

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING
23 JANUARY 2024 FROM 1.30 PM TO 4.00 PM
TEAMS MEETING
AGENDA

Time	Item	Subject/Title	Presenter
1.30	1.	Apologies and declarations of interest	Cecilia Buffon
1.35	2.1	Chair Update – verbal update	Cecilia Buffon
1.40	2.2	Board Members updates – verbal update	All
	3.	Policy	
1.55	3.1	Latest Guidance from Government re Integration of LEPs	Vinita Nawathe
2.05	3.2	Task and Finish Group – verbal update	Cecilia Buffon
2.10	3.3	Economic Evidence Base And Priorities Refresh -Emerging Themes And Next Steps	Emma Buckman
2.30	3.4	Great South West – verbal update	Ahmed Goga
	4.	Delivery	
2.50	4.1	One Health Enterprise Network Update – verbal update	Cecilia Buffon
2.55	4.2	Business Update	Rebecca Davies
3.05	4.3	Skills Update	Rebecca Davies
	5.	For Noting	
3.10	5.1	FACR Committee meeting 11December	Nicola Newman
	6.	Minutes from the Last Meeting	
3.15	6	Approve Minutes and actions from November Board Meeting and matters arising	Cecilia Buffon
	7.	Any Other Business	

Note: Date of Next Meeting – 28 March at 10.00 am

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23 rd January 2024	Item Number	3.1
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Latest Guidance on the transfer of LEP core functions		
Recommendation	Board members are recommended to note the papers and discuss for any points of clarification.		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

To ensure that all board members are aware of government expectations for the delivery of LEP core functions in 24/25.

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

Ministers wrote to LA and LEP leaders on 19th December 2023 confirming the funding available in 24/25 for the delivery of the LEP core functions with an embedded link within the letter to guidance outlining the expectations of Local Authorities in return. The letter and guidance are reproduced here.

Further to previous board decisions and the form returned to DBT, the two councils and the LEP board have agreed that the core functions should be delivered through the LEP as a "geographically relevant private sector organisation" for 2023-24. We agreed that a Task and Finish group will consider options for the longer term sustainable delivery of these and other functions that benefit the combined area and in a manner that supports and does not constrain aspirations for devolution.

The Guidance sets out parameters for the delivery of the LEP core functions we will deliver in 2024/25 and sets key questions for Local authorities to consider in developing a longer-term delivery model that could be a useful starting point for discussion through the Task and Finish Group.

On top of the long-term establishment of a "business board", a key deliverable within 6 months of April 2024 is a published, up to date economic strategy on a functional economic or devolved geography. We are well placed to deliver a comprehensive, fully consulted on strategic plan within this timeframe, having already started an economic evidence base and strategic priorities refresh exercise. (Who would have guessed in an election and CSR submission year!) A proposed timeline for the strategy development is for discussion in item 3.3.

The guidance also makes clear that the delivery of other government funded functions should continue at a functional geographic or devolved area.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Board members are recommended to note the papers and discuss for any points of clarification.



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

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Business & Trade

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19 December 2023

To: Combined Authority Mayors, Local Authority Leaders, the Mayor of London, and LEP Chairs

Dear all,

TRANSFER OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) CORE FUNCTIONS TO COMBINED AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

On 4 August 2023, Minister Hollinrake and the then Minister for Levelling Up wrote to you to confirm that, from April 2024, the Government's sponsorship and funding of LEPs will cease, and we will instead support combined and upper tier local authorities to deliver the functions currently delivered by LEPs. This empowers democratically elected local leaders to work with the private sector to support local businesses and drive local economic growth.

To support you through this policy change, we published [technical guidance](#) in August 2023. We have now published the final piece of [guidance](#) on the core functions of business representation and local economic planning. These two pieces of guidance should be viewed as complementary, with both documents relevant to the integration of LEP functions. As such, any statements in the original guidance are still applicable and both guidance documents should be used by local authorities in developing their integration and delivery plans for 2024/25 and beyond.

In October 2023, our officials issued a local authority / LEP integration plan template for completion by the end of November. The purpose of the template was to aid the process of integration and transition and inform the direction on any future government funding. We would like to thank you for providing the necessary information in response to this request. Our officials are now reviewing these plans as part of the approvals process, which will conclude early next year.

We are now pleased to confirm that in 2024/25, Government will provide eligible combined authorities and upper tier local authorities with up to £240,000 to deliver the functions previously delivered by LEPs – namely business representation, local economic planning, and the delivery of Government programmes where directed – subject to final business case and integration plan approvals (where plans are required and/or not yet approved). We recognise that this represents a small reduction in 2023/24 funding levels – this reflects the efficiencies we expect the integration of functions into combined and local authorities to deliver.

Eligibility for funding is conditional on LEP functions being delivered over sensible functional economic areas or whole county geographies. Where multiple upper tier local authorities are working together over a single functional economic area, they have selected one local authority to take responsibility for submitting the integration plan. Subject to approval of the plan, that authority will now be considered the accountable body for funding in 2024/2025. Funding beyond 2024/25 will be subject to future Spending Review decisions.

This core funding is separate to any programme funding that may be provided to support the delivery of, for example, Growth Hubs or Careers Hubs. Funding for the delivery of Government programmes as directed will be communicated to authorities by the responsible Government department or body as per usual processes.

We are also pleased to confirm that in 2024/25, Government will provide the LEP Network with up to £150,000, subject to business case approval, so they can continue to provide their support to aid the transition process.

To ensure the integration process already underway continues to progress as smoothly as possible, please do continue to direct questions and queries via the LEP Network or to your Area Lead within the Cities and Local Growth Unit. We would also like to take this opportunity to reconfirm that local authorities and LEPs should seek their own legal advice on issues related to staff; that LEP Directors should seek their own legal advice regarding personal liabilities; and that the management and transfer of any LEP assets should be agreed locally between the LEP and its Accountable Body, in line with any pre-existing arrangements and in accordance with any legal requirements. Where there are no existing arrangements, Government expects that any reserves and assets built up using public funds will remain within the public domain.

Government remains committed to empowering democratically elected local leaders by integrating LEP functions into local democratic institutions. We would like to thank LEP Chairs, their Boards, and their staff for all the work they have done to drive and support local growth across England since 2010. In addition, we would like to thank you all for your work to date and your continued efforts to facilitate this transition.



Jacob Young MP
Minister for Levelling Up



Kevin Hollinrake MP
Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business



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> [Guidance for local authorities delivering business representation and local economic planning functions](#)

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Communities](#)

Guidance

Guidance for local authorities delivering business representation and local economic planning functions

Published 19 December 2023

Applies to England

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-local-authorities-delivering-business-representation-and-local-economic-planning-functions/guidance-for-local-authorities-delivering-business-representation-and-local-economic-planning-functions>

Introduction

1. On 4 August 2023, following an [information gathering exercise \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-information-gathering-exercise\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-information-gathering-exercise), government [confirmed \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transfer-of-local-enterprise-partnership-lep-core-functions-to-combined-and-local-authorities\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transfer-of-local-enterprise-partnership-lep-core-functions-to-combined-and-local-authorities) a 'minded to' decision to withdraw central government support (core funding) for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) meaning that government's sponsorship and funding of LEPs will cease from April 2024.
2. From April 2024, government will instead support local authorities to deliver the core functions currently delivered by LEPs – namely, business representation, local economic planning, and the delivery of government programmes where directed. Government expects these functions to be exercised by upper tier local authorities (working in collaboration with other upper tier local authorities as appropriate), where they are not already delivered by a combined authority, or in areas where a devolution deal is not yet agreed. An area may choose to create an entirely new business board, or commission the function to be delivered by a geographically relevant private sector organisation whilst maintaining effective governance and oversight.
3. The August 2023 [guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions/guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-local-and-combined-authorities-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions/guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-local-and-combined-authorities-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions) also supports local authorities and LEPs through this policy change and committed to providing final guidance on the core functions currently delivered by LEPs – business representation and local economic planning. This guidance provides that clarity on government expectations on transfer and future delivery of the interrelated functions of business representation and local economic planning. Demonstration of adherence to this guidance may be a factor when determining eligibility for any future funding.
4. This guidance and the [guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions/guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-local-and-combined-authorities-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions/guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-local-and-combined-authorities-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions) published in August 2023 should be viewed as complementary, with both documents relevant to the integration of LEP functions. As such, any statements in the original guidance are still applicable and should be used by local authorities in developing their integration and delivery plans for 2024/25.
5. Government expects decisions on the transfer and delivery of current LEP functions to be made locally and to be led by upper tier local authorities. Upper tier local authorities should seek input to their integration and future delivery

plans from all relevant partners, including district and borough councils and the LEP, as appropriate.

Business representation

6. The Levelling Up White Paper was clear about the importance of having institutions that are both empowered and accountable to local democratically elected leaders. The principles of effective, independent and diverse business representation, which were a common connection across all LEP functions, should remain in these institutional structures.

7. Private sector and employer perspectives can enhance local economic strategies and interventions, including: shaping business, trade and investment support around local business and economic needs; providing challenge and insight on business impacts of public sector initiatives; and providing delivery expertise. It can also provide market credibility and a strong vehicle for leveraging match funding for public sector programmes and developing effective partnership projects to support growth.

8. Demonstrating a strong business voice is also an eligibility requirement for some government programmes (including Growth Hubs) as well as key principle of the [English Devolution Accountability Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-accountability-framework/english-devolution-accountability-framework) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-accountability-framework/english-devolution-accountability-framework>). For other areas, including those where devolution is not on the immediate horizon, we expect local authorities to create or continue to engage with an economic growth board (or similar) within their functional geography.

Membership

9. The August 2023 guidance sets out a broad base for membership – a wide range of business types, sizes, and locations relating to local economic strengths and priorities. A board should have a diversity of voices, involve business representative organisations (e.g., local Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses) and there should also be a clear conflict of interest policy (where private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary are declared). Local authorities should consider the following questions to help guide them through this process:

Q: How might membership of the Board be selected and recruited in an open and transparent process, to ensure that they meet the above criteria? How might this be maintained as membership is refreshed?

Q: How would membership of the board be managed? For example, requirements within any Memorandum of Understanding, including conflict of interest and confidentiality, and how these would be managed? Are there time limits, gateway criteria or disqualification/removal procedures?

Q: What links do the members of the business board have to the wider business community and representatives of key economic growth sectors?

Q: Would other local economic partners outside of the business community add value to the board?

Role and responsibilities

10. The [English Devolution Accountability Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-accountability-framework/english-devolution-accountability-framework)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-accountability-framework/english-devolution-accountability-framework>) sets out that a strong, independent, and diverse business voice should be embedded into their decision-making process. For non-devolved areas, we strongly encourage local authorities to consider similar approaches. It is important to manage the expectation of members through setting out clear roles and responsibilities – both for the board, and for the local authority – and how input will be commissioned, supported, reported on, and used. Local authorities should consider the following questions to help guide these decisions:

Q: How will the business board feed into economic priorities for the local authority(ies)? And what processes might need to be in place?

- consultation on emerging plans – at what stages of development? What is in or out of scope?
- feedback on implementation of economic programmes
- engagement with district councils, [Town Boards](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-long-term-plan-for-towns/our-long-term-plan-for-towns) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-long-term-plan-for-towns/our-long-term-plan-for-towns>) and UKSPF programmes (where appropriate)
- endorsement for significant public funding proposals – e.g., competitive funding bids, Growth Hub plans/delivery
- how this might link in to wider economic plans and engagement structures such as Growth Hubs, LSIPs and Careers Hubs (e.g., the inclusion of Careers Hub Cornerstone Employers where relevant)
- any links to wider or pan-regional economic planning organisations (e.g., Midlands Engine, Western Gateway etc.)

Q: LEP Business Boards currently have representation on other local fora, including Town Deal Boards. How might this be continued under new

institutional arrangements?

Model and governance

11. In areas with an agreed devolution deal, we are not expecting any changes to governance arrangements set out in devolution arrangements. In other areas, an upper tier local authority may host a representative business board on behalf of other neighbouring authorities, depending on local agreement on managing former LEP functions, or in some cases it may be appropriate to act independently over functional economic areas.

12. Options might include transferring an existing LEP Business Board into a new institutional home or merging the LEP board into an existing internal business board or set of boards within the local authority or area. An area may choose to create an entirely new business board, or commission the function to be delivered by a geographically relevant private sector organisation, such as the LEP whilst maintaining effective governance and oversight.

13. Any new business board members must be appointed through an open process. That process should ensure appointees are able to provide a constructive check and challenge on local decision making using their private sector perspective. In making decisions on future provision, we expect upper tier local authorities to consider the impact on users of services and demonstrate how any changed structures will deliver effective services. The questions below are for consideration by Local Authorities and should help in making these decisions:

Q: What is the most appropriate and sustainable geography for your area that maximises democratic accountability, efficiency, and effective service delivery?

Q: How will this organisational and governance structure deliver an independent business voice? For example, in choice of Chair and the appointment process, how terms of reference are set, how decisions are made and agreed within the board (and disputes managed), and in managing public communications.

Q: If the Board covers an area with more than one UTLA, what agreements and protocols might you collectively need in place to ensure: a) that the board is representative of the whole geography; b) that its duties are recognised by all parties; and c) effective management of any disagreements between local authority partners on operation of the board?

Local economic planning

14. LEPs are currently responsible for producing economic strategies in their area and have delivered both Strategic Economic Plans and Local Industrial Strategies that brought together local businesses, authorities, and individuals to develop a long-term economic strategy for the respective areas. There are also examples of collaboration – looking beyond individual authority boundaries – to make strategic connections and address shared challenges over regional corridors. Government recognises and appreciates the work of LEPs over the last decade in supporting local economic growth and the local business landscape. It is important that this work is built upon through the efficient transfer of their functions into local and combined authorities.

15. From April 2024, government encourages areas to produce (or update) economic strategies on an ongoing basis to support local decision making, furthering the work previously undertaken by LEPs. Government expects areas to publish their (existing, new, or updated) strategy within six months of receiving funding. The strategy should be published on the combined authority website or where multiple upper tier local authorities are working together, the authority appointed to be the accountable body^{[footnote 1](#)} should publish the strategy on their website.

16. Where possible we suggest building on the Local Industrial Strategies or any other similarly relevant strategies or documents already in place, with appropriate adjustments made in line with the geographical preferences set out below. These strategies should be underpinned by a strong evidence base and look to identify: the local economic opportunities (including areas of comparative advantage); challenges; and where there are opportunities for strategic connections across regions. Local authorities should consider the following questions when developing their local strategies:

Q. What should the local economic strategy include?

- analysis of the main underlying competitive advantages and strengths of your area, as well as opportunities for strategic connections across regions
- opportunities for growth over the next 10 years, and your vision for what would happen if these opportunities were successfully grasped in this period
- your top public and private sector investment priorities

17. Government recognises that it may be the case that an existing local economic/industrial strategy meets the above criteria. If so, there is no requirement to produce a new strategy, but government encourages areas to review existing strategies on an ongoing basis and update as required.

18. Updated strategies should be informed by and, where possible, be developed alongside other local plans that have the ability to contribute to economic growth (such as Local Visitor Economy Partnerships, local transport plans, and those plans addressing local planning and skills provision). Where the upper tier local authority is not responsible for developing or delivering these plans (e.g., developed at a different level of local government) then they should work in partnership with those responsible. This will help ensure decisions are aligned and consider the full economic picture of the area.

19. The delivery of strategic economic planning is expected to give direction to local economic policies and help coordinate the institutions with an ability to drive local economic growth. Furthermore, as stated in the August 2023 guidance, areas bidding for local growth funding in future may be asked to demonstrate how a proposal fits into their local economic strategy. Areas should consider, and can use 2024/25 revenue funding to support, how their strategies are laying the groundwork and building capacity for future devolution and deeper devolution agreements.

Contributing partners

20. Government expects upper tier local authorities to engage with their district and borough councils on the development of economic strategies, including in those areas where individual upper tier local authorities are contributing to a strategy developed by the authority appointed as the accountable body. All upper tier authorities may wish to consider working with other areas across a larger geography where there are mutual interests and cross-border considerations.

21. Further contributors will be at the discretion of the combined authority or upper tier local authority appointed as the accountable body - but it is expected that this will include organisations, businesses, and individuals with the ability to identify and respond to local economic challenges and opportunities. This could include but is not limited to: educational establishments; Employer Representative Bodies; Police and Crime Commissioners; the existing LEP if it continues to operate; transport providers; as well as the expectation around business representation as set out in this guidance.

Timeline of delivery

22. The strategies cover an appropriate long-term timeframe as to allow for challenges to be addressed and for opportunities to be acted upon. The authority or authorities may revise the strategy at any time to reflect noteworthy

changes to the local, regional, or national economic environment and should, as good practice, review plans annually.

Future geographical coverage

23. As set out in the August 2023 [guidance](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions/guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-local-and-combined-authorities-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions#business-representation--embedding-a-strong-independent-and-diverse-local-business-voice-into-local-democratic-institutions>), from April 2024, government expects functions to be delivered over current^[footnote 2] or potential devolution^[footnote 3] deal geographies so far as possible. This means whole county geographies or functional economic areas with a minimum population of 500,000, as set out in the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>) [Section 2.3.3]. Where devolution is not desired by the local area, government still expects functions to be delivered over sensible functional economic areas or whole county geographies as a minimum. Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate across a whole county or functional economic area, no upper tier local authority should be left out – there must be no gap in service provision across the area. Additionally, government will not provide funding to areas that intend to deliver these functions at a lower-level geography (i.e., below whole county or functional economic area).

24. Government expects the delivery of government programmes – such as Growth Hubs and Careers Hubs – to be coterminous with the delivery of business representation and economic planning functions. This geography should be sustainable and maximise efficiency and effective service delivery as well as enhance democratic engagement. We will not support plans that lead to a fragmentation of approach or proliferation of unsustainable support services to business.

25. Where multiple upper tier local authorities are working together, one authority should be appointed as the accountable body^[footnote 4]. That authority is responsible for the submission of the overall integration plan, will be considered the accountable body for funding in 2024/25, and is responsible for publishing the economic strategy on their website. That authority will be expected to demonstrate how all upper tier authorities in the area are involved in decision-making and how service provision will be ensured across the whole area.

Funding provision in 2024/25

26. Government will provide up to £240,000 per local or combined authority area delivering functions over a functional economic area that meets the geographical requirements set out in the August guidance and reiterated above. Funding allocations are subject to final business case approval and the approval of integration plans. Funding beyond 2024/25 will be subject to future Spending Review decisions.

27. The authority appointed as the accountable body will be required to submit a short funding application form, ahead of receiving 2024/25 funding (as LEPs were previously required to do annually). Government will provide further details in due course, but it is expected that the application will request:

- a. Brief details of how the area intends to use the funding (in line with this guidance)
- b. Confirmation from the accountable body that all upper tier local authorities in the area are included in delivery plans
- c. Bank account details and S151 or S73 officer details for the accountable body

28. This core funding is separate to any programme funding that may be provided to support the delivery of, for example, Growth Hubs or Careers Hubs. Funding for the delivery of government programmes as directed will be communicated to authorities by the responsible government department or body as per usual processes.

Assurance

29. To secure assurance of responsibilities set out in this guidance and the management of associated funding, government will publish assurance information setting out the assurance process required to be delivered. Government aims to publish the information ahead of core funding payments being made for 2024/25.

30. The authority appointed as the accountable body will collaborate with government over assurance requirements, which will include the S151 / S73 Officer providing a written statement of grant usage to government. This will include written confirmation of continued value for money/best value represented through the delivery of all aspects of this guidance. The authority appointed as the accountable body will provide information within the assurance cycle as set out in the assurance process and collaborate with government if required to support further assurance as needed.

Contacts

31. For any further questions local authorities and LEPs should contact their Area Lead within the Cities and Local Growth Unit in the first instance.

1. The authority appointed as the accountable body is as agreed in the integration plan for 2024/25 and may differ to the current accountable body.
2. Current devolution deal geographies mean areas to which government has agreed or implemented the devolution of powers, either to a combined authority or local authority.
3. Potential devolution geographies mean areas where no devolution agreement or transfer of responsibilities has yet been agreed, but where areas envisage a future devolution deal could sit at that geography.
4. The authority appointed as the accountable body is as agreed in the implementation plan for 2024/25 and may differ to the current LEP accountable body.

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DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23 rd January 2024	Item Number	3.3
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Emerging Strategic Priorities and Opportunities		
Recommendation	Board members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note this update - reflect on the emerging evidence, SWOT and priorities in preparedness for a workshop in Feb (date tbc) - note and discuss next steps 		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

For noting and discussion of next steps

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

Buckman Associates Ltd was commissioned by Dorset LEP to update the socio-economic evidence base for the area with a view to refreshing strategic priorities and identifying economic opportunities. To date this has involved:

- A desk-based review of key socio-economic indicators, reports and other evidence sources;
- Qualitative interviews with LEP board members to capture perspectives on the issues/challenges facing the area as well as potential opportunities.

The attached paper provides a summary of the findings to date as well as emerging thinking in terms of potential priorities for discussion and feedback. **Please note, this is not a draft strategy, but a working paper to support the development process.**

In addition, the paper sets out a plan for how this emerging work could be built upon to meet the new requirements set out by Government for more formal Strategic Economic Plans to be produced in 2024/25.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Board members are asked to note this update and to engage with the upcoming workshop to discuss emerging priorities in more detail.

Board members are asked to note and discuss proposals detailed under the next steps.

Appendix 1: Emerging Priorities Discussion Paper

Introduction

Buckman Associates Ltd was commissioned by Dorset LEP to update the socio-economic evidence base for the area with a view to refreshing strategic priorities and identifying economic opportunities. To date this has involved:

- A desk-based review of key socio-economic indicators, reports and other evidence sources;
- Qualitative interviews with LEP board members to capture perspectives on the issues/challenges facing the area as well as potential opportunities.

This paper provides a summary of the findings to date as well as emerging thinking in terms of potential priorities for discussion and feedback. **Please note, this is not a draft strategy, but a working paper to support the development process.**

The socio-economic picture

The points below summarise the key findings from the evidence review. The full review (including graphs, tables and sources) will be available shortly.

Growth and Productivity

- In 2021, the economic output of the area was £19,137m (2021 prices). However, output growth has been slow. Between 1998 and 2021, economic output increased by 19.11% in real terms (2019 prices), driven by growth in the BCP area. This rate of growth is much lower than the England average and of the 38 LEPs, only the Black Country grew more slowly.
- GVA per hour worked in 2021 was lower than the national average which means there is an output gap of £2.68m per year.

Businesses and sectors

- Since 2010, the number of businesses has grown by 18% in the LEP area. This is slower than the increase for the UK of 30%
- 89.4% of businesses are micro businesses which is similar to the national average (89.1%)
- In 2020, Dorset had 43.63 scale-ups per 100k population, slightly lower than the UK median of 45.0
- Innovation activity levels are similar to the national average, despite innovation funding being lower than expected for the number of businesses
- The area benefits from a trade surplus, driven by the export of services from the BCP area. Between 2019 and 2021 the trade surplus increased in the BCP area, but the Dorset Council area moved into a trade deficit
- Dorset's sectoral composition is similar to that of the UK, although it does have several areas of comparative advantage (as measured by location quotients). These include:
 - Engineering (1.79)
 - Accommodation and food services (1.38)
 - Agriculture (1.36)
 - Arts and Entertainment (1.33)
 - Finance and Insurance (1.28)
- It also benefits from several sectors where the area's assets (e.g. business networks, R&D facilities, anchor businesses, natural environment) mean there is further growth potential (e.g. Digital and media, where the location quotient is currently less than 1)

Population

- The area has 779,779 residents, of which 25% are aged 65 or over, compared to 18% for England. This difference is largely due to the demographic profile of the Dorset Council area, where 30% of people were aged 65 or over
- Over the last 20 years, the population of the Dorset LEP area has increased by 12.7% compared to 15.6% for the South West and 14.3% for England
- Population projections suggest that the population of the LEP area will increase by 5.6% between 2018 and 2043, compared to 14.1% for the South West and 10.3% for England
- By 2043, projections suggest only 53% of people in the LEP area will be aged 16-64, compared to 59% for England. Whilst more people are working beyond the age of 65, the numbers are not sufficient to mitigate the dependency challenges
- Migration will drive population growth between 2018 and 2043 in both the BCP and Dorset Council areas, as natural change (births-deaths) will result in a declining population
- Focusing on in-migration (to and from other authorities in England and Wales), during 2020, the area experienced a net loss of people in their 20's, but a net gain in all other groups (particularly people in their 50's and 60's)

The Labour Market

- The number of economically active people (aged 16+) has been slowly increasing since 2004 and now stands at 386,000. This growth reflects the growing population, an increase in the proportion of people aged over 65 who are continuing to work, as well as a growing proportion of women working. The size of the workforce has increased faster in BCP than within Dorset Council
- The workforce has an older demographic profile than nationally, with 39% of all economically active people aged over 50, compared to 32% for the UK, which has implications for replacement demand
- The employment rate in the LEP area has consistently exceeded the national rate over the long-term and some stakeholders believe the area is approaching 'full employment'
- The area has a higher proportion of self-employment than the UK average and men are more likely to be self-employed than women
- The area has a higher proportion of people working part-time than the UK average, and women were much more likely to be working part-time than men
- Whilst the occupational profile is similar to the national picture, the LEP area has a lower proportion of people employed in professional, associate professional and process, plant and machine operative occupations and higher proportions employed in sales and customer service and caring, leisure and other service occupations
- There is a pay gap between full time workers in Dorset and those in the rest of the UK, which is more pronounced in the Dorset Council area
- Approximately 35,000 jobs pay below the 'Real Living Wage', and these are most likely to be part time workers and women

Unemployment and inactivity

- Over the last 20 years, unemployment rates in Dorset have usually been lower than the national average, but post pandemic, rates have exceeded the national average within the BCP area. The unemployment rate has been falling in all areas since 2021 and in June 2023 stood at 3.3%
- Claimant count data suggests that unemployment rates are currently higher amongst men, people under 40 and people in the BCP area

- Economic inactivity rates have been consistently lower than the national average in the long term, but post pandemic the LEP area appears to have had a steeper rise in inactivity rates which peaked in September 2022. As of the end of June 2023, 85,600 people (19.1% of people aged 16-64) were inactive in the LEP area
- The reasons why people are inactive are changing: a greater proportion are students, 'other' or long term sick than in 2004 and a smaller proportion are looking after the home/family or retired
- Economic inactivity rates have increased for the two youngest age groups and decreased for all other age groups since 2004

Skills supply

- Dorset's skills base has been improving over time and the workforce has become more qualified, however, the area has a slightly lower proportion of people with Level 4 or higher qualifications than nationally
- Educational outcomes at 16 for all groups are higher than the national average amongst BCP schools and lower than the national average for Dorset schools
- A high proportion of students are achieving sustained education, employment and apprenticeship destinations after key stage 4
- At 16-18, a higher proportion of students studied A-levels than other applied or technical qualifications than the national average
- After Key Stage 5 (A levels), a greater proportion of young people went into employment destinations than the national average and a lower proportion went into higher education. A greater proportion of young people in BCP went into an apprenticeship destination than the national average, but in Dorset a lower proportion did so
- Apprenticeship completions have fallen since 2018/19 for intermediate and advanced apprenticeships, but increased for higher apprenticeships
- 7,550 adults achieved adult education and training qualifications in 2022/23, the majority achieved Level 2 qualifications and over 2,000 people achieved qualifications through community education
- In 2021/22 there were 22,720 students enrolled in the area's three universities, of which 16% were international students and 21% post graduate students
- In 2021/22 there were 7,405 graduates qualifying from the area's institutions. Subjects with high volumes of graduates included: business and management, design and creative and performing arts, subjects allied to medicine and computing
- Stakeholders believed that the area struggled to retain graduates in the area and immigration statistics would suggest that this is the case. However, specific retention data is no longer available from HESA

Skills Demand

- Nationally, the number of vacancies has been falling since May 2022, although the number of vacancies is still higher than pre-pandemic levels
- However, in Dorset the number of vacancies has remained consistently high through 2023 and the aggregate number of vacancies advertised hit a record high in July-Sept 2023
- The NHS is the largest source of labour demand in Dorset, with over 5 times as many job postings than the second largest employer, Dorset Council
- By sector, health and social care had the most postings, followed by food and services and retail
- Demand (vacancies) for lower and mid-skilled roles in Dorset has increased in scale over the past decade, particularly for elementary and caring occupations, however, high skilled jobs still accounted for c. 46% of advertised vacancies
- However, in terms of the employment profile, high skilled occupations account for half of all employment and employment in these occupations has grown since 2016

- Looking to the future, forecasts indicate that the number of jobs in the area will grow from c400,000 jobs in 2020 to 439,000 in 2035. The largest industries in terms of employment are predicted to remain health and social care, wholesale and retail, accommodation and food and construction
- 84% of projected employment change (204,000 jobs) will be driven by replacement demand, that is replacing workers already in the workforce who are projected to leave. The remainder (39,000) are projected to be new jobs associated with economic growth

Housing and Place

- House prices are significantly higher than regional and national averages and relative to wages, houses are less affordable in the LEP area than the wider South West. Stakeholders indicated that house prices (to buy and rent) made the area unattractive to prospective workers
- The Housing Needs Assessment identifies that there is a minimum housing need of 2,667 dwellings per annum (dpa) in BCP and 1,757dpa in Dorset over the 2021-38 period. This is significantly more than the average rate achieved since 2011
- Housing stock in Dorset has significant levels of under-occupation than across the wider comparator areas and there are lower levels of overcrowding
- There has been a shift from owner occupation to private renting since 2011 in both council areas
- There is a notable need for affordable housing and it is clear that provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the area
- Whilst a significant part of the land area is rural, 78% of households live in urban cities and towns
- BCP is the second urban area in the South West and the largest on the south coast
- The area has significant inequalities with 50 LSOAs in the least deprived 10% in the UK and 15 in the most deprived 10%. These most deprived LSOAs were located in Bournemouth, Poole and Weymouth and Portland
- The area has five main Travel to Work areas, Bournemouth, Poole, Dorchester and Weymouth, Blandford Forum and Gillingham

Accessibility and Infrastructure

- The Western Gateway STB is developing its Strategic Transport Plan for 2025 to 2050. Work to date has identified the following issues for the Western Gateway area: decarbonisation, air quality, rural journeys, car use, freight emissions, housing, seasonal traffic, road congestion, north-south connectivity, seaports and airports, freight, rural connectivity and deprivation.
- Opportunities include alternative fuels, active travel, bus and coach, demand management, multi-modal, rail improvements and the road network (including north south and east west connectivity)
- The Councils are working jointly on a Local Transport Plan expected to be completed by the end of FY 2024/25.
- Digital connectivity is better than the national average in BCP, but worse in Dorset Council area
- Both council's have led pioneering projects to demonstrate the benefits of 5G

Energy and the Environment

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions have been falling since 2005 and 2021, but there is a long way to go to reach net-zero
- Existing renewable energy generation capacity in Dorset is less than the national average per household and 94% of renewable energy capacity was solar PV
- Research by Regen highlighted that there are significant opportunities for Dorset to reach net zero including solar and wind resources (including offshore). If these resources are utilised, excess local energy generation could be complemented with

opportunities around energy storage and the future development of green hydrogen. The natural capital in both Portland's salt caverns and the potential to re-purpose existing oil and gas infrastructure provides a unique opportunity for Dorset to be a leader in the new hydrogen economy

- The challenges in reaching net zero are around energy efficiency and heat in buildings, transport and grid constraints (where the network is constrained for both generation and demand)
- Climate change and sea level rise/flooding represent a particular threat to the area
- Dorset is recognised for its biodiversity and landscape quality with many national and international designations for both wildlife species and sites. But despite these protections, these habitats continue to be at risk from a range of challenges including development, changes in farming, light pollution, noise and disturbance on fishing, fly tipping etc.
- Natural assets are essential for supporting our way of life and are a driver for environmental growth

Quality of Life

- People living in the Dorset Council area appear to have higher rates of personal well-being than the national average, but people in BCP have rates that are similar to the national average
- Dorset's natural environment (including coast) is thought to be a significant contributor to its quality of life
- BCP benefits from a Cultural Compact, a partnership that brings together multiple sectors with the creative community. With funding from the Arts Council and BCP it has developed a cultural strategy
- Whilst total Gross Disposable Household Income grew in the LEP area between 2011 and 2021, it grew at a slower rate than nationally or regionally
- GDHI per head was 22,047 in 2021, 1.6% higher than the UK average of £21,679. However, in 2011, it was 5.1% higher than the UK average, indicating that household incomes are falling relative to the national average

Question for the Board:

1. Are there any areas which warrant further investigation/analysis?

Emerging SWOT analysis

Figure 1: Emerging SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Business and growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mixed economy providing resilience, but also several areas of comparative advantage Dorset Ambassadors network – a group of business people who champion the area <p>Research and innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 universities with > 22,700 students enrolled and approx. 7,000 graduates a year providing research base and graduates Previous innovation investments linked to health, engineering, defence, digital and creative as well as new investment from UKRI <p>Employment and skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low unemployment (but higher in BCP) An improving skills base although the area has a slightly lower proportion of people with Level 4 or higher skills Increase in higher apprenticeship completions <p>Housing and infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good digital infrastructure (but with scope for improvement in rural areas) Benefits from key employment sites including Dorset Innovation Park with Enterprise Zone status <p>Energy and the environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable and other low carbon energy resources <p>Quality of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good quality of life, linked to proximity to a high-quality natural environment and coast Cultural compact in BCP <p>Local Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 upper tier authorities and a world leading integrated care system 'Our Dorset' 	<p>Businesses and growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A slower rate of growth than most other LEPs (measured in terms of GVA, Gross Disposable Household Income and the number of businesses) Lower than average productivity equivalent to £2.68m per year Fewer scale-up businesses <p>Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing population and expected reduction in the number of children and working aged people Low levels of graduate retention <p>Employment and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher proportion of self-employed and part-time employment Lower than average wages including 35,000 jobs paid below the Real Living Wage Lower take-up of applied general or technical qualifications post 16 Fewer young people going to university or into an apprenticeship Falling apprenticeship completions Limited provision of low carbon skills <p>Housing and infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High house prices and rents relative to income which makes homes unaffordable for many Poor transport infrastructure leading to congestion Constrained electricity grid infrastructure
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolution of powers from Government Crown estate licences offshore wind sites off the South Coast and Celtic sea Technological developments in the use of hydrogen as a transport fuel create an opportunity for Dorset to develop a green hydrogen industry linked the potential to use its salt caverns as underground storage Developments in AI and digital technologies provide an opportunity to boost business productivity New trade agreements provide opportunities for Dorset's businesses to increase exports The formation of an agri-tech catapult centre may create opportunities for Dorset 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macro-economic factors (e.g. Brexit, Covid, inflation, cost-of-living crisis and global instability) leading to economic slow down and tougher trading conditions Planning and NIMBY attitudes towards development Future funding uncertainty and local government finance issues Climate change, in particular risks associated with sea level rise and flooding

Emerging Priorities

Based on the evidence base and consultation process, a number of priority areas emerged. These are shown in Figure 2 below, grouped under three themes and with suggested Strategic Objectives to give greater clarity on the potential focus. If agreed, these will be further developed with high level activities identified.

Figure 2: Emerging Priorities

Theme	Priority Area	Strategic Objectives
Creating the conditions for sustainable growth	Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the supply of affordable homes for working people Reduce the carbon footprint of new and existing homes
	Transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve north-south transport connectivity across the Western Gateway Improve east-west transport connectivity through Dorset Reduce train journey times to Bristol and London Reduce the carbon footprint of transport Address digital hot-spots
	Employment sites and premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise utilisation of existing employment sites Unlock potential employment sites Reduce the carbon footprint of commercial buildings and sites
	Energy and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase low carbon energy generation capacity Increase electricity grid capacity Improve the area's natural capital Take steps to mitigate the impact of climate change
Creating vibrant, resilient, communities	Towns and high streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rejuvenate the area's towns and high streets
	Quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce levels of poverty and deprivation in urban and rural areas Improve the health of the population Increase the attractiveness of the area to young people
Boosting business productivity	Employment and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the size of the workforce Improve the skills of the workforce Ensure skills provision aligns with future skills requirements
	Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and develop clusters of comparative advantage and enhance supply chains Increase opportunities for commercialisation from the region's knowledge base
	Technology adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase technology adoption across all business sectors
	Business decarbonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the carbon footprint of businesses
	Internationalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing exports and inward investment

Commented [EB1]: Note, these are likely to require some editing to align with the Western Gateway Long term plan when it is produced

Commented [EB2]: I think we may have something of an evidence gap here - do we have enough employment sites? Are there any that are being blocked?

Commented [EB3]: Alternatively we could align these with the skills prioritise in the Dorset Local Skills report - 1) Skills to meet demand, 2) skills for future growth and 3) talent attraction and retention...

Question for the Board:

1. What do you think of this proposed structure?
2. What is missing/not quite right?

Meeting new requirements

In December 2023 Government issued guidance for local authorities delivering business representation and local economic planning functions. [Guidance for local authorities delivering business representation and local economic planning functions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/guidance-for-local-authorities-delivering-business-representation-and-local-economic-planning-functions)

This encourages local areas to produce (or update) economic strategies on an ongoing basis to support local decision making, with an expectation that areas publish an up to date strategy within 6 months of receiving funding (by October 2024). This is expected to be developed across the existing geography.

This existing project (commissioned in 23/24) provides an excellent foundation to meet these new requirements by updating the evidence base and refreshing strategic priorities. However, the work was never intended to be a fully fledged Strategic Economic plan. Having reviewed the requirements set out in the link above, the table below sets out how the existing work programme could be built upon to meet the new requirements.

Figure 3: How the existing work programme would be built upon to meet new requirements

	Existing work (2023/24)	How it could be built upon to meet new requirements
Evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk based review of published data/evidence sources • Qualitative evidence from board engagement 	Addition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 year (plus?) economic forecasting on a range of potential scenarios • Incorporation of evidence from GSW IER • Incorporation of any other new evidence from local planning and transport planning processes as they emerge or through engagement with officers • Potential deeper dive on specific issues (as required)
Vision, priorities and strategic objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft vision, priorities and strategic objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with regional partners to ensure alignment (where relevant) • SMART objectives (informed by the forecasting)
Actions and investment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of high-level actions under each strategic objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed information on specific investment opportunities (public and private) including strategic regional connections • Identification of potential devolved powers and non-financial asks of government
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly LEP board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper engagement with local partners to support evidence base refinement • Engagement with neighbouring authorities to identify strategic connections across regions • Engagement with business community and wider stakeholders

Next Steps

Figure 4 below shows the proposed timeline for completion of the existing work within this financial year.

Figure 4: Completion of 2023/2024 work programme

	February					March			
	29th	5th	12th	19th	26th	4th	11th	18th	25th
Further evidence base development									
Drafting introductory narrative									
Board member and partners workshop to agree vision and priorities (date tbc)									
Identification of high level activities									
Draft priorities document shared for comment									
Board members review									
Final version produced									

Figure 5 illustrates a potential timeline for the next phase of activity to meet the new requirements, which builds on the 2023/24 outputs.

Figure 5: High level 2024/25 work programme

	April					May				June				July					Aug	
	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th	6th	13th	20th	27th	3rd	10th	17th	24th	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th	5th	12th
Wider Engagement on high level priorities through online consultation and series of events/workshops																				
Engagement with regional partners to identify areas of alignment (e.g. GSW, Western Gateway, neighbouring authorities etc.)																				
Incorporation of new evidence/ analysis (including forecasting, GSW IER work etc.)																				
Development of SMART objectives																				
Development of detailed information on specific investment opportunities and devolution opportunities																				
Preparation of final draft strategic economic plan																				
Board invited to comment																				
Final copy produced																				
Final version professionally designed																				

Commented [EB4]: Exact proposals to be worked up - these could be either: 1) general or focused on specific areas of the plan, 2) focused on particular types of stakeholder/business or open to all; 3) bespoke events or piggybacking on existing opportunities; 4) virtual or in person. Or potentially a combination of the above

Commented [EB5]: Suggest that we use the output from the initial work to do wider engagement early in this process so that the engagement process can inform the direction of travel

Commented [EB6]: May be subject to change, depending on timescales of work being commissioned by GSW

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23-01-24	Item Number	4.2
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Dorset LEP Business update		
Recommendation	None – for information only		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

To brief the Board on delivery, activities and developments related to business growth and inward investment within Dorset LEP.

This report supports Dorset LEPs strategic objective for business growth and attracting inward investment to increase employment opportunity and raise productivity of businesses across the region.

2. SUMMARY

Growth Hub Delivery 24/25

Plans are being developed for 24/25 delivery, this will be agreed with BCP Council and Dorset Council.

Growth hub funding delivery 23/24 (Dorset LEP Business)

Key outputs to date:

- Light touch support – 261 (annual target 200)
- Medium intensity – 74 (annual target 100)
- High intensity – 9* (annual target 60)

* The high intensity programmes are all now underway and CRM will be updated at the end of the programmes.

An example of the well-known Dorset businesses being supported include **Beagle Technology Group Ltd, DP Seals, Gama Aviation, Farmer Palmers, Crowd**. Feedback will be provided at the end of each programme.

Dorset LEP funded business growth programmes:

LIVE

- **Dorset Business Innovation Programme** – Evolve and Silicon South have commenced programmes to deliver practical and theoretical innovation support to 40 businesses (12+ hours).

- **Funding / Investor Readiness Programme** – working with Evolve events are now being advertised for Start-up and Growth businesses – this will lead to approx. 50 interventions (3+ hours).
- **Funding Accelerator Programme** – DLEP are part-funding 4 places on this highly-regarded programme with Focused for Business which is now underway (12+ hours).
- **Business Growth & Productivity Groups** – this peer support programme delivered by Evolve is supporting 40 businesses across four key sectors (Engineering & Manufacturing / Marine & Maritime / Digital & Creative / Visitor Economy) with strategic growth, leadership, business performance and productivity (12+ hours).
- **Bid Writing Support Service** – this popular programme continues to provide expertise on bids to Innovate UK and Government funds. This programme supported a business to apply for the Innovate UK Marine and Maritime Launchpad.
- **Horizon Scanning Service** – this programme helps businesses navigate the complex landscape identify suitable funding opportunities.
- **Bid Writing Masterclasses** – small group masterclasses have been delivered for three key clusters (SWRDSC, DEMC, Digital Creative). Bid Writing and Horizon Scanning is being delivered by Brooks Kebbey.

COMPLETED

- Investor Readiness Pilot Programme – this workshop ran in June and attracted 25 businesses. Feedback was excellent and this programme has been developed into a series.
- Strategic Business Review Pilot Programme – this programme is now complete with 5 businesses receiving 12+ hours of one-to-one specialist advice and support.

These programmes are in addition to the **business signposting service, CRM management** and **DBT reporting** (monthly, bi-annual and annual).

The **DLEP Business LinkedIn page** is very active with 1426 followers as at 10th Jan (up from 1390 at 9th Nov).

Innovate UK Marine and Maritime Launchpad – Dorset LEP worked closely with Innovate UK, Maritime UK SW and GSW teams to launch this high-profile funding opportunity - £7.5m pot for projects related to Clean Maritime, Digital Oceans and Marine Autonomy. Round 1 is now closed and applications are being reviewed end Jan.

Dorset Ambassadors – the next event is booked for 27th March at AUB, invites have been issued.

Fintech West South Coast – Dorset LEP has partnered with BCP Council and Fintech West to launch the “South Coast Spoke” of Fintech West in Dorset. The next event is planned for 31st Jan with bookings almost at 100.

South West Regional Angel Development Programme – Dorset LEP are working with Tech South West and other LEPs, Combined Authorities and Local Authorities across the wider-SW region on this new initiative on regional angel network development. A “Super Connector” has been recruited by Tech SW and Dorset activity is imminent.

Inward Investment – Inward Investment prospectuses for all priority sectors in Dorset are in the process of being updated and being made available as a web resource (Invest in Dorset) by end March. Working with DBT partners, BCP and Dorset Council the team work

to share resource and provide an effective support service for inward investors under the Invest In Dorset (IID) brand.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Dorset LEP is the representative for and link to business on the steering group for this initiative led by Dorset Council in conjunction with BCP Council. Dorset LEP Communications Manager is on the Comms and Engagement Working Group.

South West Investment Fund – DLEP continue to promote this £200 million fund for the South West region.

GSW – we continue to work closely with the GSW team on several initiatives including GSW's Pavilion at UK ReIFF.

UK SPF – BCP Council's UK SPF Programme continues and is very popular with grants already paid out to successful applicants. Dorset Council are offering business support via Dorset Growth Hub plus their grant scheme is now live.

Future Farming Resilience – working with Devon County Council and Business Information Point we are driving forward the delivery of support for farmers across Dorset. GSW region is still the highest performing region in England on programme registrations and engagements. A radio advert has been live on Greatest Hits Radio Dorset since Sept, executed by Dorset LEP.

Clusters / Programmes – Dorset LEP continue to play an active role in a number of clusters / programmes including South West Regional Defence & Security Cluster, Maritime UK South West, South West Agri-Tech, South West Aquaculture Network.

3. RECOMMENDATION

None – for information only

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23 January 2024	Item Number	4.3
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Dorset LEP Skills Update		
Recommendation	None		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

This paper provides operational updates from Dorset LEP skills team. Dorset Skills Board meets in March, with an update to be provided at the Dorset LEP Board in March.

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

Dorset Careers Hub

Dorset Careers Hub (DCH) Delivery overview Sept - Dec:

- DCH is in the national top quartile for achievement of five Gatsby Benchmarks and in the 2nd quartile for the other three.
- During the Autumn Term 61 Careers leaders/staff from 40 institutes attended 6 CPD sessions
- 110 parents and young people attended four Saturday morning Careers and Coffee events in Poole, Sturminster Newton, Wimborne and Weymouth.
- Senior Leaders/governors from 19 institutes attended our SLT Session in November.
- Our achievement within the schools with the highest number of Disadvantaged students for both work experience participation and Gatsby Benchmark achievement is significantly higher in Dorset than the national trend.
- The funder has advised DCH is, *'in the top ten of all Careers Hub across the country and in the top five for some areas of delivery'*.

Teacher Encounters:

We were successful in our bid for Wave 2 of the Careers and Company (CEC)/Department for Education (DFE) funded Teachers Encounters project. The project will enable 20 teachers to undertake encounters by funding their supply and transport costs. Each encounter will include:

- Visit/experience to an employer premises related to their curriculum subject.
- Networking lunch.
- Visit to a training /educational institute that offers courses/qualifications representing the employers' sector visited earlier.

The delivery element will be April to July 2024 so, we are about to promote the opportunity with our institutes and employers.

Targeted Transitions Fund (TTF):

The project is on track with 137 young people on programme. Recruitment of a member of the TTF who has access to home educated young people has improved access to this group of young people. As a result, the project has been able to shape the resources and response which the young people value. Home educated young people were also invited to other events delivered by DCH and have attended in significant numbers.

As over 1200 families are now recorded as home educated and with the current business challenges of recruitment, skills gaps, productivity, growth, high number of vacancies across both unitary councils, further research is planned to explore how to maximise this potentially invisible talent pipeline.

Cornerstone Employer Group:

Group membership now includes 15 employers representing 12 sectors. In October, the group has asked how to improve engagement with our SEND and Alternative Provision schools, so our first meeting of 2024 was in Employ My Ability (EMA) which is a SEND college in Moreton.

During the morning, the Cornerstone Employers met the students who cooked and served their breakfasts in the commercial cafe, had a tour of the farm and 6 acre site, followed by a formal meeting where they discussed future collaboration and projects.

Primary Project: Start Small - Dream Big

The 30+ primary schools across Dorset County who are involved are planning their employer event and accompanying resources. In preparation, we delivered a number of meetings with Headteachers and the project lead in each school. Grant offer letters have now been disseminated and plans to deliver a series of webinars for employers interested in supporting the project are scheduled for later in January.

January 2024 Steering Group Meeting:

We welcomed David Matthews to be our new Chair and thanked Luke Rake who has undertaken the role since 2019 for his support and guidance. The group work collaboratively to inform, shape and support the delivery of Dorset Careers Hub. In particular, the steering group recognise the strength of the council partnerships in driving aspiration for young people.

Digital Skills Hub

From January, the Digital Skills Hub will operate Mon – Thur each week, an additional day to the first few months. This gives us 8 sessions across 2 spaces in the hub, and we have created a programme of learning, support, workshops and networking events to help businesses in Boscombe and wider BCP area.

Of particular interest is the launch of Business Connect Monday's from 22nd January 2024. The mornings will provide business focused bitesize learning, master classes and practical workshops for businesses in Boscombe and the wider BCP area. From lunchtime on Monday's we will be providing a drop in Business Support service with a number of our partners offering time to support growth and resilience support to local business owners. There is an opportunity for involvement these collaborative Monday sessions should Board members or their organisations be interested.

From April 2024 we will be hosting a bespoke incubator for 6 innovative companies looking to grow their digital businesses. This is enabled by a further allocation of the Digital Skills Hub space. Full details will be available at the March Dorset LEP Board.

Understanding the real digital capability needs for business and residents is a big part of the Digital Skills Hub and allows us to focus action and impact where it is needed. Building on our researcher in residence contract with Bournemouth University, we have bid to Time after Time for funding to understand the real need for digital capability in Dorset, unpicking the exclusion and inequality to help Dorset deliver actions that are relevant to all at all times of life.

Our delivery of Business Accelerator, Essential Digital Skills, Intermediate Digital Skills and Multiply continues, with the collaborative support of partner organisations. For residents, the Community Connect Tuesdays have been very successful, creating an opportunity to see a wide variety of service organisations in one place. The aim, to improve lives, upskill and help the journey to work.

To follow the work of the Digital Skills hub, sign up at www.digitalskillshub.org.uk, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn profiles.

KPIs

Next KPI report will be at the Dorset LEP May Board.

Dorset LEP Skills activity

Skills Boot Camps – Businesses are now able to sign up to wave 5 delivery. Courses will be tailored to specific training needs for businesses. Training is applicable to employees and those not working, so businesses are able to use this scheme to train their existing workforce. Business who might benefit from this delivery can contact Dorset LEP [Contact us | Dorset LEP](#) or Dorset and Somerset Training Provider Network [Skills Bootcamps - DSTPN](#) to start the process of informing the learning needed.

Labour Market Information presentations – a presentation on the labour market with a focus on Health is scheduled for the 23 January 2024 at the Integrated Care Partnership. Working collaboratively across Dorset's organisations will help us all to act on some of the workforce challenges as well as driving service innovation and improvement.

In December, Dorset's LMI was presented to the Dorset and Somerset Training Provider Network quarterly meeting, informing apprenticeship and training providers about what's needed in Dorset. Working with Job Centre Plus we are delivering LMI to groups of employers about how they may benefit from working with Job Centre Plus to recruit to vacancies.

Labour Market Information

The Labour Market Information next update will be published at the end of February. This will provide an analysis of the Dorset Labour Market for the whole of 2023 in comparison to previous years. An update will be provided at the Dorset LEP Board in March 2024.

Dorset Skills Board

No meeting has taken place since the last Dorset LEP board. Next update at the March Board.

3. RECOMMENDATION

For information.

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23 rd January 2024	Item Number	5.1
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	FACR update		
Recommendation	The Committee Recommends that the board notes the financial position and the six monthly monitoring report.		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

To inform the board of the meeting that took place on 11th December.

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

The FACR Committee met on 11th December.

Nick Gaines, Aaron Lawes and Cecilia Buffon attended the Committee for the first time. Nicola Newman acted as chair.

The financial position of the LEP to date was considered to be on track against budget. (attached)

Applications for the Growing Places Fund by the deadline of 15th December for an initial application were very few. Potential applicants had indicated that the timeline for a loan of this size was very short. Following discussion, it was agreed to revert to an open ended call as per all the previous GPF rounds, with the caveat of the 151 Officer that the call could be closed if the available funds were allocated or if so agreed.

The Committee considered the six monthly programmes monitoring update and noted exceptions to outcomes delivery. (attached)

The Committee considered the risk register.

The Committee thanked Nicola Newman for taking the role of acting chair. It was agreed that Nick Gaines would chair the Committee going forward.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee Recommends that the board notes the financial position and the six monthly monitoring report.

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>	

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
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>	

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
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>	

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
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>	

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
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>	

DRAFT MINUTES

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
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

DRAFT