

West of England LEP Board

Tues 21 June, 9:30am
Meeting held “virtually” via Teams

Present:

Richard Bonner, Arcadis (Chair)
Katharine Finn, PwC (Vice Chair)
Joanne Rumley, Foot Anstey
Margot Day, Arup
David Brown, The Bristol Port Company
Nigel Costley, TUC

Natasha Swinscoe, WEHNS
Zoe Metcalfe, Atkins
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Steve Bridger, North Somerset Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council
Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority

Officers in Attendance:

Jess Lee, West of England Combined Authority
Stephen Bashford, West of England Combined Authority

Melissa Houston, West of England Combined Authority
Rachel Pykett, West of England Combined Authority
Jo Walker, North Somerset Council

Also Present:

Cllr Winston Duguid, Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Prem Goyal, City of London

Gavin Edwards, University of Bath (item 5 only)
Ben Woods, University of Bath (item 5 only)

Apologies:

Christopher Grier, Airbus
Prof Sue Rigby, Bath Spa University (Vice Chair)
Neil Douglas, Viper Innovations
Ruth Jefferson, Wessex Water
Patricia Greer, West of England Combined Authority

Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset
Mike Jackson, Bristol City Council
Will Godfrey, Bath & North East Somerset
Dave Perry, South Gloucestershire Council

Minutes

1.	<p>Introduction from the Chair Richard Bonner welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Prem Goyal from City of London who is attending this LEP Board meeting as an observer and for item 4's discussion.</p> <p>Richard also noted that this was Nigel Costley's first LEP Board meeting as a new business member.</p> <p>Apologies were noted.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting of 30th March 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th March 2022 were then agreed as a correct record.</p>
3.	<p>Declaration 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> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
Items for discussion	
4.	<p>Pre Goyal, Alderman from the City of London Prem thanked the LEP Board for the opportunity to attend today's meeting and gave a brief overview of his position as Alderman and potential areas of collaboration to strengthen connections between London and West of England, including but not exclusively, attending future Board meetings and providing</p>

updates on the City of London.

Stephen Bashford gave a brief presentation from a West of England perspective to highlight the synergies, particularly around the professional services sector, fintech cluster and joint investment and trade activities both nationally and internationally.

In discussion the following points were made:

- To deepen the relationship and to increase collaboration we need to identify ways to ensure connections are sustainable.
- Prem confirmed that there are a number of teams within the City of London with sector expertise including an 'Investment & Growth' team that he can connect officers with to explore opportunities to collaborate.
- The opportunity to share experience of supporting low carbon projects to investment readiness was raised by the Mayor of Bristol
- Mayor Dan Norris highlighted that the City of London owns a number of designated heritage assets including the Barbican and would therefore be interested in exploring and developing the Arts and Culture offer. **ACTION: Prem Goyal and Dan Norris to meet and discuss further.**
- Links around the social mobility agenda and an opportunity to share best practice as the City of London has a 10-year Social Mobility Strategy which has been in place for 3-4 years. **ACTION: Prem to share what progress has been made**

ACTION: Team will coordinate the synergies and follow up with Prem separately on how to move these forwards.

Regional opportunities around sustainable energy generation, including hydrogen

As part of our approach to achieve net zero and to discuss the regions emerging opportunities for sustainable energy, including hydrogen, Richard welcomed Gavin Edwards and Ben woods from the University of Bath to begin the item by giving members an overview of IAAPS - a live case study.

IAAPS was originally set up to be a globally recognised centre for industry focused R&I and to create a collaborative hub to work with the automotive industry and to take propulsion research forward and achieve net zero target, as well as develop skills and education to support the sector - Capabilities have developed over the last 5-years and are now wide ranging. Although automotive is at the core, 50% of activity is now Aerospace and other sectors.

The team have secured £2.5m from the UK Research Partnership Innovation Fund (RPIF) to install H2 infrastructure at the new IAAPS facility (based at the Bristol & Bath Science Park and will officially open in July 2022). This will allow the installation of a green hydrogen production capability - solar panels on the roof, an electrolyser to generate hydrogen and storage tank.

5. In discussion the following points were made:

- The challenge of launching new projects is to join together and not only inspire the next generation to embark on this sector as a career but also inspire our existing workforce and upskill for future technologies.
- Cllr Toby Savage highlighted the work around Hydrogen that Western Gateway are leading on - mapping of assets across Wales and the West of England area. This will launch in due course and help set out our position to Government as to why we are the place to do international business.
- There is a need to capture and retain talent. Within our skills agenda there needs to be a thread running through everything we do.
- Members were reminded that the Skills Advisory Panel plays a key role - There are a number of tools currently being delivered across the region around skills. It's important to work towards capturing opportunities for jobs, making sure there are clear access routes, and the team would welcome further collaboration with IAAPS to achieve this.
- Nigel Costly made the point that the skills focus should be on inspiring and upskilling the existing workforce as well as the next generation

David Brown informed members of a newly formed, industry led consortium called South West Hydrogen

	<p>to support the government’s ambitious drive to generate 10 GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. This partnership of organisations is in its early stages but has had some great bilateral dialogs and links supply and demand centres in the region, enabling cross-sector collaboration to drive the development of hydrogen infrastructure and technology.</p>
6.	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) At March’s LEP Board meeting board members were given an overview of the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a £2.6bn funding stream to replace the EU Structural funds.</p> <p>Rachel Pykett summarised progress so far, including the West of England allocation and proposed timeline. To date, our engagement with the LEP Board, Unitarity Authorities and wider stakeholder groups have highlighted a range of challenges and opportunities and have helped to identify a set of proposed regional principles and priority outcomes which will frame our investment plan.</p> <p>To date online engagement has seen 20+ responses from the proforma and a webinar for the voluntary sector has been scheduled for early July.</p> <p>Comments from members around the process and mechanics for approving the projects were noted, alongside a request for an overarching vision to help create a framework for decisions - what’s the problem we’re trying to solve?</p> <p>Mayor Marvin Rees also informed members of a recent session with Neil O’Brien in his role as Chair of City Regions. UKSPF has a number of opportunities and challenges - Be mindful that the LEP can use this forum to feedback to gov on how it’s landing in the region. Four key challenges [from across the country] that have been highlighted are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timescales are too short ▪ A need for longer term predicable finance ▪ Reserving people and skills funding to 2024-25 - this is too late ▪ Clarity on the role the MP’s will play in imputing how UKSPF is spent
7.	<p>AOB Richard updated members on the LEP working group - recently formed to work through the LEP Integration and its practicalities. The group has met a couple of times and is required to complete a questionnaire. The group will therefore wait and reconvene once the final template has been received from government.</p> <p>Mayor Marvin Rees informed members of a new city wide initiative to address the cost-of-living crisis ahead of the winter months. Bristol City Council will be working with local networks to open schools and community venues in the evening to provide families with a place to spend time - feeling warm, feed and supported. Ideas and support [from individuals or businesses] are welcome, please do get in touch.</p>
Items for information only	
8.	West of England Growth Hub - Annual Report Summary
9.	Papers for June Committees Richard Bonner will be attending the WECA Committee and Joint Committee on the 8 th April. Business members were asked to provide any feedback to Richard by Wednesday 6 April .