

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING
28 MARCH 2024 FROM 10.00 AM TO 12.30 PM
AT DIGITAL SKILLS HUB, 30-32, ROYAL ARCADE, CHRISTCHURCH RD, BOSCOMBE, BOURNEMOUTH BH1 4BT
AGENDA

Time	Page No	Item	Subject/Title	Presenter
10.00		1.	Apologies and declarations of interest	Cecilia Buffon
10.05		2.	Updates (verbal)	
			Chair	Cecilia Buffon
			Board members	All
		3.	Policy	
10.25	1	3.1	Economic Strategy And Evidence base	Emma Buckman/Vinita Nawathe
		4.	CIC Business	
10.55	125	4.1	FACR Update and GPF proposal	Nick Gaines
11.15	127	4.2	Financial position	NG/VN
11.25	128	4.3	Draft Budget	NG/VN
11.35	129	4.4	Draft high level delivery plan	Vinita Nawathe
		5.	For Noting	
11.45	130	5.1	Business Update	Shelley Collins Trevett
11.55	134	5.2	Skills update	Rebecca Davies
12.05		5.3	GSW update verbal	VN/CB
		6.	Minutes from the Last Meeting	
12.15	138		Approve Minutes and actions from November Board Meeting and matters arising	Cecilia Buffon
		7.	Any Other Business	

Note: Date of Next Meeting – 28 May at 1.30 pm

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	28 th March 2024	Item Number	3.1
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Emerging vision, mission and strategic objectives		
Recommendation	Board members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note this update - review and comment on the evidence base - discuss the draft vision, mission and strategic objectives - 		
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;
- 2 workshops with board members to discuss the evidence base and input into the vision.

There are two papers attached:

- A draft evidence base; and
- A paper to support the development of a draft vision, mission and strategic objectives.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Board members are asked to note this update and engage in a discussion about the draft vision, mission and strategic objectives.

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23 March 2023	Item Number	4.1
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	FACR update		
Recommendation	The Committee recommends the approach of the draft budget. The committee recommends the Board discusses the attached proposal.		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

For noting

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

The FACR met on 15 March.

The financial position to date and the draft budget was considered and the direction of travel approved.

The GPF loan fund was discussed. There had been limited interest with a tight deadline to December, and while there ha been some interest since, no full proposals had yet come forward. A refreshed comms reminder was planned. Discussion turned to the potential of developing a proposal to meet needs identified by the strategy work and the recent Homes and the Communities work Committee members agreed to work up a proposal to put to the board.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends the approach of the draft budget.
The committee recommends the Board discusses the attached proposal.

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	23 March 2023	Item Number	4.4
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Draft Delivery Plan 24/25		
Recommendation	The board are recommended to note, discuss and approve the high-level objectives for the forthcoming year		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE

This paper outlined the high-level objectives that will guide the activities of the Dorset LEP team over the next twelve months.

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

As part of the three year plan 2022- 2025, this paper outlines the headline objectives that will guide the activities of the Dorset LEP team over the next 12 months.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Board are asked to consider the draft plan.

Subject to any material considerations, the Board is asked to approve the high level plan.

“The objects of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to drive economic and employment growth in Dorset, through the support of a strongly performing, productive and sustainable economy, characterised by a greater incidence of higher paid and skilled jobs, in a manner that, in so far as possible, harnesses and protects Dorset's unique environmental assets. ...To further its objects the Company may do all such lawful things as may further the Company's objects and, in particular, but, without limitation, may borrow or raise and secure the payment of money for any purpose including for the purposes of investment or of raising funds.” Articles of Association Dorset LEP

Draft Delivery Plan 2024/25

The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership will deliver, and seek opportunities to deliver, activities under the following objectives:

Objective	High Level Objective
1.	Embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions.
2.	Strategic Economic Planning 2.1 Building and maintaining robust evidence base 2.2 Convening business, education and other local economic stakeholders 2.3 Write and consult upon a ten-year horizon economic strategy for the area on behalf of the Councils as part of LEP core function delivery
3.	Functions for govt departments including: 3.1 Growth Hub activity – expected £260k programme 3.2 International trade and investment activity, provision of local business intelligence, grant funding and levelling-up focused projects, 3.3 Local Digital Skills Partnerships, 3.4 Careers Hub – current contract to August – expected renewal 3.5 Monitoring and assurance pertaining to local growth programmes and funds to 2025
4.	Other Contracted functions 4.1 Boscombe Digital Skills Hub 4.2 Agile response to other contractual opportunities

Objective	High Level Objective
5.	Partnerships and Clusters 5.1 Support, signpost and see opportunities for established and emerging partnerships and clusters 5.2 Actively engage and support Dorset LEP and Council participation on the GSW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and officer group meetings • Co-ordinating and leading economic intelligence group • UK REIF 5.3 Dorset Skills Board 5.4 One Health Enterprise Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene Steering Group • Lead funding bids • Conference 5.5 Regular liaison at a regional and national level to ensure opportunities for Dorset are identified and flagged up
6.	Seek, generate and capitalise on opportunities to leverage private and/or public investment to the area 6.1 Promote the area and partners 6.2 Link funding sources to investable opportunities. 6.3 Target use of LEP resources
7.	Future Local Economic Partnership arrangements 7.1 Help support progress towards devolution deal, where requested by local partners. 7.2 Work with LA partners to determine and enable future working arrangements for Core LEP functions to be embedded within local democratic structures.

	High Level Objective	What	How	Who	Funding source
1.	Embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions	1.1 Work collaboratively with Local Democratic institutions, to complement perspectives and skillsets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructively engage with and support the work of elected members and officers through LEP board, working groups/committees, and one to one. 	Board CB All staff	Core
		1.2 Grow and consolidate business engagement to have a dynamic network of businesses that want to engage across themes and public policy areas; and to identify willing business representatives as nominees to working groups and boards – with feedback loop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorset Ambassadors Work with Chambers/BMOs Integration of Enterprise Advisers and Cornerstone Employers Better utilise CRM 	VN/CB SCT RD RP	Core
		1.3 work with both councils to determine how this function should best be delivered from 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task and finish group 	VN/CB board	Core
2	Strategic Economic Planning	2.1 Building and maintaining robust evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure timely and regular analyses of economic data releases are circulated and published to the website. 	VN/RD	Core
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on evidence base refresh of 23/24 to develop and consult on economic strategy with 10 year horizon on behalf of Councils 	VN	Core
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strategic research themes – scope and commission 	VN	Core

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly update and promulgate data and analysis – including on website including: Local skills analysis 	VN/ team	
		2.2 Convening business, education and other local economic stakeholders to ensure dynamic and up to date understanding of area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x Board meetings with econ policy/strategy discussion time built in. 	CB/VN	Core
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene themed committees/boards – including DSB. 	Core team	Core
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Series of themed events and a conference variously bringing together national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners, education providers, businesses and stakeholders. 	All	Core CEC
3	Functions for govt departments	3.1 Growth Hub activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of targeted business support activity 	SCT	DBT Core
		3.2 International trade and investment activity, provision of local business intelligence, grant funding and levelling-up focused projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to enquiries Work collaboratively with Councils and partners 	SCT	Core
		3.3 Local Digital Skills Partnerships,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support partnerships 	RD	Core
		3.4 Careers Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver contract academic year 23/24 Agree contract terms academic year 24/25 Deliver contract 24/25 	RD	CEC Core
		3.5 Monitoring and assurance pertaining to local growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure monitoring and reporting twice yearly on 	VN	Core

			investments supported by Local Growth and Get Building Funds.			
4	Other Contracted functions	4.1	Boscombe Digital Skills Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver second year of three year contract. Using a partnership approach to delivering a programme of activity for the benefit of citizens and businesses in Boscombe 	RD	BCP contract
		4.2	Agile response to other contractual opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek and respond to contractual opportunities that meet CIC objectives 	All	
5	Partnerships and clusters	5.1	Support innovation and cluster development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support, signpost and seek opportunities for established and emerging partnerships and clusters. 		
		5.2	Great South West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively support LEP and Council participation in GSW: Board and officer group meetings Co-ordinating and leading economic intelligence group UK REIF 	CB VN	Core GSW
		5.3	Dorset Skills Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene, support with data 		
		5.4	One Health Enterprise Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene Steering Group Lead funding bids Conference 		
		5.5	Regular liaison at a regional and national level to ensure opportunities for Dorset are identified and flagged up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gov Depts, Innovate UK, Steering groups/boards including Maritime UKSW, NetZero hub 		

6	Seek, generate and capitalise on opportunities to leverage private and/or public investment to the area	6.1 Promote the area and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through everything we do • Social and traditional media • Website • Events 	All	Core
		6.2 Link funding sources to investable opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost public sector funds • Know investor landscape • Co-ordinate bids/consortia • Develop soft landing package 	All	Core
		6.3 Target use of LEP resources			GPF/Core
7	Future Local Economic Partnership arrangements	7.1 Help support progress towards devolution deal, where requested by local partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making use of strategic knowledge and expertise and ability to work across the area 	VN	Core
		7.2 Work with LA partners to determine and enable future working arrangements for core LEP functions to be embedded within local democratic structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and Finish group 	VN/CB	Core

DORSET LEP BOARD MEETING COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	28 March 2024	Item Number	5.1
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 funding delivery 23/24 (Dorset LEP Business)

Key outputs to date:

- Light touch support – 303 (annual target 200, up from 261 at Jan report)
- Medium intensity – 81* (annual target 100, up from 74 at Jan report)
- High intensity – 16* (annual target 60, up from 9 at Jan report)

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

Dorset LEP funded business growth programmes:

LIVE

- **Dorset Business Innovation Programme** – Evolve and Silicon South are delivering programmes to deliver practical and theoretical innovation support to 40 businesses (12+ hours).
- **Funding / Investor Readiness Programme** – Evolve have delivered four events for start-up and growth businesses supplemented by one-to-one specialist support where a need is identified. This will result in approx 50 interventions (3+ hours).
- **Funding Accelerator Programme** – DLEP have part-funded 4 places on this highly-regarded programme with Focused for Business (12+ hours). All businesses are now actively seeking investment.
- **Business Growth & Productivity Groups** – this peer support programme delivered by Evolve has supported 40 businesses across four key sectors (Engineering & Manufacturing / Marine & Maritime / Digital & Creative / Visitor Economy) with strategic growth, leadership, business

performance and productivity (15+ hours).

- **Bid Writing Support Service** – this popular programme continues to provide expertise on bids to Innovate UK and other 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 annual report template has been received and is due by 31st May.

The **DLEP Business LinkedIn page** is very active with 1456 followers as of 14th March (up from 1426 in Jan).

Growth Hub Delivery 24/25

There is an expectation that a similar amount of Growth Hub funding will be made available for 24/25 delivery but nothing has been received in writing as yet. In advance of this confirmation, plans have been developed for 24/25 delivery and have been agreed in principle with BCP Council and Dorset Council that they complement the SPF delivery and add value to Dorset SMEs. Dorset LEP would like to launch selected programmes in April 24 to provide a seamless provision to Dorset businesses.

The key themes include:

Access to Finance

- **Horizon Scanning, Bid Writing Support including Masterclasses** – these ongoing programmes will be invaluable for Dorset businesses to access funding and grants from Innovate UK and other UK Government departments in particular the Marine and Maritime Launchpad Round 2.
- **Funding and Investment Readiness** – this programme has been very popular in 23/24 in helping start-up and growth businesses access a range of finance including start-up loans, British Business Bank SWIF, Angel Investment etc.
- **Funding Accelerator** – run as a pilot in 23/24 with 4 part-funded spaces we would like to extend this to 10 part-funded spaces in 24/25. This programme helps demystify the investment process and provides businesses with the tools and techniques they need to encourage investors to back the business.

Growth, Innovation and Productivity

- **Business Growth Groups** – this popular programme in 23/24 delivered across key priority sectors helps businesses identify, plan, and implement business growth and productivity actions.
- **Digital, Productivity & Innovation Programme** – new for 24/25 this programme would lay the foundations for the Made Smarter* funding expected from April 25. This programme aims to deliver specialist-led digital tech, productivity and innovation advice and support.

- * **Made Smarter** – WECA are leading a bid for Made Smarter funding for AEM businesses across the South West. This is an opportunity for £128k funding for Dorset in 25/26 and we need to provide details to WECA by May 24 of which Dorset organisation will be responsible for managing the delivery of this funding.

Supply Chain Development

- New for 24/25 this programme aims to help Dorset companies identify new opportunities within their AEM, Digital Creative & Marine & Maritime business that would benefit the Defence & Security Supply Chain across the SW region and beyond.
- This programme could be extended into other sectors e.g. NHS Supply Chain if additional funding could be identified.

Other Activity

Inward Investment – Inward Investment prospectuses for all priority sectors in Dorset have been updated and will be available by end March on the brand-new website www.investindorset.com.

Working with DBT partners, BCP Council 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. The most recent II interest was from Familux Resorts – a 5* family hotel and resort group and sites are being identified.

Dorset LEP lead on the review and updates to DBT Propositions to ensure representation for Dorset.

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 one Dorset business was successful. Round 2 launches in the summer and a Dorset working group has been set up to assist businesses with tailored support and collaboration opportunities thus increasing the success rate for Dorset.

Dorset Ambassadors – there is an event being held on 27th March at AECC. In addition to an interesting presentation from AECC as well as tours of the campus the event focusses on the new Invest in Dorset Website plus what is expected of a Dorset Ambassador. Next event to be held in the summer.

South West Agritech Showcase – 2024 event is being held on 21st March with a varied agenda including:

- Supporting the commercialisation and adoption of agritech
- Livestock – benefiting from technology and innovation
- Arable farming – efficiencies and sustainability.

Dorset LEP managed all the event bookings as well as building the agenda as part of their role on the Steering Group.

Fintech West South Coast – Dorset LEP has partnered with BCP Council and Fintech West to launch the “South Coast Hub” of Fintech West in Dorset and held a very successful and well-attended (70+) event in Jan 24. Next event planned for summer.

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 initiative on regional angel network development. A Dorset event was

held in Feb at Foundry with other events being held around the GSW region.

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 and Dorset Council UK SPF Programmes continue and are very popular with grants already paid out to successful applicants.

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.

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

Meeting Date	28 March 2024	Item Number	5.2
Security Level:	Confidential <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Dorset LEP Skills 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

This paper provides an update from the Dorset Skills Board (DSB) together with operational updates on the contracted LEP skills delivery.

2. Dorset Careers Hub Contract Update

Dorset Careers Hub (DCH) continues to deliver activities for stakeholders across the region. Following a comprehensive review of the strategic plan and associated budgets, delivery is aligned to the CEC's five priorities and is reflective of school needs. The overarching strategy is now being translated into a comms plan to ensure all audiences are accessing DCH's offer, and this will see a review of the website.

Our partnership with Dorset Chamber to deliver a Workplace Experiences Project is making great progress and has already raised the profile of benchmark six across Dorset – more employers are engaging and innovative approaches to work placements are being designed and shared.

Twelve organisations across Dorset have completed the Employer Standards framework which supports them to evaluate the impact of their work with schools and in turn improve performance. Our Cornerstone Employers are supporting this roll-out and encouraging peers to reflect on their programmes.

The Teacher Encounters project, that attracted additional funding from the CEC, has now launched and promotional materials have been shared with schools and employers. There is a good appetite from local organisations wishing to host school staff including NHS Dorset, Beagle Technology, Saline, Lester Aldridge, JP Morgan, Hoburne, Waitrose and NFU. Delivery will start in the summer term.

DCH were unsuccessful in their bid for the CEC's Digital Accelerator Fund. The programme, funded by Salesforce, aims to enhance the take up of apprenticeship and technical education pathways within digital jobs. The wealth of local research and intelligence that steered the bid will now be used to inform future activity that can be delivered without direct cost.

The team have been exceptionally busy with the delivery of events throughout the spring term and now look to support schools with their compass assessment completions which are due at the end of term.

Jan – March delivery highlights:

- Steering Group met 8th January – led by new Chair, David Matthews. Reviewing ToR and membership
- Cornerstone Employer Group: x3 meetings in this term now representing 15 employers and over ten sectors
- Events:
 - North Dorset Careers Day – 700 students
 - Careers & Apprenticeship Show (sponsor) – 5000 students
- CPD:
 - Provider Access Legislation One Year On – 8 attendees
 - Changing Face of Dorset Economy – 25 registered
- Primary Project - Wave 2 and 3:
 - x3 employer webinars – 17 attendees
 - x2 virtual and x2 f2f lead teacher sessions – 65 attendees
 - Wave 3 extension to include BCP and other DC primary schools – target to attract 30 schools
- EAs:
 - Becoming an EA webinar (9 employers / 15 delegates)
 - EA virtual induction

Dorset Careers Hub (DCH) performance overview End February 2024

Target from CEC Grant Agreement for 2023-24 Academic Year	Pan Dorset Achievement (End of Feb 2024)
Compass + upgrade: 80%	68%
Future Skills Questionnaire Completions: 20%	9% 14 institutions = 1771 FSQs
Enterprise Adviser Recruitment: 80%	85% 60 in post
Benchmark Achievement: 90% of institutions to achieve at least 3 benchmarks 5.5 average benchmark score 20% of institutions achieving 8 BMs	98% achieving at least 3 Benchmarks 6.3 average benchmark score 28% of institutions achieving 8 BMs

3. Digital Skills Hub Contract update

The Digital Skills Hub has been busy. The weekly schedule Jan – March 2024 includes:

Monday	business workshops + business support drop in : ESOL with employability and ESOL with digital skills
Tuesday	Community connect with JCP, CAN, Seetec Plus, WEA and Citizens Advice : National Careers Service 1hr job finding + CVs
Wednesday	Introductory Digital Skills (5 week programme x 2) + Business Accelerator (monthly) + Director Roundtable : WEA Multiply workshops and ESOL with digital skills
Thursday	Intermediate Digital Skills (5 weeks programme x 2)
Friday	National Careers Service CV writing workshops (9-5pm)

We are also co-funding the Business Start Up programme at TOSH, a 5 week programme for new businesses.

Our location has been really impactful to highlight our skills delivery to the local, diverse population, the most important driver to bring people to our skills delivery, employment opportunities and CPD skills has been our 'Community Connect Tuesdays'. These are all-day drop-in events that provide residents with support services all in one space. We have people from Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, Seetec Plus, Family Support Services, WEA, Citizens Advice and the Community Action Network to help solve, direct and support people with all services in one space. Rather than residents having to travel across the conurbation to seek help visiting the different services in their 'normal' locations, they are able to see all the providers relevant to personal work and skills support in one location.

Community Connect Tuesdays are now extremely popular and directly contribute to full cohorts on our entry-level digital skills, intermediate level digital skills, ESOL with digital skills, ESOL with employability courses and more. National Careers Service has been so popular, we are now running bespoke CV writing on confidence-building workshops on Fridays as part of our training suite for residents. Community Connect Tuesdays have led to us delivering recruitment and retention events for businesses locally - highlighting the supply of trained, talented people available for work - as well as support with business-focused excel courses and Multiply-funded courses aimed at employability.

The Digital Skills Hub is also here to support business owners, allowing us to upskill and develop them to create resilience within the area, providing jobs and promoting retention. 'Business Connect Mondays' is a drop-in service for business owners, working with the Federation of Small Businesses, UK Shared Prosperity Fund providers, BCP Council comms and high street team. As well as an afternoon drop-in, we provide business workshops, a year-long Accelerator programme for growing businesses, Director Conversations and business peer support events and programmes.

By bringing together skills and employability opportunities for residents and business support, training and CPD we are creating a whole area of resilience, growth and opportunity for everyone.

Based on our delivery, BCP recommended we apply for a Visa Lets Celebrate Towns 2024 award under People and Skills category. We were shortlisted, and then won the award at the House of Lords on the 13th March. This will bring £15,000 in prize funds to further embed digital skills in the community.

4. Dorset Skills Board

The Board met in March and the following is shared as a highlight report:

Ellie Parson, NHS Dorset Director of People, joined us to discuss the recruitment and workforce challenges within the NHS in Dorset, and the action being taken especially around partnership working and engagement with education providers.

Rod Davis, Dorset and Somerset Training Provider Network, was nominated as Deputy Chair

Nicola Newman updated the Board on the Dorset Chamber led Local Skills Improvement Plan and the reporting due for May 2024. The LSIP is working across Dorset and the May reporting will show the impact on curriculum changes and business related skills.

Vinita Nawathe joined the meeting to share the learning from the Homes and the Economy Conference. A conference video and update can be found here <https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/news-article/homes-and-the-economy-conference-film-round-up>

Rebecca Davies provided an overview of the Labour Market Information for 2023. The presentation and dashboard will be available online shortly.

Partner lightening updates included:

- UKSPF people and skills intervention across BCP and Dorset starts on 1st April and they have already commissioned 3 delivery partners.
- Dorset Council UKSPF are also working with digital skills and the low carbon teams on finding providers and also have a project with Portland Quarries Trust.
- DSTPN are developing a Business Directory. They are working at director level with the DfE on Apprenticeships. There is significant appetite to simplify the process. They are funded across Somerset LSIF to work as a partnership across both counties on a green curriculum.
- BU outlined the impact of low international student numbers on their budget. HEI's are facing huge challenges. Offerings are going to be significantly reduced in the sector. AECC echoed BU's challenges but recognised that FE is slightly different. It was interesting to hear that more students are staying local to home to study.

5. RECOMMENDATION

None – for information only.

DRAFT MINUTES

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

23 JANUARY 2024 FROM 1.30 PM TO 4.00 PM

TEAMS MEETING

MINUTES

Board Attendees:

Aaron Lawes (AL)
Cecilia Buffon (CB) (Chair)
Ian Girling (IG)
Cllr Millie Earl (ME)
Neil Skelland (NS)
Nick Gaines (NG)
Nicola Newman (NN)
Paul Gough (PG)
Paul Read (PR)
Phil Sayles (PS)
Cllr Simon Gibson (SG)
Cllr Spencer Flower (SF)

Also Present:

Anwen Jones (AJ) (Cities and Local Growth Unit)
Clare Fleming (Dorset LEP)
Kathryn Hill (KH) (Dorset LEP)
Nick Webster (NW) (Dorset Council)
Rebecca Davies (RD) (Dorset LEP)
Vinita Nawathe (VN) (Dorset LEP)

Presenting:

Ahmed Goga (Great South West)
Emma Buckman (Buckman Associates)

Apologies:

Aidan Dunn (AD) (Dorset Council)
Jim Andrews (JA)
Luke Rake (LR)
Cllr Vikki Slade (VS)

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Apologies were received for: Jim Andrews, Luke Rake, Vikki Slade and Aidan Dunn</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: no declarations of interest were declared.</p>	
2.	<p>Board Members' Updates</p> <p>PG informed that the Arts University Bournemouth has won a grant for £1.6m to connect activity in creative technology and plastics and environmental sustainability. They plan to create a new research centre in plastics that aims to be an R&D centre for local businesses.</p> <p>PR informed that Weymouth College has been awarded funding for a Modern Methods of Construction Centre of Excellence. PR has been helping with the development of the course content and building up the courses. Homes England has expressed interest in spreading this further.</p> <p>PS informed that B&P College received an outstanding from Ofsted for their Specialised Chef Apprentices residential accommodation which enables students to come and study in Bournemouth and get placement opportunities with high profile employers/chefs in London. Work is also underway at the Bournemouth campus in preparing for a new building and redevelopment of Bournemouth campus.</p> <p>IG updated on the latest economic forecast and quarterly economic forecast findings. It is still a challenging climate at a national level but businesses are optimistic, although recruitment continues to be a problem for businesses in Dorset.</p> <p>NN updated on the continued collaboration since publishing the Local Skills Improvement Plan. She mentioned the upcoming Dorset Skills Day taking place on 22 February and asked the Board if they could cascade this to their networks.</p>	All
3.	Policy	
3.1	<p>Latest Guidance from Government re Integration of LEPs</p> <p>VN took the paper as read, reminding the Board that this is about the transfer of core functions to the local authorities and that it was agreed these functions would continue to be delivered by the LEP until March 2025, whilst the Task and Finish Group work up options for the longer-term sustainable delivery of these functions. Core function delivery for the next year (April 2024 – March 2025), includes the development and publication of an up to date economic strategy for the area by October 2024, for which we had a good head start.</p> <p>AJ said that the paper included all the currently published detail. AJ confirmed that the Integration plan has been received and although there has not been a formal response to the Board, there are no concerns with that plan and she encouraged everyone to progress with that plan moving forward.</p>	

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3.	Policy	
3.2	<p>Task and Finish Group</p> <p>CB informed that the members of the Task and Finish Group are Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Millie Earl, Aidan Dunn, Phil Sayles and herself. They will be supported by Nick Webster, Adrian Trevett and Vinita Nawathe. The first meeting is scheduled for 2 February and that meeting will be looking through the guidance and scoping out the questions to be worked on. She said that the LEP has communicated that we will be doing business as usual for the next year whilst we work through this. Round table discussions with businesses across the county are planned, to inform how we will deliver these functions after March 2025. The LEP Board wants to take this as an opportunity to refresh how we work together with partners across the area.</p> <p>CB confirmed that the Dorset Council remains the accountable body for the next year and explained that Aidan Dunn is part of the group as the section 151 officer.</p>	
3.3	<p>Economic Evidence Base and Priorities Refresh - Emerging Themes and Next Steps</p> <p>Emma Buckman (EB) went through the paper, explaining that it is not a finished piece of work. EB is reviewing all the evidence and is having conversations with most members of the Board to get a sense of the opportunities and issues affecting the area.</p> <p>EB said that the energy and environmental information had come from reports the LEP had already commissioned and also Government departments. There are a few gaps where we could use more information, such as in relation to employment land where it is unclear as to whether there is enough or more is needed. Everything in the report is referenced.</p> <p>It was noted that it would be helpful if, in the report, there could be clarity on whether references to 'Dorset' meant Dorset LEP area or Dorset Council. SF suggested the term "Pan-Dorset", to mean the entire county.</p> <p>EB clarified that the housing needs information has come from the Housing Needs Assessment. It looks at population demands and applies a formula to that.</p> <p>NS mentioned that the growth and productivity information is up to 2021 and asked if there are any sources of information that are more recent. EB explained that is the most recent Office of National Statistics data. She explained that location quotients compare the percentage of employment in a sector locally and nationally. If location quotients are above 1 then we have more businesses than the national average, in that sector.</p> <p>A discussion took place on transport and that this is a major issue for the county, affecting how people can access work and education. IG informed that there are real problems with transport and parking across the BCP area and getting to work in the rural area is often a lot easier than travelling in the conurbation. IG considered parking to be a barrier to growth for businesses in the conurbation.</p> <p>PS spoke to the skills supply section and the flow of young people through the institutions into the workplace. There is a higher level of students studying A-level</p>	

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3.3	<p>Economic Evidence Base and Priorities Refresh - Emerging Themes and Next Steps Cont'd</p> <p>and not going into technical courses. More people are doing A-levels but fewer people are going on to university. He asked about the data sources used in the report and EB explained that all the data comes from the Department for Education and is the most recent data that they have published.</p> <p>EB said that from the conversations she has had with the Board and her assessment of the evidence base, she has defined a set of potential priorities as a starting point. Barriers identified include pockets of deprivation in the area, a shortage of people to fill job vacancies and homes for people to live in.</p> <p>CB stated it is important to identify what you are not going to do as well as what you are going to do.</p> <p>The micro business environment was discussed, as the majority of businesses pan-Dorset are small or micro. Productivity in such businesses can be challenging to measure and staffing needs are different to larger companies, as they need multi skilled people, rather than specialists.</p> <p>Our main challenge will be making it appealing and attractive for people to live in our county, with the major barrier being the cost of housing. Affordable homes in the right place, with reliable infrastructure (heating, transport, digital, schools etc) are key.</p> <p>VN reminded the Board of the Homes and the Economy Conference taking place on 27 February. If your home is taking up all of your income/savings, you are not going to use it to start up a new business. Housing costs are part of the whole productivity chain.</p> <p>EB explained that to date, her work has been to update the economic evidence base and strategic economic priorities. Consultation has been mainly with LEP board members and LA officers. In the latest guidance from government, this should be taken further to the development of an economic strategy looking forward ten years. EB presented a timeline and plan to do this by including local forecasting that goes over the next 10 years and aligning with other plans and strategies currently under development, for example in transport and planning. There is a lot of activity underway in the development of local transport plans and strategic transport plans for the region. Input from Board members will be required, to get to a draft vision and objectives that can be taken out to wide consultation with stakeholder groups. The aim is to develop a final draft strategy document by end of August.</p> <p>VN informed that the instruction from Government for the economic plan is that it is has to be owned by the local authorities. The board agreed the process and timelines for completing the draft strategy in time to hand over to the councils to take Through their processes.</p> <p>NN said she thought the report would be something that the Skills Board would be interested in looking at this more closely.</p>	All agreed

Item	Notes and Decisions	Action
3.4	<p>Great South West</p> <p>Ahmed Goga (AG) updated the Board on the Great South West (GSW) work. The GSW Board has representatives from across political, business and education. He said Dorset has strong representation on the Board. It is worth reiterating that GSW is not a LEP or a super LEP. There has been some misunderstanding and confusion about this. He said he wanted to focus on what the GSW is doing going forward. It works to convene - convene the critical assets and partners of the region; to clarity - champion the assumption that people know what is here is a false assumption; creating - new ideas for the region, need to make sure that as part of our position on the national stage that we are clear on those; communicating - having clearly defined priorities and communicating on them; culture – set the tone and rhythm on how we are seen.</p> <p>He said that the Partnership and Board has met and reset its focus towards delivering the UK's future energy, defence and food security. These are of national importance and are of scale Extensive work will be taking place over the next couple of weeks that will launch this. Future meetings will move around the area. Need to look at how to bring greater engagement and visibility, so developing a programme of regional roadshows around the area. GSW will also be hosting four events in Westminster across the year and an annual conference which is taking place at Sandy Park in Exeter. GSW is commissioning an Independent Economic Review that will provide the framework and route map for economic growth for the region. There are many more things going on and looking to do much more regular sessions with partners going forward.</p> <p>CB asked whether the Westminster events will be themed and how will people get to know about them. We need to engage with our local MPs to get them to those events.</p> <p>AG said they will be themed and they are working with the GSW APPG and working on mobilising the Dorset MPs through engagement with the APPG. The Dorset contingent has been more difficult to engage with the GSW APPG. He said he is working with SG on what can be done to work on that.</p>	
4.	CIC	
4.1	<p>One Health Enterprise Network Update</p> <p>CB gave an update on the recent One Health Enterprise Network Steering Group meeting. She explained that the OneHealth network is a cluster of businesses, universities and others working across animal, human, plant and environmental health. the Steering Group meeting comprised three universities and businesses, together with the one Health leads of DBT and Defra. This is the next stage of development that has grown from work initially done with the Wessex Academic Health Science Network. We have run four conferences in this space and at the last one in July we agreed to set up a Steering Group to take the work forward. We have identified over 500 companies working in this space and we are trying to create something that does not exist anywhere else.</p>	

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4.1	<p>One Health Enterprise Network Update Cont'd</p> <p>CB said that all three universities felt they could lead on a “hackathon-type” working session. They saw the potential for creating research and innovation and the opportunity to network with people from different areas. It is an exciting opportunity if we can develop the cluster across Dorset and the South West.</p> <p>VN informed that an EPSRC funding opportunity is available for new clusters. The Steering Group confirmed that they are keen to pursue this and as it has to be led by an HE organisation, BU has agreed to lead supported by Southampton, with the LEP supporting the application process. This is an international concept but we are keeping our involvement to a manageable scale at the moment. There are a lot of academics talking about it across the world. Our conferences have demonstrated the value of getting businesses together to see where they can collaborative across what might otherwise be considered, different sectors.</p> <p>CB stated that Innovate UK are very supportive of the initiative.</p> <p>NS mentioned the National Digital Twin Programme and that would be a worthwhile connection as there is a good national programme going on. Some regions are using it for crisis planning for instance.</p> <p>Action: NS to send a link to CB and VN.</p>	NS
4.2	<p>Business Update</p> <p>RD ran through some highlights and mentioned there are two innovation programmes at the moment that businesses can be part of. She informed that all the programmes for this year and now running and we are hoping to hit the high intensity target on our KPIs.</p> <p>There is another Dorset Ambassador event taking place on 27 March and AUB are hosting.</p> <p>RD mentioned the Innovation UK and Maritime launch pad and that 52 applications have been received across the whole of the GSW. We do not know how many are from Dorset businesses. The applications are being reviewed ready for the second stage and hopefully there will be some Dorset applications.</p> <p>RD said that Board Members amplifying our comms is very much appreciated and is the best way of reaching new business.</p> <p>AW and AL left the meeting at 3.15 pm</p>	
4.3	<p>Skills Update</p> <p>RD informed that she had spoken at the Integrated Care Partnership meeting this morning. It was interesting for ICP members to see what the labour market looks like outside the world of health and care.</p> <p>The Digital Skills Hub have launched “connected Mondays”, which is focussed on events for business. In the morning there will be a series of workshops and</p>	

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4.3	<p>Skills Update Cont'd</p> <p>master classes and the afternoons are for drop ins. The skills delivery has increased significantly for this term and we now have eight sessions a week.</p> <p>RD informed that the Dorset Careers Hub is in the top 10 of Careers Hubs in the country against performance markers and we are used as an example for our delivery. This is great news for the team. RD updated that there have been changes within the team, with Rebecca Phillips leaving us.</p> <p>IG updated that Dorset Chamber has a project working with the Careers Hub looking to increase the quality of work experience opportunities across the whole of the Dorset area. RD explained that we are working with the Chamber to get more businesses to offer work experience for young people, to show them what it is like to be working and what the workplace looks like. It is such an important part for that move into work or higher education. IG explained that young people are being asked to find their own work placements and if their parents do not have those contacts, it can be very difficult for them. If they do not find a placement they have to remain in school.</p> <p>NN mentioned she was at the Battlelab this morning for an event and they had a great session with Atlas Elektronik explaining what they do with their work experience.</p> <p>SF left the meeting at 3.23 pm</p>	
5.	For Noting	
5.1	<p>FACR Committee</p> <p>NN took the paper as read but wanted to highlight that the Committee agreed that the Growing Places Fund should remain as an open call.</p> <p>NG said that we need to get more people engaged with the Growing Places Fund, asking Board Members to please make people aware. He pointed out that we are working very close to our planned budget and asked the people involved in the transition planning to be aware, so we can plan to get most out of our budget going forward.</p> <p>RD confirmed that we will be doing more comms for the Growing Places Fund and we will provide the Board with information to share across their contacts.</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	
	<p>Local Skills Improvement Plan</p> <p>NN updated that the Department of Education and Department of Media and Sport have shown interest in the Local Skills Improvement Plan and so she was feeling very supported, both locally and nationally.</p>	

Note: Date of Next Meeting – 28 March 2024 at 10.00 am to be held at the Digital Skills Hub, 30-32, Royal Arcade, Christchurch Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth BH1 4BT