

DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31 AUGUST 2021
MS Teams Video Conference
MINUTES
Committee Attendees:

Aaron Lawes (AL) (independent member)
 Cllr Jon Andrews (JA) (Dorset Council)
 Cllr Lawrance Williams (BCP Council)
 May Palmer (MP) (private sector representative)
 Cllr Paul Hilliard (PH) (BCP Council)
 Sara Uzzell (SU) (Dorset LEP Board member)

Also Present:

Amy Blackham (AB) (Dorset LEP)
 Dr Corrina Osborne (CO) (Dorset LEP)
 Finn Morgan (FM) (Dorset LEP)
 Kathryn Hill (KH) (Dorset LEP)

Apologies:

Cllr Dave Bolwell (DB) (Dorset Council)

Item	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	Action
1.	<p>Everyone introduced themselves as this was MP's first meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Dave Bolwell.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were received.</p>	
2.	Agree Draft Minutes	Action
	The Minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the last meeting.	All agreed
3.	Actions from last meeting	Action
	All actions involved circulating presentations or further for the August meeting and, therefore, these are complete.	
4.	Engaging the Business Community	Action
	<p>FM informed the Committee that Dorset LEP works in partnership with businesses, local government, education institutions and other industry and community organisations to drive economic growth, attract funding and investment, increase productivity and develop local industrial strategies for Dorset. Engaging with the business community is, therefore, critical to all of our activity. The framework we use for engagement activity and mechanisms was outlined in the meeting.</p> <p>FM explained that the Dorset LEP Communications and Engagement Plan ensures that there is a joined-up and comprehensive approach to communications across all of Dorset LEP's functions.</p> <p>Our mechanisms for general communication activity include key information and statistics about our website, Social Media, the Newsletter and Press Releases. Our website attracted over 86,000 visitors from June 2020 to 2021, a</p>	

4.	Engaging the Business Community Cont'd	Action
	<p>140% change from the previous year, social media followers continue to steadily increase, with an increase of 'mentions' on Twitter by 161% during June 2020-2021 compared to the previous year.</p> <p>Our mechanisms for specific activity include Dorset Gateway and the Careers Hub – their webpages, social media, eNewsletters, events and targeted communications campaigns. We use our CRM for sending specific communications and the success of the Dorset Careers and Apprenticeship Show event, which involved 17,000 year 10 and 11 students, 60 Dorset based businesses and all Further Education and Higher Education providers.</p> <p>AB explained how the LEP team work really closely to make sure we are targeting the right businesses</p> <p>FM informed that we work with the Dorset's BIDs, for example, ShopAppy, the LEP has supported funding of this and invited BIDs and Chambers to come in with us on it.</p> <p>JA said he was glad that the LEP is supporting ShopAppy initiative.</p> <p>PH asked about the communication with lenders and banks and FM informed that the LEP does speak with NatWest and Lloyds on a regular basis. NatWest have been very supportive. He has also spoken to a couple of alternative lenders as well, for example the South West Investment Group.</p>	
5.	Sharing Best Practice with other LEPs	Action
	<p>CO informed the Committee that our Local Assurance Framework demonstrates our commitment to sharing best practice and that we have a culture of continuous improvement and participate in sharing best practice with other LEPs as standard.</p> <p>She explained that Dorset LEP took part in a formal Peer Review and was paired with Marches LEP in 2021 and worked with a Centre for Governance and Scrutiny facilitator for the peer review exercise. This included sharing various documentation in advance to help understand each other's organisations. There were 10 attendees and from Dorset LEP this included the Section 151 Officer, Chair and Head of Governance & Operations. The exercise was informative for both LEPs.</p> <p>She informed the Committee that Dorset LEP also has established informal peer review activity to learn more from other LEPs regarding specific aspects of the operations. For instance, an informal peer review was held with Cheshire and Warrington in 2019 in order to learn more about their governance structure and with Oxford LEP to learn more about their Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>She further explained that Dorset LEP is one of 38 LEPs across England, who all belong to the LEP Network and this is a key mechanism for sharing information and best practice and there is also a monthly LEP Director meeting established for LEPs across the South West.</p> <p>CO mentioned Dorset LEP is also involved in work within the South West region, for example the Western Gateway.</p> <p>SU explained that LEPs are also compared during the annual review of all LEPs – Annual Performance Review – undertaken by government each year.</p>	

6.	Energy and Digital Connectivity	Action
	<p>CO gave the Committee a summary of the activity undertaken in the following areas:</p> <p><u>Energy</u> CO advised that the strategic ambitions around energy, articulated in the Local Industrial Strategy and the Dorset Investment Prospectus, states that the region remains an untapped resource for clean energy generation and as a result in 2021 we created the Dorset Low-Carbon Energy Investment Opportunities document which details opportunities around energy networks, building energy efficiency, decarbonising heat and decarbonising transport. This showcases the opportunities for inward investment and is aligned with the Government agenda, thereby placing Dorset in a strong position to receive low-carbon energy investment. The close work with the South West Energy Hub was also discussed.</p> <p>JA expressed the serious concerns there is in rural Dorset around energy. CO explained Dorset LEP is having conversations with SSE, the local authorities and also Network Rail regarding energy issues in Dorset. She informed that SSEN sit on the Strategic Infrastructure Committee and so hear the issues directly.</p> <p>CO also mentioned that there are concerns around skills for this new low energy technology which we are feeding into.</p> <p><u>Digital Connectivity</u> CO advised of the strategic ambition articulated in the Dorset Investment Prospectus in particular and because technology and data can drive connectivity and sustainable regeneration and economic development across Dorset, improving the lives of local residents and generating value for people, businesses and places. We have worked with key stakeholders to support the investment of around £48m in the Smart agenda. This includes helping to roll out superfast broadband to 95% of the county and, more recently, accelerating gigabit (1,000 Mbps) and next generation 5G wireless broadband deployment.</p> <p>Support for this activity was outlined including the Digital Skills Partnership for Dorset and examples of capital investment including Ultrafast Broadband Project, Lansdowne Business District, Defence Innovation Centre (BattleLab) and Fibre Hub Connectivity in Rural Dorset Project.</p> <p>CO informed that Dorset LEP works with the councils to encourage the inward investment into fibre and digital connectivity.</p> <p>SU mentioned that digital connectivity is critical for businesses and if we are going to change the way people live and work in Dorset we need it. She emphasised the importance of local partners with support of MPs to raise this issue nationally.</p>	
7.	Future Work Programme	Action
	<p>CO referred to the future work programme and asked the committee if there were any matters they wished to see discussed at the forthcoming meetings.</p> <p>PH mentioned Governments' review of capital funding allocations and when that was due and have an MP attend a meeting to discuss engagement with the LEP would be useful.</p>	

7.	Future Work Programme Cont'd	Action
	It was agreed that the next meeting would provide information on the government's future capital allocations and the LEP would explore the possibility of having an MP attend a future meeting.	
8.	Annual Review of Terms of Reference	Action
	<p>The review of the Terms of Reference was discussed. Everyone agreed that they were happy with the Terms of Reference and that no changes were needed.</p> <p>Action: The Terms of Reference was agreed.</p>	All agreed
9.	Highlights for Board Update	Action
	It was agreed that the LEP Board update would consist of rural connectivity and energy and how the LEP engages with businesses regarding business support.	
10.	Any Other Business	Action

Note: Date of Next Meeting – 28 April 2022