

Minutes of Board Meeting

14 November 2012

At

Dartington Hall Trust

Attendees:- Adam Chambers, Alan Denby, Chris Grace, Frances Brennan, Jane Gallagher (Coast), Janet Powell (mins), Keri Denton, Liz Waugh, Paul Hickson, Nick Ames, Nick Engert, Rachel Davies, Sean Fielding, Stephen Bird, Theo Leijser, Tim Jones (chair), Tudor Evans, Vaughan Lindsay

Apologies:- David Hall, Gordon Oliver, Sally Edgington, Simon Barker, Wendy Purcell, Will Mumford

Introductions:-

The Chair welcomed Sean Fielding - Director of Research and Knowledge Transfer, University of Exeter who succeeds David Allen & Theo Leijser- from BIS standing in for Sally Edgington. Congratulations were also given to Chris Grace on his promotion to Head of Economy, Enterprise and Employment at Plymouth City Council.

Declarations of interest:- Sean Fielding in reference to GPF Exeter Science Park project.

2. EU Funding Prospectus up-date LW &PH

LW explained the composition of the EU working group, and noted that they have done an exceptional job to produce the first iteration of the EU Prospectus. A workshop in October attended by Keith Richardson from BIS provided further valuable input in terms of questioning some of the rationale for the inclusion of certain items / themes. Board input and support is now needed.

The Board's attention was drawn to two EU papers. The first outlines the need for the Board's input into: where our focus needs to be and how we communicate our needs to Government. The second provides a précis of the workshop and the input from BIS.

The agenda then moved to item 5 in order to ensure TE was present for items 3 and 4.

5. Finance & Resource Group update – AC

The Board's attention was drawn to the papers for this item on the Agenda: Finance & Resource Sub Group update, Governance List, LEP General Fund P & L and the LEP structure map.

AC stated the purpose of the group: to recruit a permanent Chief Executive and Administrative Assistant, move to a suitable legal status, the governance of the LEP, how it organises its sub groups, partners, sub teams and how they are controlled and finally to monitor/forecast the financial position of the LEP.

4. City Deals - Plymouth update by TE

The shortlist for Round 2 of City deals is 15 January 2013 with a draft EOI going in on Friday. PCC is committed to working across geographical (as opposed to administrative) functional economic areas with parties and is keen to emphasise the 'in partnership' relationship. The City is in the process of pulling together a leaders' meeting, to look at issues and how to solve them in the context of the City Deal. The principal problems are those of productivity vs population and an over - reliance on the public sector. The priority will be jobs-led housing growth, in order to stimulate growth sectors, gain graduate retention and to close the gap between wages and affordable living standards e.g. by granting planning permission for more than 10,000 homes. The role of the LEP is fundamental in getting partners together. Discussion ensued and the prospect of housing as a focus was questioned by the Board.

3. Growing Places Fund update - LW

Federal Mogul was in the final stages of having its funding agreements drawn up with Matford and Exeter Science Park following.

Discussions continued over whether the principle of repayment and interest that the Board had agreed at the last board meeting should remain or whether there could be any flexibility in this.

The Board's attention was drawn to the Government's key message: the fund should be used for projects that can quickly demonstrate job creation. The LEP can, with appropriate Government approval and within a very short time frame, change from loan to grant. Board agreed to keep the option of changing the criteria under review but maintain current loan basis at present.

Board agreed that there could be more flexibility on interest rates and repayment terms, however they were unwilling to support repayment periods of 25 years and 0% interest rates or make changes at this point. It was therefore agreed to cap the interest rate at 1.5% above base where appropriate and with additional security. And after further discussion, the Chair set the maximum repayment period at 10 years and *in extremis* 12 years may be considered. Job creation and time spans should also be more evident within the funding agreement to compensate.

6. Chair's Update

Upon reviewing the structure of the partnership via the Finance and Resource Sub Group, queries had arisen over whether the Business Forum was actually required. However, it was felt that the Forum was seen as a vital interface with the local business community and especially the private sector. The 'Special Interest Groups' (SIGs) would enable the private sector to become involved and focus on specific topics. A new chair for the Forum needed to be nominated and Board member participation was required to sponsor specific special interest groups. It was important to utilise the groups that were already out there, to add value and not to duplicate those already in existence. It was agreed to give the new chair at least six months to re-focus the Business Forum and engage with the wider business community.

7. Approval of LEP Board minutes of 10 July, 11 September, and 27 September

All minutes agreed as accurate apart from an amendment to 11 September minutes on page 2, section 4 - to read: GO stated that his Deputy Mayor, David Thomas may be better placed to deal with planning issues as this is part of his role.

8. Papers for noting – No comment

9. AOB

FB: urged caution with regard to the sheer volume of business groups in the market and the need to be clear about the agenda's for the special interest groups. Her organisation was meeting with GAIN/University of Plymouth to explore some common themes and suggested that if this model worked, it may be worth considering the same formula with other groups. AC: expressed the view that the groups must be private sector led, task and finish and they should be left to decide what groups to form.

NE: requested time at the next Board meeting for some guidance on the objectives of the planning group. He suggested that these needed to be strategic e.g. renaissance of Plymouth, countering major objections around nuclear and the

supply chain, supporting the Exeter Growth point and the exciting opportunities coming out of Yeovil and the aerospace sector. This would enable the LEP to drive the agenda forward for infrastructure and create a cohesive response to Government with a real ability to influence. WM and NA had already indicated their willingness to take part in this group. A request was made for an LA officer to join the group, one with good planning experience.

AC/VL: specified their intention to form a special interest group around social enterprises and the need for a board representative.

NA: asked the board to agree to the paper circulated on the formation of a Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Group. All agreed.

NA: Queried how the topics for the special interest groups had come about, were there potential overlaps e.g. for planning and whether there were any gaps? TJ: stated that this was a role for the Executive group to look at and they would be given observer status to sit in on Forum meetings to monitor this.

TJ: Proposed the extension of Board meetings from two to three hours in order for more time to complete agenda items - all agreed.

The chair expressed his thanks to Vaughan and the Dartington Hall Trust for hosting the meeting.

Next Board Meeting: 8 January 2013 from 10am - 1pm at South West Water, Exeter