

West of England LEP Board

Wednesday 6 October, 9:30am
Meeting held “virtually” via Zoom

Present:

Katharine Finn, PwC
Christopher Grier, Airbus
David Brown, The Bristol Port Company
Dick Penny, Independent Consultant
Joanne Rumley, Foot Anstey
Margot Day, Buro Happold
Natasha Swinscoe, WEAHSN

Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations
Prof Sue Rigby, Bath Spa University
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset
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
Lynda Bird, West of England Combined Authority
Stephen Bashford, West of England Combined Authority

Jo Walker, North Somerset Council
Dave Perry, South Gloucestershire Council
Melissa Houston, West of England Combined Authority

Also Present:

Freyja Lockwood, West of England Combined Authority (for item 5)

Apologies:

Richard Bonner, Arcadis (Chair)
Mohammed Saddiq, Wessex Water
Zoe Metcalfe, ValueSwift

Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Mike Jackson, Bristol City Council
Will Godfrey, Bath & North East Somerset Council

Agenda:

	Subject
1.	<p>Introduction from Chair Today’s LEP Board was chaired by Katharine Finn as Richard Bonner was unexpectedly unable to attend.</p> <p>Katharine welcomed members, apologies were noted, and the meeting began with a short update on the Spending Review and recent reshuffle in Government.</p> <p>Spending Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regional Spending Review submission went in last week -thanks to LEP Board members for the input throughout the development.The Chancellor will give his Spending Review statement on the 27th October. It is expected the Levelling Up White Paper will be published around the same time.As a recap, our spending review submission highlights four specific proposals to help us deliver on our regional priorities (1) invest in innovation, (2) invest in digital, (3) scale up retrofitting and (4) put the region on a footing to deliver. <p>Reshuffle: There has been a reshuffle in Government and the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government has been rebranded the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, overseen by Michael Gove.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting of 21st June 2021 The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.</p>

3.	<p>Declaration of Interest LEP Board members were reminded 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>	
4.	<p>Appointment of Vice Chair Joanne Rumley, a member of the Business Nominations Committee, took members through the process to appoint a new Vice Chair for the West of England LEP. The process is defined in the LEP Board Terms of Reference and Local Growth Assurance Framework.</p> <p>As set out in the meeting papers, the process to appoint a Vice Chair was overseen by our business nominations committee which met on Monday 27 September to consider expressions of interest received. The committee was formed of Richard Bonner as LEP Chair, together with Joanne and Business Board members Neil Douglas and Zoe Metcalfe.</p> <p>The nominations committee have unanimously recommended the appointment of two Vice Chairs, Katharine Finn and Sue Rigby. The committee felt that having the opportunity to draw on the wealth of experience offered through two Vice Chairs would be enormously helpful in supporting the Board.</p> <p>AGREED: LEP Board members voted and formally approved Katharine Finn and Sue Rigby as Vice Chairs of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership starting from today [Wednesday 6 October 2021].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Katharine Finn to be appointed for a term of 12 months to offer a point of continuity to support Richard as the new LEP Chair ▪ Sue Rigby to be appointed for a term of three years <p>Congratulations were extended to both Katharine and Sue by Board members.</p>
5.	<p>Cultural Compact The West of England Recovery Plan committed to a review of the draft Cultural Strategy, developed through 2019/20, to ensure every opportunity is taken to enable culture to thrive.</p> <p>The Cultural Compact was identified as the vehicle through which to support the implementation of the West of England’s cultural recovery plans and at June’s LEP Board, members discussed the importance of transitioning from cultural strategy to a strategic plan.</p> <p>Katharine invited Sue Rigby to lead the discussion and provide an overview of the West of England Cultural Compact’s approach to its [Cultural] Strategic Plan.</p> <p>An external consultant has been appointed to help run a series of consultations and workshops. The focus over the next 12 months will be to support covid recovery measures, prioritising freelancers, young people and embed culture into wellbeing whilst continuing to understand what we have in the region.</p> <p>LEP Board members continue to be extremely supportive of the work and a discussion developed around the long-term vision, the development of an infrastructure map to demonstrate where our cultural assets are and understanding the Arts Council’s bidding process.</p> <p>Additional observations from the LEP Board included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highlighting what culture can do for the wider agenda, both economic and social is the right approach. ▪ Ensuring this strategy aligns with available funding routes. ▪ There is significant evidence [research based] on how culture supports mental and physical health and wellbeing – interested in hearing more about health integration and the Cultural Compact collaborating with health individuals/organisations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In relation to the launch and to give the campaign a boost is there an opportunity to include input from business and highlight how valuable culture is to the business community. <p>To note: It is planned to launch the West of England Cultural Compact and Cultural Plan in the autumn, as indicated in the West of England Business Plan (2020/21), by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and Dr Darren Henley, OBE, Chief Executive, Arts Council England.</p>
6.	<p>Digital Innovation & Transformation Stephen Bashford, Director of Business and Skills and Freyja Lockwood, Programme Manager in the Innovation and Sector Development Team introduced this item.</p> <p>The West of England LEP recently commissioned an initial piece of work on how we solve the problem of connectivity within our region. Freyja took members through a short presentation on the progress so far. This included an overview of the digital programme which is looking at skills, inclusion, infrastructure, connectivity and innovation to bring together a coherent plan for the region.</p> <p>A discussion developed around understanding our challenges and current capabilities, clarity on timelines and the need to work at pace to deliver a digital transformation programme that will enable us to address some of the inequalities across the region in terms of both infrastructure, skills and access to jobs.</p> <p>Members were supportive of the work and its approach.</p>
7.	<p>LEP Membership This was the last meeting for Dick Penny and Mohammed Saddiq as their terms on the LEP Board have concluded.</p> <p>Katharine and fellow board members thanked Dick and Mohammed for their time and contributions over the years. The support and challenges they have brought to discussions have been invaluable and has been reflected in the work of the LEP.</p> <p>Dick took the opportunity to wish everyone good luck. He has enjoyed his time on the LEP Board and hopes to continue to help/support in the future.</p> <p>A recruitment exercise to fill the vacant business positions will commence in due course.</p>
Items for information	
8.	<p>Papers for October Committees Richard Bonner will be attending the WECA Committee and Joint Committee on the 15 October. Business members were asked to provide any feedback to Richard by Wednesday 13 October.</p>
9.	<p>AOB Code of Conduct [Annexe 2] At the request of the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities we have updated our Code of Conduct to clarify that expenses are not routinely offered to Board Members. Katharine asked members to note the updated code of conduct paragraph and advise them that an updated copy will be circulated to each member for signature following this meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Melissa Houston to circulate and obtain signatures</p> <p>Data Protection Policy [Annexe 3] LEP Board members were asked to formally adopt the WECA Data Protection Policy which were included with the meeting papers. This is required as part of our ongoing assurance process.</p> <p>AGREED: LEP Board members confirmed they are happy to adopt.</p>

	<p>Chris Grier requested further information on developing a decarbonisation plan for aviation following the recent Extraordinary meeting of the combined authority committee. Patricia Greer confirmed that next steps would be included in the committee papers for the October meeting and the Board Members would be sent a link once papers were published.</p>
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