

# Agenda Item 1

## West of England West of England LEP Board

Friday, 12 June 2020, 9am  
Meeting not open to the public. Meeting Held Virtually

### Present:

Joanne Rumley, Foot Anstey  
Margot Day, Buro Happold  
Richard Bonner, Arcadis  
Heather Cooper, Hargreaves Lansdown  
Prof Steve West, West of England LEP  
David Brown, The Bristol Port Company  
Martino Burgess, Gregg Latchams  
Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations  
Katharine Finn, PwC

Christopher Grier, Airbus  
Dick Penny, Watershed  
Jon Reynolds, GDS Digital  
Cllr Dine Romero, Bath and North East Somerset  
Cllr Donald Davies, North Somerset Council  
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire  
Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined  
Authority

### Officers In Attendance:

Patricia Greer, Chief Executive  
David Carter, Director of Infrastructure  
George Margesson, Principal Economist  
Tim Milgate, Democratic Services  
Stephen Bashford, Director of Business & Skills  
Jess Lee, Head of Policy & Strategy  
Menna Davies, Head of Communications  
Pete Davis, Head of Grant Management &  
Assurance

Melissa Houston, Policy Officer  
Will Godfrey, Bath & North East Somerset  
Council  
Susan Hayter, Bath & North East Somerset  
Council  
Mike Jackson, Bristol City Council  
Jo Walker, North Somerset Council

**Also Present:** Anwen Jones, BEIS [observer]

### Apologies:

Natasha Swinscoe, Academic Health Science  
Network  
Mohammed Saddiq, Wessex Water

Zoe Metcalfe  
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council  
Dave Perry, South Gloucestershire Council

## Minutes

		Action
1	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  The Chair welcomed members and apologies were noted.	
2	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2020</b>  The minutes of the meeting held 21 April 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.  Cllr Romero noted that Mayor Marvin Rees had been recorded as present twice on the minutes and asked that this be corrected. She also asked that the situation with substitute members be clarified. The Chair confirmed that the Terms of Reference did not permit substitute members but would speak to Cllr Romero separately.	
3	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	

	There were no declarations of interest declared.	
	<b>Items for discussion</b>	
4	<p><b>Future Scenarios</b></p> <p>The Chair stated that the substantive part of the meeting would be to discuss the challenges and opportunities that the current Covid-19 crisis had presented, and how the region could support any future recovery. The Chair reported the downturn figures in the economy for April 2020 and said that an opportunity now presented itself regionally in influencing both the region and the decision-makers in Government.</p> <p>George Margesson, Principal Economist, WECA, introduced a report with an accompanying presentation, providing the LEP Board with an overview of the national and regional trends that were emerging in the post-Covid-19 recovery and framing a discussion around opportunities and challenges this presented for the region.</p> <p>Four scenarios were presented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local renewal – Business significantly reduces use of global supply chains and trade declines. Personal and business behaviour shifts and extensive home working remains in place permanently</li> <li>2. Global Britain – International trade rebounds quickly as disruption reduces. International travel does not return to mass levels, amid ongoing virus concerns.</li> <li>3. Local consolidation – British firms strengthen use of local suppliers but face high costs and low innovation. Behaviour quickly returns to the pre-virus position, with people willing to occupy public spaces.</li> <li>4. The old future – There is no significant “reshoring” of supply chains, as foreign clusters retain cost and technical advantages, and businesses seek diversification. International travel and tourism recover quickly and return to growth [when incomes recover], and few behavioural changes persist.</li> </ol> <p>Recognising that these are scenarios and the reality of the future is likely to be somewhere between these extremes, the LEP Board were asked to think about the key opportunities and challenges for the region and which dimensions they considered the most important. The main points raised in the discussion are set out below:</p> <p><b>Culture.</b> The tourism and hospitality sectors were planning for the new ‘normal’ and he emphasised the importance of clean and inclusive growth and ensuring that it was at the forefront of thinking and planning.</p> <p><b>Low Carbon Economy.</b> The main focus was around “green recovery” and that lockdown had demonstrated rapid behavioural change was possible in areas such as reduced travel and increases in walking and cycling. The importance that the region leveraged this appetite for change was emphasised, and it was agreed that community engagement/action was a core part of rebuilding.</p> <p><b>Incubators, accelerators &amp; hubs</b> – noted some challenges with the availability of business grants and loans. He also noted that incubators had been set up for hotdesking resulting in many locations [particularly listed buildings in Bath] struggling to meet social distancing requirements.</p> <p><b>Digital Connectivity.</b> Stated that Government support had made a difference to the digital sector and that remote/home working was vital in protecting the</p>	

	<p>economy and preventing any future repeats of the Covid-19. With everyone adapting quickly to virtual communication the main challenge was to ensure a resilient infrastructure in all areas [including rural] and address potential broadband disadvantage/poverty.</p> <p>Professional Services – The speed to deliver remote working had been consistent across the larger firms who had seen minimal furloughing. The Group had also discussed the West of England offer as businesses wanted to move out of London, and the Thames Valley the region had to try to attract these businesses to the area.</p> <p>Skills Advisory Panel. Reported that discussions had centred around the potential of social inequalities as some sectors and groups may be behind in the digital connectivity. There may also be an issue with re-skilling and re-educating adults who fall into unemployment and concerns on the long-term impact of certain school years missing education and the foreign student cohort;</p> <p>Housing, Construction &amp; Development. Outlined the main issues he saw, such as apprenticeship levies being carried forward, automating industries, and how to provide deliveries in a carbon neutral future without impacting cyclists and walkers.</p> <p>Patricia Greer reported on a request from Government for potential infrastructure projects that could be delivered within the next 18months. A capital projects list was being developed to deliver on the Government’s ask.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Infrastructure project list to be circulated for comments.</p> <p>Cllr Savage raised the importance of space and the built environment, such as potential job losses in the aerospace industry may have on Filton. Chris Grier reiterated that there were around 180 aerospace companies in the SW region all with a supply base, emphasising its importance to the region.</p> <p>In summing up the discussion the Chair stated that the focus should be on three ‘P’s – People, Place and Potential.</p> <p><b>Agreed: That the discussion points be used to inform future work.</b></p>	
5	<p><b>LGF update</b></p> <p>Pete Davis, reported on progress with the delivery of the Local Growth Fund programme including the current funding position, risks and the impact of Covid-19, seeking views on the LGF programme, the forecast spend position and risks.</p> <p>Pete reported that there has always been a requirement that all funds be spent by March 2021. Owing to the impact of Covid-19 Government were revising arrangements for LGF payments with 2/3 paid at this time followed by ‘a period of joint working and review over the summer on contractual commitments and likely spend over the remainder of the year’.</p> <p>To mitigate the impact of delay to schemes within the programme and to ensure full grant spend by March, the Authority had for some time been employing an overprogramming approach. Given this overprogramming, and with all but 3 projects in the LGF programme in delivery, it was expected that the Authority would be well placed to meet the criteria that all commitments were paid in full.</p>	

	<p>The following point was raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cllr Dine Romero asked a question regarding the moving of some schemes from green to amber. Pete explained that the dashboard tried to show recent changes, such as delays and it was not a reflection on the credibility of the schemes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed: That the update on the LGF programme be welcomed.</b></p>	
6	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Reports for the WECA Committee on 19 June 2020 have been published. Steve West will attend the meeting as Chair of the LEP to feedback any views.</p> <p>Following recent press speculation regarding Tesla, Stephen Bashford confirmed that IBB were working with DiT on this and offered to provide a briefing document giving a clear indication of the opportunities as well as the site size/location requirements.</p> <p>Dick Penny asked that his thanks be passed to Mayor Rees on his handling of recent events which had placed Bristol at the centre of an international debate.</p>	
	<b>Date of Next Meeting.</b>	
	Thursday, 1 October 2020, 10.00 am, Venue to be announced.	