

West of England LEP Board

Monday 21 June 2021, 2:30pm
Meeting held “virtually” via Zoom

Present:

Katharine Finn, PwC (Vice Chair)
Christopher Grier, Airbus
David Brown, The Bristol Port Company
Dick Penny, Independent Consultant
Joanne Rumley, Foot Anstey
Margot Day, Buro Happold
Mohammed Saddiq, Wessex Water
Natasha Swinscoe, WEAHSN
Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations

Richard Bonner, Arcadis
Prof Sue Rigby, Bath Spa University
Zoe Metcalfe, ValueSwift
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Don Davies, North Somerset 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
Malcolm Coe, West of England Combined Authority
Will Godfrey, Bath & North East Somerset

Mike Jackson, Bristol City Council
Jo Walker, North Somerset Council
Dave Perry, South Gloucestershire Council
James Cooke, South Gloucestershire Council
Menna Davies, West of England Combined Authority
Melissa Houston, West of England Combined Authority

Also Present:

Pete Davis, West of England Combined Authority
[item 7 only]

Apologies:

Prof Steve West, West of England LEP (Chair)

Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council

Minutes

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| 1. | <p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>In the absence of Steve West, Katharine Finn chaired today’s LEP Board meeting welcoming everyone, especially Dan Norris the new West of England Mayor and Cllr Kevin Guy the new Leader of B&NES.</p> <p>Katharine also congratulated Mayor Marvin Rees on his re-election and informed members that since the last meeting, Heather Cooper has stepped down from the LEP Board after recently leaving Hargreaves Lansdown. Thanks for Heather’s time, expertise and active participation were noted.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2021</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2021 were 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> |

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| | There were no declarations of interest. |
| Items for discussion | |
| 4. | <p>LEP Chair</p> <p>Professor Steve West’s term as Chair of the West of England LEP is concluding after four years.</p> <p>The process to appoint a new Chair for the West of England LEP is set out in the LEP Board Terms of Reference and Local Growth Assurance Framework and this guidance states that the LEP Board Chair must come from the private sector and be nominated by business members.</p> <p>LEP Board Business members were contacted and invited to submit expressions of interest for the role of Chair.</p> <p>The nominations process was overseen through a business nominations committee (a sub-committee of the LEP Board). The business nominations committee met on Friday 11th June. This was attended by the current Chair Steve West, Katharine Finn as Vice Chair, and Business Board member Neil Douglas where they recommended that Richard Bonner is nominated as the new chair.</p> <p>AGREED: LEP Board members voted and formally approved Richard Bonner as the new Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership for a term of three years, starting on the 1st July 2021.</p> <p>Richard took the opportunity to thank the business board members for their support and to Steve West for his work over the last 4 years. There is a lot to do going forward and Richard is keen to work with everybody on the LEP Board and wider to deliver our ambitions for the region.</p> <p>To note: A process to elect a Vice Chair/Chairs will commence in Autumn 2021.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Supporting Recovery in the Cultural Sector</p> <p>West of England Cultural Compact was established in April 2021 as a collaborative vehicle and mechanism to steer, join up, facilitate and support strategic activity for the creative and cultural sector.</p> <p>This builds on work led by a regional Cultural Strategy Engagement Group - chaired by Dick Penny.</p> <p>Katharine Finn invited Prof Sue Rigby to provide a short overview of the West of England Cultural Compact and to lead a discussion on the potential role and impact of the West of England Cultural Compact in helping to achieve regional recovery and inclusive growth.</p> <p>Within the update the importance of moving from strategy to a strategic plan was emphasised along with how culture is both a driver for economic growth, as well as an enabler to help communities grow - people like to live in places that have a rich and diverse culture, where there’s a feeling of community.</p> <p>A Cultural Compact co-ordinator post has been developed to ensure momentum is maintained and tangible progress is made. Several sprints are underway to guide the Cultural Compact’s initial work of influencing, auditing, evaluating and doing, at pace - outputs from this work will inform the ongoing development of the regional cultural strategy.</p> <p>Observations from the LEP Board included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the need to align cultural activities to WECA/LEP initiatives, ▪ to understand the relationship between culture and business - How could culture be used to maintain moral as we move back to the office? ▪ how post covid recovery is about people remembering how to do things together |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use the talent available to help our narrative - storytelling for the region <p>Culture as a sector needs to be more inclusive and recognise the barriers.</p> <p>Overall LEP Board members were very supportive of the work so far and a number of members offered to speak with Sue offline to explore further opportunities.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Jobs & Skills</p> <p>Mayor Dan Norris updated LEP Board members on his ambition for the upcoming Job & Skills Summit in early July where the focus will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ meeting people across the region who are struggling with access to employment and the skills they need for future jobs ▪ encouraging big employers to participate in the apprenticeship levy transfer and encouraging SMEs to consider taking on an apprentice through that scheme ▪ understanding the specific challenges facing sectors as we reopen, in particular hospitality, health and creative ▪ understanding the experience of users of programmes to ensure the programmes we put in place in future are easy to access and respond to the needs of users. ▪ Showcase opportunities across the region and to highlight sectors where there will be huge growth potential and job opportunities including green digital and creative industries <p>Chris Grier and Joanne Rumley, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Skills Advisory Panel both agreed that any additional avenues to gather information/data is welcomed and an opportunity to not just share expertise but also discover what residents are thinking is beneficial.</p> <p>Questions around promotion and signposting of the event to ensure success and reaching those underrepresented were noted and will be incorporated into the communications plan.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund</p> <p>Pete Davies, Head of Grant Management and Assurance took the LEP Board members through the delivery programme, providing a review that included risks and covid-19 impact.</p> <p>As previously reported all funds were required to be spent by March 2021. To help manage this hard LGF end date, structured overprogramming has been employed for some time. It was always recognised that this overprogramming would translate into an actual funding requirement in 2020/21 if all schemes delivered as planned, or in 2021/22 otherwise.</p> <p>Members were pleased to see the progress. A post project evaluation to help understand the longer-term impacts was requested along with exploring ways to showcase projects to demonstrate that the West of England can deliver.</p> |
| Items for information only | |
| 8. | <p>Growth Hub Annual Report Summary</p> <p>LEP Board members were provided with a summary of the Growth Hub Annual Report.</p> <p>Over the last twelve months the Growth Hub has significantly enhanced its delivery in response to the impact of Covid-19 - delivering over 11,000 new business interventions since March 2020, a record level for the region.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Papers for June Committees</p> |

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| | <p>Steve West will be attending the WECA Committee and Joint Committee on the 25th June. Business members were asked to provide any feedback to Steve by Wednesday 23 June.</p> |
| 10. | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dick Penny thanked the Combined Authority team for developing the Recovery Fund for the cultural and creative sector, understanding the sectors complexity and extending support that includes the freelance community. <p>Richard Bonner requested a brief update on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Levelling up fund</i> - Separate bids were made by the Unitary Authorities. An application around Station accessibility was submitted by the West of England Combined Authority.2. <i>Unlocking funds for Temple Quarter</i> - A decision will be made in the Spending Review. |