

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

24 JANUARY 2023 FROM 1.30 PM TO 4.00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

Board Attendees:

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

Also Present:

Aidan Dunn (AD) (Dorset Council)
Anwen Jones (Cities and Local Growth Unit)
Chris Shepherd (CS) (BCP Council)
Kathryn Hill (KH) (Dorset LEP)
Nick Wester (NW) (Dorset Council)
Rebecca Davies (RD) (Dorset LEP)
Vinita Nawathe (VN) (Dorset LEP)

Apologies:

Cllr Drew Mellor (DM)
Cllr John Beesley (JB)
Sophia Story (SS)

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Apologies were received for: Cllr Drew Mellow, Cllr John Beesley and Sophia Story.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: no declarations of interest were declared.</p>	
2.	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>CB started by congratulating Dorset Council and BCP Council for the Levelling Up grants they received.</p> <p>CB gave an update on the GSW and the launch event that took place at the House of Lords. There was a strong attendance from Dorset and CB thanked those who took the time and were able to attend. She explained the guiding principle for the partnership is to make sure they do not duplicate any existing activities but work to amplify. The focus is on marine, high value manufacturing, tourism, food, farming & fishing, international trade, innovation and energy. There is also a plan to work together on "enablers" such as transport, infrastructure, housing, skills and social mobility. The launch event was about publicity and getting central Government to back and work with the GSW. The Partnership Board is now up and running and Board members for Dorset include representatives from both local authorities, BU (representing higher and further education) and the LEP Chair - VN attends. Programmes are now starting to be established and if you are interested or know someone who is interested in getting involved let CB or VN know. The next steps include appointing a permanent Chair, which is going out to open recruitment. IG informed that the five accredited chambers in the South West are working together closely and are really supportive of the GSW.</p> <p>The GSW is an informal partnership recognised by Government and at the first Partnership Board meeting a structure and terms of reference was agreed. VN said she can distribute the ToR that was agreed at the first meeting, including the suggested programme boards.</p> <p>CB mentioned the GSW are planning to hold some meetings in Dorset, so there will be opportunity to get information first hand and then, as a group, structure how much the LEP wants to get involved. We can get as much out of it as we put into it.</p> <p>CB informed she attended the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) meeting that morning. There was a desire in the meeting to work across all areas to impact health and wellbeing. It was agreed that the LEP needs to work out how it can support this.</p> <p>CS recognised its value but expressed concern about duplication and thought it would be a good idea to have discussions with the ICB to talk about what is already being done and to understand relationships, strategy, aims and directions. NOTE: both Councils Leaders are members of the ICB Board</p> <p>CB mentioned she had re-read the white paper on devolution which states that, by 2030 'every part of England who wants devolution will have it'. A clear opportunity of such a deal is the possibility of long term funding and the opportunity to do something at scale. The published Hampshire devolution prospectus that included BCP was raised and BCP's intentions to be part of a Hampshire deal questioned. BCP's position has been that it is talking to everyone but has not made a decision yet. It was noted that Government are</p>	

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2.	<p>Chair's Update Cont'd</p> <p>prioritising those wanting a locally elected mayor but BCP and Dorset Council have shown no appetite to work towards a locally elected mayor.</p> <p>SF informed that he thought the only option is a pan Dorset deal and he will be pushing hard for that.</p> <p>CB reminded that the LEP's remit is to work within the Dorset footprint.</p> <p>CS said that BCP is considering the Hampshire deal but not pro-actively working towards it. In the absence of any direction from Government it is not a high priority.</p> <p>VN explained that from what is published on the Hampshire deal, 14 councils, led by different political parties, would be expected to form a combined authority with an elected mayor.</p> <p>AJ explained that Government's prioritisation for this year's wave of devolution deals are for those at level 3 with an elected mayor. Part of the policy around this is that significant funding only comes with level 3 deal. Government have said that there is no level 2.5 (NOTE: several places have indicated interest in a level 3 without a Mayor, colloquially known as level 2.5), it is either level 2 or 3. In regard to timescales, Government is looking to initiate a new wave this Spring. They are not using an Expression of Interest process at this time but are going to places to negotiate with them directly to save time. Completing a level 3 deal can take some time but even if you are not looking at a level 3, and are interested in a deal, it is worth making plans to offer up later in the year so that you maybe be at the front of the queue for a level 2.</p>	
3.	Policy	
3.1	<p>Review of Growing Places Fund</p> <p>MP said she would take the paper as read. The paper was discussed in great detail and it was agreed that the Finance, Audit and Corporate Risk Committee would look at what the different options are if the Growing Place Fund is invested in something else, with the parameters of principles, speed, impact and who do we want to target.</p>	
3.2	<p>Enterprise Zone Update</p> <p>TF explained that some time ago it was agreed that Dorset Council would take on an Enterprise Zone Board function that was about the delivery, new plots sales, interfacing between the park and the tenants. What was not established is how best to take advantage of the LEP relationship and how that would enhance the Enterprise Zone (EZ). The substantive piece that affects this group is what has been proposed as the Enterprise Zone Committee, comprising of</p>	

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3.2	<p>Enterprise Zone Update Cont'd</p> <p>two LEP members, two Dorset Council members and an independent chair. It is about the external facing piece, the relationship with Government, where we might lobby and influence and feeding that back into the EZ Board. Currently we do not have this and so are not as connected as we could and should be. The Board that currently runs the EZ has a big pile of work to do running it and needs that separate body to look strategically and externally.</p> <p>There are formal requirements of the site and reporting into BEIS. The funding was secured by the LEP and so the LEP needs to be part of the formal aspect of this.</p> <p>CS said he was very interested in this and asked what the goals are and whether there is going to be a role or is it just a committee.</p> <p>NW explained that in addition to the Committee they will be putting in place an operational structure beneath it. They will run the park and be held to account by the Committee. Operational decisions and having those wider economic connections with partners will add value to the site.</p> <p>VN informed the Board of the background to the original application to the Enterprise Zone. The EZ Committee will be a way of getting more attention to it.</p> <p>CS asked about the timeline to setting this up and, if the primary aim is to unlock additional investment for Dorset, will there be a role created.</p> <p>NW explained he is looking to bring in some support and this role will include marketing, managing the site utilities, inward investment, maximising the use of the Battlelab. This will be in the business plan and they will probably bring in a consultant to help with that. They are not looking at specific post at this point in time.</p>	
4.	Process	
4.1	<p>Executive Director's Update</p> <p>VN said the Board Skills Audit had been sent out and off the back of that, a report will be sent to the Nominations and Remuneration Committee detailing what the new composition of the board should be and the relaunch of the Dorset Ambassadors.</p> <p>VN updated that in regard to next year's plan, part of that is subject to funding and we are waiting to hear exactly what the funding will be. When VN arrived the LEP was looking at re-homing the Careers and Enterprise staff but they are a real asset. Part of the issue with the contract is the funding and that the LEP has to part fund a couple of staff. They have really good connections into schools and very good engagement with businesses too.</p> <p>CB said she was very impressed to hear how the careers team have been working and how they have enabled access to the people we serve in Dorset.</p>	

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4.	Process	
4.1	<p>Executive Director's Update Cont'd</p> <p>VN said looking at funding opportunities for the area, business support is a potential area the LEP can complement working with the local authorities and what they are doing.</p> <p>NN asked about the LEPs funding and that rather than waiting for other people to make decisions, was there any funds of our own to use.</p> <p>VN explained that we expect to hear about funding at the end of this month but there are funds of our own to a certain extent.</p> <p>VN informed there was an invitation to tender from BCP Council to run a Digital Skills and Innovation Centre, RD put forward an application on behalf of the LEP and the LEP has been awarded the contract. We are currently in a 'standstill' period at the moment, so this information is currently confidential.</p> <p>RD explained it was a team effort and the contract is to deliver a Digital Skills and Innovation Learning Hub in Boscombe, running a "skills shop" on Boscombe High Street. Initially it will be to create a concierge service, sign posting service and digital tech incubator. This will compliment a virtual skills platform and we will be working with that supplier. The contract is for three years and two months. There is lots of potential and lots of our partners will have contributions to it. It will be creating a physical partnership of delivery.</p> <p>CB congratulated the team on the brilliant news.</p>	
4.2	<p>Business Update</p> <p>RD took the paper as read but wanted to highlight the One Health Nucleus. We have held One Health conferences for the last few years and the Board agreed to create a One Health Nucleus. We will be holding two breakfast events. We have created one cluster around agri-tech but are looking at a cluster for environment science and changing environments, support resilience and disaster management. Putting out invites to specific companies. There are 200 environmental companies within Dorset.</p> <p>RD and CS both sit on the Integrated Health Steering Group and Kevin Brookes and RD will be representing the LEP at their summit in May.</p>	
4.3	<p>Skills Update</p> <p>RD took the paper as read and highlighted that the annual review up to September 2022 took place with the Careers and Enterprise Company last week. We have made great progress, tracking the national averages for Gatsby benchmarks and we have added another six schools. The team consists of staff that work for the LEP, for Dorset Council and for BCP. The nine members of staff all function as one team to deliver careers service to all schools.</p> <p>NN gave an update on the LSIP and informed they are in the middle of new evidence gathering. The LEP has been doing a lot of work around skills requirements, they are looking at recruitment needs and vacancies and have</p>	

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4.3	<p>Skills Update</p> <p>asked businesses what they need in work, not just recruitment needs. They are tracking where the responses are from and NN encouraged everyone to complete the survey.</p> <p>LR congratulated RD and the team for the fantastic job they are doing. He mentioned there are new legal duties being imposed on schools to work with providers of apprenticeships and training. This should bring together those providers of technical training.</p> <p>CB mentioned the one thing the Integrated Care Partnership Board (ICP) is missing is a higher/further education representative. She advised the SAPB is well placed to provide a representative to the ICP and she was hopeful that they will make contact with LR, as the Chair, to reduce duplication and make sure there is a connection with each workstream the ICP is working on.</p>	
5.	For Noting	
5.1	<p>Finance, Audit and Corporate Risk Committee</p> <p>The budget was noted and no questions were raised. AD confirmed the budget was fine and the Committee had gone over it in detail.</p> <p>The question of doing something with the current funds was raised and VN explained it depended on how quickly the Board wanted to run out of funds. The CIC has always had non trading status but we could change that and wake up the dormant company or investigate what we can do within the current structure with the Accountable Body.</p>	
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	

Note: Date of Next Meeting - 23 March at 10.00 am, face to face meeting at the Arts University Bournemouth