

DRAFT MINUTES

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

23 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 10.15 AM TO 12.30 PM

HELD AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES

Board Attendees:

Cecilia Buffon (CB) (Chair)
Jim Andrews (JA)
Cllr Millie Earl (ME)
Neil Skelland (NS)
Nick Gaines (NG)
Nicola Newman (NN)
Paul Gough (PG)
Paul Read (PR)
Phil Sayles (PS)
Cllr Spencer Flower (SF)
Cllr Vikki Slade (VS)

Also Present:

Adrian Trevett (AT) (BCP Council)
Aidan Dunn (AD) (Dorset Council)
Anwen Jones (AJ) (Cities and Local Growth Unit)
John Sellgren (JS) (Dorset Council)
Kathryn Hill (KH) (Dorset LEP)
Rebecca Davies (RD) (Dorset LEP)
Rebecca Phillips (RP) (Dorset LEP)
Shelley Collins-Trevett (SCT) (Dorset LEP)
Vinita Nawathe (VN) (Dorset LEP)

Apologies:

Aaron Lawes (AL)
Ian Girling (IG)
Luke Rake (LR)
Cllr Simon Gibson (SG)

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Apologies were received for: Aaron Lawes, Ian Girling, Luke Rake and Cllr Simon Gibson.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: no declarations of interest were made.</p> <p>CB informed the Board that Julia Howe has resigned, as she does not currently have the time to commit to the LEP. Phil Sayles will take over as the FE representative and the Board approved Phil Sayles as a Board Member and member of the CIC.</p> <p>CB reflected with the Board on the sad news of the recent passing of Tony Ferrari. Tony was as a valued and respected member of the DLEP Board for three years. Our sincere condolences to his family and colleagues at Dorset Council.</p>	All agreed
2.	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>CB mentioned the Chancellor's Autumn statement and highlighted that four more Devolution Deals were announced and that Growth Hubs will continue to be funded.</p> <p>CB updated the Board that Ahmed Goga has been appointed as the Great Southwest CEO. He plans to meet all GSW Board members and Sector leads. There is growing interest in the Great SW, evidenced by the fact that more people want to join it. As a pan regional partnership, it can help act as a convener of people and an ambassador for our region. Working together we can amplify Dorset messages and to use the leverage of the Southwest area.</p> <p>PR reported on a Parliamentary inquiry into MMC (Modern Methods of Construction), which is looking at "what went wrong". PR described how the work being done in Dorset means we are well placed to be the counterpoint to this enquiry "MMC – What's gone right". Chris Loder MP has managed to get a response from Rachel Maclean (Minister of state for housing and planning) with a potential visit to one of Magna's schemes completing in 24/25. Also an invitation for Magna to engage with the ministry.</p> <p>We have also had confirmation of the funding from the DfE for the MMC and Digital Centre of Excellence and we are now pulling the syllabus and discussing the capital projects.</p> <p>CB mentioned the Oceans Hackathon she recently attended at BU. She was asked to be a judge and was very impressed with the entries. JA informed that this was one of 40 hackathons taking place around the world and all the winners will get together to meet. This competition provides a great example of the innovators we have in Dorset and the need for "incubation and acceleration" facilities to be developed to build and grow local enterprise.</p>	
3.	CIC Delivery	
3.1	<p>Business Update</p> <p>SCT gave an update on the business support service and that we have had a really impactful first six months. For light touch support, which is anything up to 1 hour, we have already exceeded the annual targets and expect to double it by the end of the year. For medium support, which is for 1 hour but less than 12 hours, we should exceed the targets by the end of the year. For high support</p>	

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3.	CIC Delivery	
3.1	<p>Business Update Cont'd</p> <p>which is more than 12 hours, we also expect to exceed targets by the end of the year. SCT confirmed that as businesses take up more support hours, they proceed through the light, medium, high categories and are removed from the preceding category figures to avoid double counting.</p> <p>Our Horizon Scanning service is popular as it helps businesses with the time consuming tasks of identify any funding that might be available to them. We held three bid writing master classes for the SW Regional Defence and Security Cluster, DEMC and Digital Creative.</p> <p>Additionally, we have part funded a small number of places on the Funding Accelerator Programme. We are working with partners on the Innovate UK Maritime launch pad.</p> <p>SCT thanked PS for hosting the recent Dorset Ambassadors meeting at Bournemouth & Poole College, where we had some new members. The event included a tour of the college which highlighted to businesses the facilities available. Some were not aware that the college did so much on hospitality and so this will hopefully lead to some good partnerships in that area.</p> <p>We are working with Tech Southwest on a new initiative for regional Angel Network development that will provide another source of funding for small and start-up businesses.</p> <p>SCT informed that she will be working on updating the Invest in Dorset propositions in the new year.</p> <p>NS mentioned the Diana Project, an accelerator programme aimed at early-stage start-ups or small and medium-sized enterprises with minimal experience in defence and security. This is funding provided by NATO. NS to provide SCT with a contact.</p> <p>SCT informed that programmes are delivered across the county.</p>	
3.2	<p>Skills Update</p> <p>RD started with some key highlights from the Labour Market Information. She mentioned that unemployment is down and currently below the national unemployment level. The workforce is up by 16,500 people in the last six months. The health sector is the top sector needing staff at all levels. 50% of the roles advertised are professional and the other 50% are in elementary and low level roles. She said she will update the Dorset LEP website site with the latest report.</p> <p>The Dorset Skills Board had its first meeting which included a talk from a business who shared its experience and issues with recruitment.</p> <p>RD updated on the Digital Skills Hub. She mentioned that AJ and JS are visiting the hub this afternoon for the Towns Fund meeting. She mentioned that Tuesdays are very popular, where they have the Job Centre Plus, National</p>	

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3.2	<p>Skills Update Cont'd</p> <p>Careers Service, Seetec Plus, and Family Hub staff there. Customers have the opportunity to talk to all services in the same space. She also mentioned that, working in partnership with Silicon South, we have created an opportunity for business mentoring. Providing a mentoring service on-line to match businesses with a formal mentor.</p> <p>NS said he would be interested in getting information on the mentoring system to be able to promote across the area.</p> <p>RP gave an update on the work of the Dorset Careers Hub. She informed that they work with 82 schools and colleges across the whole of Dorset and that 23% of schools are in the SEND category. She said that we ended above the national average on all benchmarks.</p> <p>A discussion took place on apprenticeships. It was mentioned how small businesses find it very difficult because of the burden of bureaucracy.</p> <p>JS mentioned that he previously worked in a Council that, as a large employer, offered a shared apprenticeship scheme to help small business.</p> <p>PS mentioned an event he hosted with BCP's Economic Development team. He said it was key that employers and education providers work together and mentioned that B&P College have partnered with Sunseeker, with their staff seconded to the College to deliver training for their apprentices/students. JA mentioned that universities provide degree apprenticeships.</p> <p>RP explained we are doing working to promote apprenticeships, which is helping to effect a change in how apprenticeships are viewed. The cost of living crisis has helped with the apprenticeships pathway as the opportunity to be paid as you learn is becoming more attractive to students compared to taking on debt for the university route.</p> <p>AT mentioned an event held at the BattleLab where Atlas showcased their apprenticeships.</p> <p>RD said there is also a very big market in apprenticeships for existing staff and mentioned that Dorset Council are a great example of offering staff opportunities to take these up.</p>	
3.3	<p>Evidence Base and Strategic Priorities Refresh</p> <p>VN explained that she has engaged Emma Buckman to work on a refresh of the strategic priorities. The aim is to complete the majority of the evidence base during November and December. VN asked Board members to participate in this piece of work if Emma approaches them for a meeting to understand current priorities, challenges and opportunities. This engagement process will culminate in 1-2 workshops in the new year, to agree the strategic direction.</p> <p>ME mentioned that with the new leadership at BCP Council there are new priorities and it would be good for them to feed into this.</p>	

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3.3	<p>Evidence Base and Strategic Priorities Refresh Cont'd</p> <p>VN informed that she has pulled together a group of evidence data staff across the Southwest region for the Great Southwest. She is very keen to ensure that work done for the region, also works for each county.</p>	
3.4	<p>Homes for the Economy Conference</p> <p>VN informed she is planning to hold a housing conference in February and will send an email out when a date and venue is confirmed. She explained that it was identified at Matt Prosser's housing group that a housing needs analysis piece of work needs to be undertaken. This is something that will be done alongside the local authorities, in partnership. We need to understand who needs/wants to live in Dorset and who cannot afford to.</p> <p>PR mentioned that house builders can only build at a certain rate. What needs to be looked at is whether there is another business model to provide homes and accommodation and if there is there another way of supporting investment.</p> <p>Action: All to advise VN of possible speakers for the conference.</p>	All
3.5	<p>Growing Places Fund Update</p> <p>VN informed the Board that the Growing Places Fund (GPF) has now gone live. The feedback that had come out of the recent review was that the process was too slow, so a new process has been suggested. VN asked the Board whether they were happy with this new process.</p> <p>The fund has been advertised on the Dorset LEP website and social media. It was agreed more advertising of the fund was needed.</p>	
4.	Policy	
4.1	<p>Implications of Published Guidance and Follow up Integration Plan Pro-forma</p> <p>CB started by saying she was very pleased with the collaboration involved in agreeing the approach to completing the integration form. We now have a workable plan that gives the partnership the opportunity to work together to define our future, whilst maintaining continuity of delivery and importantly giving our elected local authority leaders the flexibility they will need in negotiating a devolution deal.</p> <p>SF said that nothing should get in the way of the aspiration around devolution. The transition up to March 2025 is fine. He stressed Dorset Council want to continue with a strong working relationship with the LEP.</p> <p>VS agreed that the most important thing is that the transition does not constrain the work on devolution.</p> <p>CB said that the setting up of the Task and Finish group is a good proposal, with representatives from all organisations working together on this.</p> <p>AD described his role as the S151 Officer at Dorset Council and his role as the Accountable Body for the LEP requires him to act independently of the council.</p>	

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4.	Policy	
4.1	<p>Implications of Published Guidance and Follow up Integration Plan Pro-forma Cont'd</p> <p>He agreed that the Task and Finish Group sounds sensible and proposed, that as the Accountable Body representative, he should be on this group.</p> <p>The board agreed to note and endorse the timeline agreed in the Integration Plan Template which confirmed that "from April 2025, the LEP core functions will transition to the two councils. This transition, and the form of future entity, will be confirmed during the transition period up to March 2025."</p>	All noted
4.2	<p>Devolution Update</p> <p>SF informed that he and VS have had an initial meeting with a number of interested councils. He took a report on this to Dorset Council and received overwhelming support. All parties involved are now working on what they want the core elements of the deal to include. The next step is the development of an expression of interest.</p> <p>VS explained that to date the options have been fairly constrained and BCP are looking carefully at what works best for the area.</p> <p>AJ explained that the current framework for devolution has been very strict. There are very clear outcomes that come with each deal and level 2 does not come with a big funding pot. She mentioned that in the Chancellor's Autumn statement a few devolution deals were announced and said that Cornwall's deal can now be seen online and provides a good example of a level 2 deal. She said it is good to look at flexibility but ultimately you will be signing one document and one deal with Government.</p>	
4.3	<p>Updates from Board Members</p> <p>AL provided a written update on the Southwest Investment Fund. It was launched in August and initial enquiries are starting. He informed that there is resistance from banks to push businesses towards alternative lenders.</p> <p>SCT mentioned that the Investor Readiness programme we are running will hopefully help businesses to get ready to apply to this fund.</p> <p>PS gave an update on the investment that has been happening at Bournemouth & Poole College. He talked about the capital funding investment in the campus at Lansdowne. There has been Investment in T-level engineering, health and green construction. He mentioned that the Higher Education Centre will see an increase in students. He informed they are finalising their strategy to 2030 which will be circulated to partners.</p>	
5.	For Noting	
5.1	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>VN mentioned the paper to note and that there has been a recent Committee meeting.</p>	

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6.	Minutes from the Last Meeting	
	The Minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the last meeting. There were no matters arising.	
7.	Any Other Business	
	There was no other business raised.	

Note: Date of Next Meeting – 23 January at 1.30 pm

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