

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

27 SEPTEMBER 2022 FROM 1.30 PM TO 4.00 PM

ZOOM MEETING

MINUTES

Board Attendees:

Cecilia Buffon (CB) (Chair)
Ian Girling (IG)
Jim Andrews (JA)
Cllr John Beesley (JB)
Julia Howe (JH)
Luke Rake (LR)
May Palmer (MP)
Nick Gaines (NG)
Nicola Newman (NN)
Paul Gough (PG)
Paul Read (PR)
Sophia Story (SS)
Cllr Spencer Flower (SF)
Cllr Tony Ferrari (TF)

Also Present:

Anwen Jones (AJ) (Cities and Local Growth Unit)
Corinne Lancaster (CL) (Cities and Local Growth Unit)
Corrina Osborne (CO) (Dorset LEP)
Kathryn Hill (KH) (Dorset LEP)
Nick Webster (NW) (Dorset Council)
Rebecca Davies (RD) (Dorset LEP)
Vinita Nawathe

Apologies:

Cllr Drew Mellor (DM)
Liz Williams (LW)
Aidan Dunn (AD) (Dorset Council)

Presenting:

David Marlow (DM)
Mike Spicer (MS)
Sandra Rothwell (SR)

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Apologies were received for: Aidan Dunn, Cllr Drew Mellor and Liz Williams.</p> <p>CB mentioned she had attended the Integrated Care Partnership meeting for Dorset and that she pointed out there was the existing Skills Advisory Board and Board that could be used for the health and social care in Dorset and the LEP could bring a business voice to that table.</p> <p>CB welcomed Julia Howe to her first Board meeting.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: there were no additional conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
2.	Guest Presentations	
2.1	<p>Options for a Dorset Economic, Labour Market and Social Insight Programme (Confidential)</p> <p>The Chair introduced the item, with a reminder that the rationale for developing our data and insight function had been agreed in the delivery plan as fundamental to creating compelling strategic economic plans for Dorset and our wider geographies.</p> <p>Mike Spicer (MS) and David Marlow (DM) were commissioned to look at the opportunity of doing this work</p> <p>MS explained that he and DM are economic development consultants with a lot of experience of insight functions. They recommended Dorset LEP invest in an insight function as it can provide economic evidence to underpin decisions and access additional investment</p> <p>DM explained that Research England often funds the translation end of research rather than the typical research universities undertake. He ran through some examples of insight functions in other areas and explained that these functions change and develop over time.</p> <p>A number of Board members and stakeholders had been interviewed as part of the process and there is an appetite for an insight function for Dorset and a rationale for it to be hosted by the LEP.</p> <p>TF said he thought it seemed a sensible idea but he was not clear of the ask of the local authorities as part of the agenda item.</p> <p>VN explained that she had run the South West Observatory, which was basically a larger version of what was being talked about. She confirmed the value of evidence for informing policy. She went on to say that the best investment they made was in the website as a one-stop portal to signposting and translation of existing data about and from the area.</p> <p>PG spoke about Dorset having strong civic universities working across the region and that this compliments what is being talked about.</p> <p>JA agreed and said that himself, VN and PG should get together to work out how to access the funding available from Research England and how that can benefit the region.</p>	

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
2.1	<p>Options for a Dorset Economic, Labour Market and Social Insight Programme Cont'd (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>JB said he was not quite sure of what it is local authorities are being asked to sign up to and what is being asked of them.</p> <p>CB explained that we started looking at an insight function when we were talking about the new function of LEPs and the delivery plan. The presentation today is a piece of research commissioned by the LEP investigating how others operate - to give us recommendations for establishing our own approach</p> <p>SF commented that everyone was looking for more economic growth in Dorset and that we should be looking for significant funding. If you look around the country, some of more successful LEPs have gone for large amounts of money for significant infrastructure.</p> <p>PR said that if there was something that businesses were able to use to utilise data to help inform decisions it needs to make would be beneficial.</p> <p>CL informed that a lot of what is being said sounded very familiar from the Government's perspective. When reviewing any application for funding or support, the areas that they can best advocate for are the ones that have data and insight to support their business case".</p> <p>Action: all approved the recommendations and to take forward the discussions on what type of areas should be prioritised further.</p>	
2.2	<p>Board Governance Review and Dorset Business Council</p> <p>The Dorset LEP Board has discussed, as part of the delivery planning process, a range of implications for future governance, from the National LEP Review, including revised core funding for LEPs and objectives outlined in the Levelling Up White paper concerning future government investment and priorities for local devolution. These considerations highlighted the need for a refreshed governance structure for Dorset LEP which, following Board approval, was initiated from June 2022.</p> <p>SR presented the latest proposed changes to the governance structure, based on information from conversations with government representatives, other LEPs and our Local Authorities. The recommended refinements are based on principles outlined previously at the March and May Board meetings.</p> <p>The proposal as described in the agreed budget and delivery plan, is to create a streamlined governance structure with a slimmed down Board supported by a "business council" (working title for a refreshed ambassadors' group). The proposed approach is more governance light, with a reduced team and is consistent with the vision already agreed. It takes more of a 'task and finish', agile approach, getting the right people around the table for specific tasks.</p> <p>The LEP Board will continue to have oversight of the strategy and corporate health of the company.</p> <p>Dorset Council is planning to review of the governance of the Enterprise Zone and the LEP will be working closely with them on this.</p>	

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2.2	<p>Board Governance Review and Dorset Business Council Cont'd</p> <p>SR ran through the proposed next steps and a possible new structure as outlined in the paper. It was agreed that the term "business council" was not appropriate and could be confusing.</p> <p>It was noted that there was no indication of changed government policy towards LEPs at the moment.</p> <p>It was noted that as Directors of a Community Interest Company, the Board have a responsibility to ensure that the company's governance structure is fit for purpose and to update the Articles of Association accordingly.</p> <p>Action: all approved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further discussion with the Councils will take place to ensure maximum impact through strategic and operational alignment. • Further work will be done in October 22 to develop the business ambassador/business "forum" concept • A LEP Board skills audit and review commencing in November 2022 and aligned to forthcoming Board 'away day'. • A revised structure would be gradually put in place with completion in Q1, 2023 – under the leadership of the new Dorset LEP Executive Director. 	
2.3	<p>A303 Update</p> <p>CB gave an overview of the background and current A303 proposal from Highways England and said that this debate has been going well over ten years. She emphasised the independent analysis that had been undertaken to show benefits of the works to Dorset. She asked whether Dorset LEP is willing to sign an open letter to the Secretary of State in support of the scheme along with the other relevant LEPs.</p> <p>A discussion took place and it was agreed the Board was happy to support.</p> <p>LR left the meeting at 1455</p> <p>Action: all agreed happy to support and sign an open letter to the Secretary of State.</p>	
2.4	<p>Weymouth College update</p> <p>Julia Howe gave a presentation on Weymouth College. She reminded the Board that in 2013 the College went into Administration. She joined in 2014 and joined the leadership team put in place to help move the College forward. In 2015 and 2020 the College received a 'good' status from Ofsted. She informed that the College is now in a financial health position of 'good' which has resulted in the DfE, funding agencies and further education commissioner's team taking the College out of financial intervention. This will allow the college to access more funding opportunities in the future. She ran through their strategic plan and projects currently engaged with.</p> <p>JA stated it was good to hear the progress of the College and that it was an important college for the Weymouth and Portland area.</p>	

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	<p>LSIP</p> <p>IG informed the Board that the Dorset Chamber has won the bid to be the employer representative for the Local Skills Improvement Plan. They have brought in the Federation of Small Businesses in as a partner.</p>	
3.	For Information / To Note	
3.1	<p>Interim Director's Update</p> <p>CO said she would take the paper as read but highlighted the sector activity. She mentioned the Dorset Defence Investment Prospectus tender was live and that work was underway to map out the One Health ecosystem in Dorset.</p> <p>IG left the meeting at 1550</p> <p>Action: all noted the corporate risk register.</p>	
3.2	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>CB updated that the Great South West works to promote and advance the economy in the South West. A business plan is being worked on with local government colleagues. They are starting with an Energy Summit on 23 November in Plymouth and are having a House of Commons event on 3 November. She said they are trying to engage with as many of our local MPs across the whole of the South West.</p> <p>MP left the meeting at 1555</p>	
3.3	<p>Finance, Audit and Corporate Risk Committee (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>CO gave an update from the FACR Committee. She mentioned programme reporting will now be through FACR who had reviewed arrangements for this at their last meeting.</p> <p>Action: all noted the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 2022/23 financial position to date • the Corporate Risk Register. 	
3.4	<p>Performance and Investment Committee (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>NN stated the last meeting of the Committee had been held and as agreed, the ongoing monitoring of the programmes is moving across to the FACR.</p> <p>CO added that RD had made the front page of the local newspaper given her expertise in labour market information and had been invited to speak with Ofsted regarding Dorset education.</p> <p>PR and PG left at 3.57 pm AJ and SS left the meeting at 4.00 pm.</p>	

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3.4	<p>Performance and Investment Committee Cont'd (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>Action: The Board noted the following:</p> <p>Getting Building Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the Getting Building Fund financial and programme update, including risks identified. <p>Local Growth Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the Local Growth Fund programme update, including risks identified. <p>Growing Places Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the Growing Places Fund programme update, including risks identified. <p>Dorset Gateway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the Dorset Gateway financial and programme update. <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the skills financial and programme update. <p>Enterprise Zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the Enterprise Zone update. 	
3.7	<p>Business Growth and Inward Investment Committee</p> <p>RD informed that Shelley Collins-Trevett is starting on Monday 3 October and will be the new Head of Business Growth and Inward Investment.</p> <p>JA and JH left the meeting at 4.03 pm.</p>	
3.8	<p>Skills Advisory Panel and Board</p> <p>RD said she was working with IG and NN on supporting the LSIP and explained that the skills DfE link will be moving across to the Chamber under the LSIP. She said that making sure the reach is as broad as possible is a priority for the LSIP and skills across Dorset.</p> <p>RD informed that Ofsted are now auditing all skills provision and she has been asked to present to them to inform all of their Dorset inspections. This is to see what businesses are saying about skills and for them to be able to take that back and look at how they weave that into their investigations.</p>	
3.9	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the last meeting. There were no matters arising.</p>	

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4.	Any Other Business	
	CB informed that this was CO's last Board meeting. She thanked for CO for everything that she has done whilst undertaking the Interim Director role. JB thanked CO on behalf of BCP for everything she has done.	
	All to note that the AGM is to be held on 24 November following the LEP Board meeting.	

Note: Date of Next Meeting - 24 November 2022