officer and ministerial level] and through the M9 discussions around the transition/exit stage had begun. With social distancing likely to continue, discussions are being had on which sectors will be unlocked first. There will be cost implications to businesses to meet certain requirements, therefore packages of financial support will need to be adaptable. Going forward there will be a bigger emphasis on skills and an opportunity to drive more people into education, particularly online. With regards to the next steps in recovery, framing our activities around the LIS and sectors is key but the biggest challenge will be meeting the needs of a new future and not just rebuilding what went before. Looking at structures, government at setting up a National Political board. Composition is still evolving but Combined Authorities will play a key role and under this will be regional economic recovery boards - part of this will involve rebuilding our sector groups.	

	<p>Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce Stephen Bashford updated the board on the regional economic recovery taskforce, a group that needs to be agile and responsive to deal with a fast-moving landscape.</p> <p>Over the next 6-month the initial focus will be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gathering intelligence. This will help to build a clear regional perspective. 2) Develop a plan to help the economy rebuild [led by the evidence and to be action based]. <p>Stephen referred to the Terms of Reference document for the taskforce, looking at the practicalities of the group, such as membership and an open discussion developed around how the sector groups and thematic workstreams will work together with concerns around duplication and crossover which could get confusing. Stephen confirmed that the team have started to map out the framework and engage with potential sector leads.</p> <p>In discussion the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordination is key – we need a single clear message to avoid confusion and duplication ▪ Construction and housing sectors will be important due to the multiplier effect ▪ Challenge will be to ensure that businesses from all parts of society are represented ▪ Infrastructure will be increasingly important to consider, including broadband as well as transport, logistics and utilities – all important enablers to the recovery ▪ Need to be inclusive in recovery planning to ensure it is future proof – young people and disadvantaged groups should be involved 	
3	<p>Immediate response to current situation Steve introduced the item and invited the leaders and Mayor to update members on the areas of focus within their unitary authorities.</p> <p>At Bristol City Council the emphasis has been on food, domestic violence and child abuse, resulting in more resources and increasing the size of the teams. Mayor Rees is also having weekly calls with core cities, focusing on the economic recovery.</p> <p>At South Gloucestershire Council the importance of seeing a locality approach to recovery is key, making sure what we talk about does materialise into real community action. Cllr Savage believes that the comms is important and that the LEP needs to publicize the work we're doing more widely.</p> <p>At North Somerset the focus has been to push out grants, however many organisations are not claiming. Cllr Davies requested support from members in spreading the message and encouraging businesses to apply for the support available. Concerns with the tourism and hospitality sectors were also highlighted as needing support particularly as these are likely to be the last released from lockdown.</p>	
4	<p>AOB Steve was pleased to announce that the Nightingale hospital at UWE has been handed over to the Health Trust. It will be formally opened on the 26th April.</p>	

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