

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

24 MAY 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)
May Palmer (MP)
Nick Gaines (NG)
Nicola Newman (NN)
Paul Gough (PG)
Paul Read (PR)
Phil Sayles (PS)
Cllr Spencer Flower (SF)
Cllr Tony Ferrari (TF)

Also Present:

Anwen Jones (Cities and Local Growth Unit)
Corrina Osborne (CO) (Dorset LEP)
Daniela Doncakova (DD) (Dorset LEP)
Kathryn Hill (KH) (Dorset LEP)
Peter Hopkins (PH) (Dorset Council)
Rebecca Davies (RD) (Dorset LEP)
Sandra Rothwell (SR)

Apologies:

Andrew Wickham (AW)
Cllr Drew Mellor (DM)
Jim Stewart (JS)
John Sutcliffe (JSu)
Liz Williams (LW)
Luke Rake (LR)
Sara Uzzell (SU)
Sophia Story (SS)

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Apologies were received for: Andrew Wickham, Drew Mellor, Jim Stewart, John Sutcliffe, Liz Williams, Luke Rake, Sara Uzzell, Sophia Story</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: No additional conflicts were declared.</p> <p>CB asked CO to pass on best wishes those staff leaving soon all the best and thanks for all their work with Dorset LEP.</p>	
2.	Guest Presentation	
2.1	<p>Introduction from New BEIS Area Lead for Dorset</p> <p>CB welcomed Anwen Jones (AJ) to the Board meeting. Anwen introduced herself to the Board, explaining she is the new Area Lead for Dorset and informed she is also the Area Lead for Gloucestershire. She is based in Bristol and works in the same office as Elizabeth Spence.</p> <p>CB thanked Anwen and welcomed her to Dorset LEP.</p>	
2.2	<p>Rural Economy White Paper</p> <p>CB informed the Board that LR was unable to make the Board meeting so this agenda item will be moved to the July Board meeting. She mentioned that the Great South West (GSW) partnership has analysed the impact on farmers of losing the basic payment scheme and mentioned that farms in the south west are more labour intensive and 24% are smaller than most farms in England, so this will have a significant impact. Dorset LEP is working with the GSW trying to establish a support programme to help farmers.</p> <p>LR will speak more about this at the July meeting.</p>	
2.3	<p>Issues Facing Businesses and Local Skills Improvement Plan</p> <p>CB informed the Board that she had recently attended Dorset Chamber's Board meeting.</p> <p>IG gave a presentation on what local businesses think are the critical issues facing them at the moment. He explained that businesses report they are not happy with the National Insurance increase as this is pushing up costs. The cost of living crisis is causing upward wage pressure from employees and that pay is not expected to keep up with inflation.</p> <p>He went on to say that export is significantly down, due to Covid, Brexit and the war in Ukraine. There is a perception that export looks very difficult and is an area the Chamber is really keen to push.</p> <p>The service industry reports a much better year than expected and demand for service is quite high. Inflationary pressures are the main problem at the moment. Professional services, law firms, accountancy firms, marketing agencies, are very busy. There is demand within the economy but there are wider cost pressures. Many employers are reporting staff shortages and recruitment problems. The hospitality sector is having a lot of problems with recruitment.</p>	

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2.	Guest Presentation	
2.2	<p>Issues Facing Businesses and Local Skills Improvement Plan Cont'd</p> <p>There is still not a lot of demand for high street retail but the office sector has picked up and the demand for industrial units are high.</p> <p>CB mentioned that a lot of these issues are nationwide/global issues. IG said that the British Chambers of Commerce are pushing hard to Government for help and support on these issues.</p> <p>NG mentioned that in the aerospace and defence sector, who are a significant player in Dorset, have reported that availability of components and parts is still a big problem. There are long lead times combined with spiralling costs. Staffing is hindering business who could be growing, as there is an inability to fill vacancies.</p> <p>JB asked if there is anything local authorities can do to help. IG said they were working with both councils on a programme to help businesses with net zero.</p> <p>IG informed that hospitality remains challenging, with increased food costs coupled with staffing challenges. There are difficulties in passing on rising costs to customers but occupancy levels are quite good. TF mentioned that bookings are very strong but cancellation rates are high. He said it is not demand that is the problem within the industry but whether they can deliver what they have promised due to staff shortages.</p> <p>IG went on to talk about the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). He explained that NN is working with them on this project. The Department for Education (DfE) is commissioning a review of the Further Education (FE) provision and need of employers over the next few years which will result in a Local Skills Improvement Plan. The DfE will fund this and it will be commissioned by LEP area. The project was launched a while ago with a series of small Trail Blazer projects and IG explained that a bid must be submitted to deliver this programme on behalf of DfE. He explained that applicants must be an employer representative body to submit a bid.</p> <p>NN went on to say this is a significant change because it has become a legal obligation of the FE providers to take note of the outcome of this planning. It is a significant task to make sure it blends in with what has already happened.</p> <p>PG mentioned that all the universities have level 3 and FE components within them and that FE and Higher Education are not seen separately now. We have to make sure we open the whole range of opportunity for talent within the LEP area, which has 3 universities and several FE colleges. JA agreed with this and also pointed out the possible overlaps with skills commission and advised that the Chamber should make sure there is not duplication. He also questioned how the LSIP work would impact the sixth form provision within some of the schools. NN informed that the guidance so far is to engage with all stakeholders Board members have mentioned and that the Skills Commission is a key process that the Chamber needs to work very closely with for its submission.</p>	

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2.	Guest Presentation	
2.2	<p>Issues Facing Businesses and Local Skills Improvement Plan Cont'd</p> <p>PS said that the college welcomes the LSIP. He said B&P College has a really strong Employer Advisory Board and they are getting more engagement from industry and employers about what they need. PG informed that they also have an Industry Advisory group and that if we can utilise existing groups rather than create new ones.</p> <p>NN commented that 85% of businesses in Dorset have less than 10 employees and the challenge remains as to how those businesses are engaged.</p> <p>IG informed that the submission date is 6 June.</p>	
3.	For Decision / Discussion	
3.1	<p>Delivery Plan and Budget</p> <p>SR and CO gave a presentation to the Board on the draft Delivery Plan and Budget. They informed that the position for LEPs is that they will be eligible to apply for two tranches of core funding for this year and next, subject to an annual delivery plan. The LEP is able to secure core funding but this is also dependant on securing 50% matched funding from local sources.</p> <p>AJ remarked that she thought SR had summed up the current state of play well. She said there is still a lack of clarity moving forward past 2024/25 in terms of Government policy on LEPs. It is an issue that is being raised across the board however, so they are aware that this is a concern for many LEPs.</p> <p>AJ said for the UKSPF purposes from Government side of things, the business support key pillar within UKSPF funding package, Government hopes places do not re-invent the wheel. So, like the Gateway, if a great intervention is already being delivered, councils are more than encouraged to continue funding that.</p> <p>CO stated that traditionally LEPs have been excluded from applying for some new waves of Government funding such as the LSIP delivery, so through the LEP Network LEPs have been raising this issue with Government. Once this is addressed there may be additional income sources that can be tapped in to.</p> <p>Action: The Board is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To note the context behind the recommendations on the delivery plan and budget. To provide outline approval for the overarching delivery plan. To delegate 2022/3 budget approval to the Finance, Audit & Corporate Risk Committee and Chair of the Board at their next meeting (15 June). To delegate overall approval to the Chair of the Board for the final delivery plan submission to Government by their deadline (30 June). 	<p>All noted</p> <p>All approved</p> <p>All approved</p> <p>All approved</p>

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3.	For Decision / Discussion	
3.2	<p>Nominations and Remuneration Committee</p> <p>JA said he would take the paper as read.</p> <p>He informed the Board that four board members would be leaving as they have come to the end of their second year term, Jim Stewart, Andrew Wickham, Sara Uzzell and John Sutcliffe. They have been asked to stay on as Dorset Ambassadors and as members of any sub committees that remain. He thanked them for all the work they had done for Dorset LEP and the contributions as part of the Board.</p> <p>He explained that Phil Sayles would also be leaving the Board, as B&P College had completed their three year term as FE Representative. He said that Julia Howe, Principle of Weymouth College, was going to take on the role as the FE rep for next three year term. He thanked PS for his time on the Board and excellent contributions within these.</p> <p>He updated on the Board composition work and that this was still on hold until further clarity around future roles and purpose and the budget.</p> <p>He updated the Board on the LEP Director recruitment and that this was now being taken forward.</p> <p>JA explained that we had two Board members whose first terms are coming to end in July, NG and IG. He asked NG and IG to leave the meeting whilst this item was discussed.</p> <p>NG and IG left the meeting.</p> <p>Action: JA asked the Board to approve NG and IG staying on the Board for a second term. All approved</p> <p>IG rejoined the meeting.</p> <p>Action: JA then explained that NG has put himself forward as nominee for the Deputy Chair role and asked the Board to approve this.</p> <p>NG rejoined the meeting</p> <p>Action: JA then explained that LW has put herself forward as the Equality and Diversity rep and asked the Board to approve this.</p> <p>JA then mentioned that as JS and SU were leaving in July there are two vacancies for the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. These have to be filled by members of the private sector Board members.</p> <p>Action: If anyone is interested in joining the Nominations and Remuneration Committee please email JA and CB.</p>	<p>All approved</p> <p>All approved</p> <p>All approved</p> <p>All</p>

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3.	For Decision / Discussion	
3.3	<p>Finance, Audit and Corporate Risk Committee (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>CO ran through the paper and a discussion took place.</p> <p>Action: It is recommended the Board notes the Finance Report 2021/22</p>	All noted
4.	For Information / To Note	
4.1	<p>Interim Director's Update (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>CO informed that there are updates on strategy in the paper and that much activity since the last Board meeting has been working with the local authority officers on future delivery.</p>	
4.2	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>CB updated the Board on the numerous events she has recently attended.</p> <p>There was a dinner at the Mansion House she attended with IG. There were a lot of LEPs there and the Lord Mayor and president of CBI were in attendance.</p> <p>A DIT visit was organised on the Innovation Park and she was very impressed with the DIT team, who were very knowledgeable and professional and willing to share information. She is certain this will lead to some opportunities.</p> <p>There was a Ministerial opening of the Battlelab which is starting to put Dorset on the map for a lot of defence, advanced engineering, cyber security.</p> <p>There was the BCP Smart Places event and it was very impressive to see the work that the LEP has invested in and what is happening in the town and it was also great to see Dorset Council colleagues there also, showing great collaboration.</p> <p>CB informed she visited Kingston Maurward to see the new LEP funded building under construction.</p> <p>She also mentioned a Finnish delegation visit to Poole.</p>	
4.3	<p>Performance and Investment Committee (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>NN took the paper as read and said that the emphasis of the committee is on performance</p> <p>Action: The Board noted all the recommendations in the report below:</p> <p>Growing Places Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: The Board notes the Growing Places Fund financial and programme update, including risks identified. 	All noted

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
4.	For Information / To Note	
4.3	<p>Performance and Investment Committee Cont'd (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>Dorset Gateway Note: The Board notes the Dorset Gateway financial and programme update, including risks identified.</p> <p>Skills Note: The Board notes the skills financial and programme update, including risks identified.</p>	<p>All noted</p> <p>All noted</p>
4.4	<p>Business Growth and Inward Investment Committee</p> <p>FM said that he would take the paper as read.</p> <p>He informed that the Supply Chain Study will be presented in more detail to the Board at the July Board meeting.</p> <p>He highlighted ShopAppy and how the Board support of that scheme is generating a good return in investment and the positive impact on those businesses, especially in the rural settings.</p> <p>He updated on the progress with the Department for International Trade (DIT) programme around SME Internationalisation Fund and that there has been a good uptake in terms of businesses applying for that fund.</p> <p>FM explained that information is received on all DIT engagements through the account management tracking that comes through the DIT team and colleagues at Dorset Council and BCP Council where the Inward Investment teams are copied into DIT reports.</p> <p>Action: It is recommended the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the update regarding future funding for business support activity • Notes the high -level findings from the Supply Chain Study • Notes the return on investment from Dorset LEP's support of the ShopAppy campaign • Notes the progress of the SME Internationalisation Fund which is being supported by Dorset Gateway. 	<p>All noted</p>
4.5	<p>Enterprise Zone (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>DD said that she would take the paper as read but mentioned a couple of highlights. She informed that the MOU is now finalised between the LEP and Dorset Council. The BattleLab official launch took place on 18 May and the new BattleLab interactive website will be available by the end of this month (May).</p> <p>Future Investment Plan for Quadrant II is planned to be delivered by 31 March 2023. A temporary amenity facility is being put in place at the site. The element of the resources to unlock the investment plan will be partially reliant on a successful levelling up fund bid.</p>	

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4.	For Information / To Note	
4.5	<p>Enterprise Zone Cont'd (Confidential - Commercially Sensitive)</p> <p>Dorset Council is progressing with the academic engagement and follow up meetings are being scheduled.</p> <p>A review of the energy supply and sustainable usage on the site is needed, however, grid power infrastructure is an ongoing challenge for all of Dorset.</p>	
4.6	<p>Skills Advisory Panel and Board</p> <p>RD updated the Board that an interim meeting was taking place in a couple of weeks. She said she was grateful to the Board for the decision about the Career & Enterprise Company and they are continuing to work for the future funding, including working with IG and NN on LSIP.</p> <p>Dorset LEP's joint bid with Somerset County Council to deliver Skills Boot Camps across the two counties, has been successful with £953k awarded to Dorset LEP. The teams are now working through the detail of delivery with some courses to be live by July and others in the autumn.</p> <p>Action: The Board are asked to note the strategic input and operational delivery of skills.</p>	To note
4.7	<p>Advisory Group Updates</p> <p>Rural Enterprise Group - the paper was noted.</p> <p>Dorset Tourism Association - the paper was noted.</p>	
4.8	<p>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the last meeting.</p> <p>There are no matters arising.</p>	All agreed
5.	Any Other Business	
	No other business was raised.	

Note: Date of Next Meeting - 28 July 2022 at 10.00 am