

Minutes of Board Meeting**23 July 2013****at Somerset College, Taunton**

Attendees:- Adam Chambers, Alan Denby, Andrew Leadbetter, Chris Garcia, David Draffen (observer), David Hall, Gordon Oliver, Janet Powell (mins), Jon Bright (DCLG), Liz Waugh, Patrick Hartop (Observer & Presenter), Paul Hickson, Nick Ames, Nick Engert, Sally Edgington (BIS), Sean Fielding, Simon Barker, Stephen Bird, Tim Jones (Chair), Tudor Evans, Vaughan Lindsay, Wendy Purcell

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed, Jon Bright (DCLG), David Draffen and Patrick Hartop and thanked Rachel in her absence for providing the meeting room and buffet lunch at Somerset College. He also confirmed that Steve Smith, Vice Chancellor of Exeter University will be taking over from Sean Fielding in the New Year and thanked Sean for his continuing support.

Apologies

Chris Grace, Frances Brennan, Ian Coates (BIS), Keri Denton, Rachel Davies

2. Declarations of interest

Adam Chambers will leave the meeting if the Rural Growth Network Pilot is raised.

In Frances Brennan's absence the chair mentioned a potential conflict of interest between City Deal and Working Links.

3. Minutes of last meeting 16 May and actions arising

Approved, except for an amendment to note Simon Barker's apologies from the last meeting.

4. Chief Executive's report and annex's

C Garcia thanked everyone for their welcome and support so far. He gave an overview of the report and outlined his proposals for managing activities moving forward.

The HOTSUW EU allocation was queried: the LEP has received a written explanation with regard to the methodology used to calculate these from Sue Baxter, Deputy Director of BIS, A notional allocation had been applied to areas in the current programme, combined with an uplift for transitional status with a slight 'tweak'. This took no account of urban need and was less money than anticipated.

Action: Briefing note to be compiled on the inter-relationship of funds to aid board members understanding - PH

City Deal update

TE: gave thanks in particular to Liz and the board members that had provided support so far.

Patrick Hartop ran through a short update presentation on City Deal. A further update on City Deal with more detail will be given at the next board meeting in September.

Emphasis was placed on driving activity across LEP and that of its neighbouring LEP Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly with a number of strong initiatives and development activity within supply chains, of key benefit to this LEP.

5. Matters arising from Leaders and CEX Summit

JB gave a summary: Government is backing LEP's and giving them the flexibility to set their own priorities which aim to devolve resources from Whitehall and expects LA's and businesses to lead on this work. Whilst it recognises that LA's will be the main delivery agents, there is an enhanced role for the district councils (especially with the relocation of new homes bonus) and an expectation of collaboration and pooling of resources (some areas are combining LA's) between LA's and HE/FE.

To arrive at an overarching strategic plan is a tough challenge which also requires alignment of the EU SIF plan. An update on progress will be required in October, with a first draft due for December which must include evidence of collaboration and ability to deliver. This LEP is not alone in having to manage large complex geographies, however our reputation with Government needs addressing, currently we feature in their lowest quadrant benchmarked against other LEPs.

Officers, staff, CEO & Interim CEO vacated the room to allow the Board to continue talks around the merits of electing or recruiting a chair. Once completed, aforementioned returned and the agenda was resumed.

6. EU Structural Funds SIF

The first draft will be available for the September board meeting. To ensure progress, a sub working group will be formed to enable decision making – comprising: Adam Chambers, Chris Grace, Nick Ames, Sean Fielding and Julian Beer. A further peer group will be also be formed to act as a “critical friend”.

4b. GPF Update

A power-point presentation was given by LW on update of projects.

Action: Further proposals to be emailed to C Garcia by 31 July.

7. SIGs verbal updates

Low Carbon

NA – reported that the group are working with Sofie Francis of DCC to inform the EU plan with themes developing around the link up with Hinkley, Marine Energy, Smart Technology (in connection with the Met Office). Also considering Agri Technology with the government announcement of £180 m to help this sector. Defra were also championing community renewables and social enterprises.

Social Enterprise

VL – reported the recent success of the Social Enterprise conference in Walsall where best practice amongst LEPs was shared. There is still a lack of understanding and awareness around social enterprises which prompted the publication of a leaflet “10 killer facts every LEP should know about social enterprises”. The group were currently involved in providing input into a technical consultation document on “social investment tax relief” but if anyone else was interested in being involved to let him know. (Both documents were circulated).

Transport

LW – Local Transport have an allocation of £27.1 m. Only 4 out of the 17 schemes put forward by the LEP were taken forward. Resilience report was ready to go and would be out next week. Transport SIG also covers maritime, rail and aviation.

FDI

S Barker - The yearly UKTI Inward Investment Report out soon will show all FDI projects across the UK with individual LEP reports showing a greater analysis by sector. The FDI group had been privy to advance viewing of these reports, the picture in the SW will be of 61 projects secured (compared to 38 in 2011/12) which is contrary to the recent Ernst & Young Report which relies solely on press announcements. Average investment in the SW creates 60 jobs, however this was in most part due to investment from Princess Yachts and Agusta Westland.

8. Election of Chair & Vice Chair

This was no longer necessary, due to discussions under agenda item 5.

9. Papers for noting

No comment

10. AOB

CG: Comms tender would be out shortly for procurement and Governance changes (Articles of Association, CIC legal entity) final draft to be available for the September Board meeting.

SBird: Suggested that a good way to engage with the Districts would be to use the existing CEX District Forums in each county.