

**West of England
West of England LEP Board**

Wednesday, 20 January 2021, 9:30am
Meeting held “virtually” via Zoom

Present:

Prof Steve West, West of England LEP (Chair)
Katharine Finn, PwC
Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations
Dick Penny, Independent Consultant
David Brown, The Bristol Port Company
Jon Reynolds, GDS Digital
Mohammed Saddiq, Wessex Water
Margot Day, Buro Happold

Heather Cooper, Hargreaves Lansdown
Zoe Metcalfe, ValueSwift
Richard Bonner, Arcadis
Sue Rigby, Bath Spa University
Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined
Authority
Cllr Dine Romero, Bath and North East Somerset
Cllr Donald Davies, North Somerset Council

Officers In Attendance:

Patricia Greer, Chief Executive
Stephen Bashford, WECA (item 4)
Malcolm Coe & Pete Davis, WECA (item 5)
Lynda Bird, WECA (item 6)
Menna Davies & Alison Barrat, WECA (item 7)
Jess Lee, WECA
Melissa Houston, WECA
Tim Milgate, WECA

Susan Hayter, Bath & North East Somerset
James Cooke, South Glos Council
Dave Perry, Chief Executive, South Glos Council
Ben Moseley, Bristol City Council

Also Present:

Richard Gutsell, Atkins (Consultants) (Item 4 only)

Apologies:

Christopher Grier, Airbus
Natasha Swinscoe, Academic Health Science
Network

Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire

Minutes

		Action
1	Welcome and apologies The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and welcomed Professor Sue Rigby to the Board.	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.	
3	Declarations of Interest 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>The Chair stated that his employer the University of the West of England (UWE) had been in receipt of growth fund funding in the past. There were no further declarations of interest.</p>	
Items for Discussion		
4	<p>Freeport bid</p> <p>Stephen Bashford, Director of Business and Skills introduced a discussion on the Freeport bid. Richard Gutsell from Atkins, the appointed consultants, gave an update on the process undertaken to develop a Freeport bid, including multi-criteria technical analysis and discussions with key stakeholders to develop a shortlist of preferred site configurations.</p> <p>A sub-group of the LEP Board has been working with WECA and Atkins. They endorsed the rigorous process undertaken to date. They noted that this will be a competitive process and a successful bid will bring clear benefits to the region by linking to our inward investment strategy and building on our strengths. The group endorsed the proposals.</p> <p>In discussion Members of the LEP Board endorsed the process undertaken and raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A real opportunity to build on strengths of innovation, technology and digital - Opportunity to ensure that our skills agenda will provide opportunities for our residents - The proposals are aligned with existing housing and transport facilities and well placed to align with future changes to work/travel patterns as we move out of the pandemic - Significant opportunities to attract other companies to the region and for regeneration - Need to ensure we address the balance of manufacturing and the green agenda - Need to stress our unique selling point in terms of key markets of import/export, drawing on International Market Prioritisation work - Western Gateway are supportive of Freeports in the WG area and will support both this and any separate submissions to the Welsh process <p>Agreed:</p> <p>(1) That the LEP Board agreed that West of England+ Freeport bid (Bristol Port – Severnside – J21 Enterprise Area and Gravity) be submitted on or before 5 February 2021</p> <p>(2) That the supporting narrative be further strengthened in line with comments received.</p>	
5	<p>Existing and Future Funding</p> <p>Malcolm Coe and Pete Davies gave a summary of existing and future funding for the LEP and West of England Combined Authority. Board Members considered an accompanying report on the Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund .</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was confirmed that there would be no monies returned to government as all funds were allocated 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certainty has been requested from Government regarding future funding and discussions continued with both ministers, civil servants and other regional Mayors through the M9 group • The Chair requested that regional narrative on challenges and opportunities is refined to reflect the impact of the covid pandemic. Members to advise if they would like to be involved. <p>Agreed:</p> <p>(1) That the present and future funding arrangements be noted; (2) Members to advise if they would like to support this activity.</p>	
Items for Information		
6	<p>LEP Delivery Plan</p> <p>Lynda Bird, Head of Performance, Planning & Projects updated Members on arrangements for agreeing the annual LEP Report and Delivery Plan which will go to WECA and Joint Committee on 29 January with the Business Plan before being submitted to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>Agreed: That the arrangements for submitting the LEP End of Year Report and Delivery Plan to BEIS be noted.</p>	
7	<p>Communications Update</p> <p>Menna Davies, Head of Communications and Alison Barrat, Marketing Manager, updated Members on a new communications campaign to be launched on Monday 25 January 2021 with the aim of ensuring that local residents and businesses could access existing support, together with increased visibility of the Authority's work and services.</p> <p>The LEP Board were asked for their assistance in increasing awareness of this social media campaign.</p> <p>In discussion Members noted that disadvantaged communities may not think that the messages were aimed at them, or may lack digital access. It was confirmed that messaging would be tailored to reach as many communities as possible.</p> <p>Agreed: That the communications campaign launch planned for 25 January 2021 be noted.</p>	
8	<p>Board membership update</p> <p>The Chair gave an update on the membership of the West of England LEP Board. The term for a number of members was due for renewal at the end of January but given the ongoing challenges the Chair had written to formally offer an extension to their term on the LEP Board until Summer 2021 to ensure continuity during this challenging period. The Chair confirmed that all had accepted the offer to remain on the Board and expressed sincere thanks to them. He confirmed that a recruitment plan will be developed to ensure diversity of membership.</p>	
9	<p>Reports for the Joint meeting - West of England Combined Authority Committee and West of England Joint Committee</p> <p>The Chair noted that the reports for the Joint Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority and West of England Joint Committee had been published</p>	

	<p>the previous day. Board members were invited to comment on the reports and pass their comments to Steve West or Patricia Greer prior to the Chair's attendance at that meeting.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>(1) That any comments LEP Board members may have on the reports to be considered by the Joint Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority and West of England Joint Committee at its meeting on 29 January 2021 be passed to the Chair and/or Chief Executive directly;</p> <p>(2) That those comments be taken into considering during the Chair Steve West's submission to that meeting.</p>	
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair noted the ongoing need to protect the NHS as we move through this current lockdown. He invited LEP Board members to comment on the current situation. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst businesses were not complacent, certain sectors of the economy remained strong in January 2021, although it was acknowledged that some other sectors such as hospitality continued to struggle with lockdown restrictions; • Brexit had caused some extra bureaucracy but to date providing the additional information had been manageable; However, there were issues around "settled status" of some employees post-Brexit; • Financial Services had offered volunteering opportunities for staff to support the NHS. • In response to a question regarding whether businesses were claiming the additional support available to them through local authorities, an update will be brought to the next business briefing • It was requested that an update on Mass Transit proposals be brought to the next meeting. 	
<p>The next Full Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 9 March 2021, 10.00 am</p>		