

**Minutes of HotSW LEP CIC Board Meeting  
18 September 2020  
from  
9.30 – 11.30 am  
Via Microsoft teams audio/video calling**

**Board Attendees:**

Cllr David Hall - Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development, Somerset County Council  
Dr Fiona McMillan OBE – Non-Exec Director EDF Energy  
John Laramy - Principal & CEO, Exeter College  
Prof. Judith Petts CBE– Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive, University of Plymouth  
Karl Tucker – Chair HotSW LEP and Managing Director, Yeo Valley Properties Ltd  
Prof Lisa Roberts – Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter  
Melanie Squires MBE – SW Regional Director, NFU  
Cllr Phil Bialyk – Leader, Exeter City Council  
Richard Stevens – Managing Director, Plymouth City Bus Ltd  
Cllr Rufus Gilbert -Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, Devon County Council  
Cllr Steve Darling – Leader, Torbay Council  
Stuart Brocklehurst – Chief Executive, Applegate  
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE – Leader, Plymouth City Council  
Cllr Val Keitch – Leader, South Somerset Council

**Officers in attendance:**

Alex Parmley - Chief Executive, South Somerset Council, Officer accompanying Cllr Val Keitch  
Eifion Jones – HotSW LEP Chief Operating Officer  
David Ralph – HotSW LEP Chief Executive  
Karime Hassan – CEO, Exeter City Council accompanying Cllr Phil Bialyk  
Keri Denton – Head of Economy & Enterprise, Devon County Council, officer accompanying Cllr Rufus Gilbert  
Kevin Mowat – Director of Place, Torbay Council, officer accompanying Cllr Steve Darling  
Michele Cussack – Director Economic & Community Infrastructure Commissioning, Somerset County Council accompanying Cllr David Hall  
Tracey Lee – CEO Plymouth City Council, officer accompanying Cllr Tudor Evans

**Others in attendance:**

Ben Bradshaw MP – representing Devon MPs  
Cllr Clare Paul – Cabinet Member for Public Health & Well-Being & Climate Change, Somerset County Council, (*Observer only*)  
David Warburton MP – representing Somerset MPs  
Helena Davison – HotSW Comms Manager  
Janet Powell – Executive Assistant, HotSW LEP (for minutes)  
Ruth Lambert – Regional Development Somerset & Wiltshire FSB, (*Observer only*)  
Suzanne Bond - Area Lead HotSW, Cities and Local Growth Unit - South West

### For Presentation only

Doug Eltham - Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer, Devon County Council

Clr Sarah Dyke – South Somerset District Council

Tim Jones, Devon Net- Zero Taskforce & Chair, South West Business Council

### Apologies:

Anne Marie Morris MP – representing Devon MPs

David Bird, Regional Director, Santander Corporate & Commercial Banking

Sarah Cook - Vice President of UK Government Business, Leonardo

### Table of decisions

Paper	Decision	Decision agreed
5. CEX report	Review the update on Covid-19 response	Noted.
5. CEX report	Agree (subject to S151 approval) to delegate funding decisions on Getting Building Fund projects to SIP	This was agreed by the Board on the condition it was only concerning projects on the previously agreed Board approved projects list. Any change to the approved list would need to be brought back to the Board for approval.
5. CEX report	Agree the publication of the LIS – (copy supplied but not attached) and recommend to the HotSW Joint Committee as a shared HotSW document.	The Board agreed.
5. CEX report	Note the mid-year review by HMG starting later this month.	Noted.
8. Response to CSR 2020	Agree to the response to the CSR consultation including the summary Building Back Better document - to be circulated next week.	Agreed but to elaborate further on tourism.
9. Update on Board Recruitment	Agree to the recommendations from the Nominations Committee including the appointments process for new/replacement Board Members	The Board agreed.

Agenda	Action
<p><b>1. Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>  Welcome to Prof Lisa Roberts joining for her first board meeting, taking over from Prof. Sir Steve Smith, who retired from the University of Exeter in August.  Apologies as above.</p>	

<p><b>2. Declarations of interest</b> All Board Directors submit yearly annual submission declarations of interest forms. Only those conflicts of interests over and above those already declared are required to be raised. Nothing further raised. Immediately prior to the Board, the Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer led a workshop reviewing Board Member responsibilities re Decs of Interest (see action below).</p>	
<p><b>3. Draft Minutes of 17 July 2020 Board meeting and actions arising</b></p> <p><b>Action: Meeting for Board members and Section 151 officers re conflicts and declarations of interest.</b> Before this Board meeting, the majority of members participated in an MS teams call with S151 officers from Somerset County Council for a useful discussion around conflicts of interest.</p> <p><b>Action: Follow up note from S 151 discussion around dispensations to follow.</b></p> <p><b>C/f Defence Mapping Research.</b> Sarah Cook has agreed to become the Board champion for defence. <b>This item is closed.</b></p> <p><b>C/f Local Industrial Strategy.</b> Advice from Cities, Local Government Unit (CLGU) via SB is that Gov't is still unclear over its direction of travel for Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) therefore there is a recommendation for the Board today to publish the LIS as a local document without formal approval from Gov't. <b>This item is closed.</b></p> <p><b>C/f Brexit meeting with the Rt Hon Michael Gove.</b> It was felt that as the LEP has not been successful. David Warburton MP agreed to pick this up directly with the Minister and report back.</p> <p><b>C/f Rural Productivity Plan.</b> Whilst the LEP continues to push this, there is no further update at this time although there has been a recent conversation update to Mel Stride, MP who has offered to try and progress this further with the Secretary of State.</p> <p><b>Action: Ports Letter to Gov't re lack of preparedness.</b> This was sent and the response back did not address the particular issues raised. The Government has since announced a Ports Infrastructure Fund – submissions to be completed by end October.</p> <p>All other actions were completed, and the board minutes were accepted as a true record.</p>	<p><b>JV</b></p> <p><b>DW</b></p> <p><b>DR</b></p>
<p><b>4. Questions from the public</b> None.</p>	
<p><b>Presentations: - An update on Devon and Somerset's Response to the Climate Change Emergency</b> (copies of both power-point presentations were circulated to all in advance of the meeting).</p> <p>The first presentation for Somerset was conducted by Michele Cussack and Cllr Sarah Dyke. A further document was shared by Cllr Sarah Dyke entitled "Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset. Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy". Sarah is the portfolio holder for</p>	

Environment at South Somerset District Council and chairs a cross authority portfolio holders' group responsible for recommending this strategy to 5 cabinets and 4 councils ensuring they demonstrate leadership, act as ambassadors, encourage councillors, parish and town councils, partner organisations and the community to understand what they need to do and how they can be involved. Somerset's strategy document will not be in the public domain until 7 October, copies are not yet available.

Highlights: -

- The strategy shares the commitment and ambitions of 5 LAs to show leadership and provide the catalyst for climate change, recognising it will take the combined efforts of every individual and business in Somerset to affect this change.
- The document sets the scene, internationally, nationally and locally and considers the impact of climate change. It sets out the goals and timeframes for delivery – the early impact with the public sector taking the lead, the medium term work towards carbon neutrality and the long-term goal (harder to achieve) which relies more on adaptive, behaviour, policy and lifestyle changes required to make the community resilient to climate change.
- It looks at what's been learnt through lockdown and COVID, what opportunities there are for a green recovery and how to contribute to the green agenda in considering the assets in Somerset.
- It delves more deeply into the different sectors looking at opportunities, impacts, challenges, barriers, timescales for delivery and outcomes required with a costed delivery plan.
- Acknowledgement is made to the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to this strategy development including industry, academic leaders, representative bodies and pressure actions groups.
- The strategy document is now on a journey through formal governance procedures to be adopted by early November.

In conclusion, many of the actions and outcomes directly support clean growth and the green recovery agendas and Somerset seeks cross border alliances and LEP support to bring this activity forward. Gaining funding to bring forward clean growth sites, improve transport, accelerate retrofitting of premises, better arrangements to deal with commercial waste are all activities that support the circular economy and supply chains and is crucial to the success of the strategy implementation. Working with South West Councils and the LEP to define the big asks of Gov on national policy change, local devolution of powers and to lobby for funding will be key to achieving these aims and objectives.

Somerset is keen to see how the two counties view this topic, for emerging synergies, shared facilities/programmes and economies of scale that can be adopted in order to raise the profile in tackling climate change.

The second presentation for Devon was made by Tim Jones and Doug Eltham with Tim taking the lead. Apologies were made for Prof. Patrick Devine-Wright, Chair of the Devon Net Zero Climate Emergency Task Force and to the University of Plymouth (UoP) for missing their logo off from the slide deck which will be rectified, also to acknowledge the support of Profs Iain

Stewart and Ian Bailey from UoP.

Devon's strategy focusses on the long journey and the need to respect the diversity of the county. A large amount of work has already taken place to develop the evidence base in sectors such as transport, spatial development and agriculture. Detailed work within agriculture includes - plant-based diets, clean meat no-tillage, food waste, ELMSs etc.

Analysis has also been carried out on the effect of COVID during this period (providing a snapshot of when a shock occurs) producing some enlightening statistics on lower carbon emissions etc. and its impact i.e. out commuting from Tiverton pre COVID was 80%, whilst Exeter has the slowest transport system at only 4 miles per hour.

Clarification note: - the reason for Exeter's low transport speeds are because of the huge number of people commuting in and out every day by private car. Exeter City Council does not have the policy levers i.e. congestion charge, workplace parking charge, more park and ride - they lie with the county.

Next steps will be on the practicalities of how to engage with different communities urban v rural and how programmes can be embedded effectively and fairly to a people-centric approach. There is a need to develop a strong commercial edge, based on vertically integrated business development with sequestration being fundamental to delivery. Also, to realise the huge opportunities around marine activity, intertidal areas and developing R & D capabilities. To look at social impact investment companies and to flex the model when solutions change to drive a seamless approach with partners working to deliver the Industrial Strategy. It recognises the need for coherent relations with both Cornwall and Somerset for common initiatives e.g. encouraging social landlords to work together for green house grants and a fund management approach to financial investment models. Delivery will be part front end loaded with interim targets and annual reduction targets, as some partners will have more immediate deadlines and others long-term. Devon's strategy also includes a Citizens Assembly which not all task forces have included.

The Chair opened the session up to Board members for comments: -

- There is cross-party Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) Climate Commission and JP is the representative for FE.
- The Citizens Assembly will be very useful in how to engage with the county's diverse socio-economic communities.
- Engagement with schools and young people is important, as children are often the drivers of adult change in families.
- There appears to be no mention of Offshore renewables - an area of strength and real opportunity, the Board were assured this was in the strategy for Devon.
- The biggest opportunity lies with retrofit, due to the large amount of housing stock to drive carbon savings, upskill the workforce and assist SME's in the supply chain.
- To align the different strategies of Devon/Exeter/Plymouth and Somerset in order that the LEP may adopt the measures/ support and subsequent investment into actions that flow from these. Unitarisation plans in Somerset will have no effect to Somerset's

<p>strategy, it has already received cross-party, group and organisation input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Network Rail’s recent response to the Gov’t around the challenge of decarbonising the railway, (partial electrification and alternative propulsion methodology) – a common thread across the South West Peninsula, uniting councils and local MPs to tackle this and make real progress in decarbonising the railway.</li> <li>➤ Energy is fundamental to decarbonising every sector Inc. agriculture and there already exists a Tri – LEP Energy Strategy which needs to be reinvigorated.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked both presenters and asked what they wanted the LEP to do and how it might help?</p> <p>In response both require the LEP to communicate the ‘big asks’ to Gov’t, ensuring all stakeholders are on the same page to ensure the best outcomes for any potential funding Partnership building is seen as crucial, to blend private and public sector investment, to the leverage of LAs and LEPs particularly with infrastructure levies and business rates and be able to borrow against these resources. The Chair concluded and agreed that alignment and joined up strategies were vital for the LEP to provide support and embed these strategies within projects.</p>	
<p><b>5. Chief Executive’s Report</b></p> <p>Ref decarbonisation of rail, the LEP is in complete agreement that this should be advocated across the area.</p> <p><b>Action: To ask the Local Transport Board (LTB) to prioritise decarbonisation of the railway to progress this further.</b></p> <p>Items to mention: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Response to COVID</li> <li>➤ Recovery Plan development</li> <li>➤ Getting Building Fund (details dealt with in SIP update)</li> <li>➤ Response to CSR (attached in Exec report)</li> <li>➤ Future White Papers on; Devolution, energy, planning, housing, FE.</li> </ul> <p>COVID has had significant impacts on the economy, staff, ability to plan and Brexit. The area’s response has been well organised and coordinated via the HotSW Economic Resilience and Opportunities Group (HEROG) meeting fortnightly and includes Gov’t representation, giving access into many Depts and providing information on the broader implications of the pandemic.</p> <p>At the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) there was an update on the impact and forecasts for the economy and the LEP is confident it is up to speed with the direction of travel and emerging area recovery plans which provide a strong consensus about what needs to be done. Challenges still exit, i.e. around the end of furlough.</p> <p>Concerning the Recovery plan response, the LEP is developing: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hardest hit sector development plans (8 in total), 4 completed marine, nuclear, aerospace and tourism, 4 left to develop being High Streets, creative, manufacturing and</li> </ul>	<p>DR/ LTB</p>

rural, not yet published but will provide a short snapshot analysis of where the sectors are and their concerns.

- Developing Building Back Better Plan – the immediate focus is on supporting jobs and business survival, but in the medium term to return to the clean and inclusive growth agenda. As the LEP approaches CSR this signals recognition of the immediate challenges but will also factor in some big transitional ideas.

**Action: To circulate Building Back Better plan when ready.**

- Local Recovery Plans – The LEP’s leadership group will pull these together and produce a HotSW area summary recovery plan, drawing out priorities. It will articulate where differences can be made and is not intended to be a long document, to be published in the Autumn.
- Getting Building Fund – full detailed business case were required by the end of August, which all projects submitted. These are currently undergoing appraisal with decisions anticipated in early October. For speed it is recommended that decisions and final sign off are delegated to SIP, however, an extra board telecon can be convened if Board Members wish.
- Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) – the LEP network is submitting its proposal for CSR (a copy of HotSW LEP’s submission was forwarded to them). The Dept. for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) are submitting a growth bid to extend the range of Growth Hubs, which they feel have been working effectively during the crisis and to provide them with a stronger local business support ecosystem. Ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on Freeports has raised issues around Enterprise Zones (EZ) revitalising the LEP’s previous ask from the Industrial Strategy for an extension to the Aviation EZ to cover Yeovil.
- The Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) - currently awaiting their digital broadband plans but are aware of their intention to extend the digital skills partnerships (DSP) for a further year. The LEP has one of the 6 DSP’s in the country and is pleased that it is making a difference to the area in digital skills.
- Dept. for International Trade (DIT) has published new export and inward investment strategies, focusing on many new markets and agreed extra ITAs for the GSW area.
- Dept for Education has asked SAPs to prepare skills strategies by next March and this is being progressed.
- Proposed CSR response (copy sent out previous to Board meeting) deliberately talks about locally led growth as opposed to LEP led growth and provides an opportunity to reiterate the decarbonisation agenda.

**Decisions required by the Board: -**

- **To agree to delegate final sign off for Getting Building Fund projects to SIP. This was agreed by the Board on the condition it was only concerning projects on the previously agree Board approved projects list. Any change to the approved list would need to be brought back to the Board for approval.**
- **To agree to publish the LIS** (with the submission of the Building Back Better plan, becoming the primary document, drawing from the LIS to shape, develop and deliver

**DR to Board**

<p>future investment priorities that reflect the priorities of clean and inclusive growth). This will be taken to the HotSW Joint Committee for endorsement. <b>The Board agreed to the publication of the LIS.</b></p> <p>➤ <b>To agree to the CSR response and for this to be shared with the Joint Committee/LAs early October and obtain joint sign off as an area.</b> <b>The Board agreed in principle with the caveat below.</b> <b>Action: CSR response to elaborate further on Tourism and any further points to be notified by 24 September.</b></p> <p>Correction to note in CEX Report under headline events – there is no Chair of the Great South West (GSW) only a Chair of the GSW Steering Committee.</p>	<p><b>Board to DR</b></p>
<p><b>6. Reports from LEP Subgroups</b></p> <p><b>a) Innovation Board update – Stuart Brocklehurst</b> The Group is in the process of deriving and Science and Innovation Strategy to be presented in November which ties into the clean and inclusive growth theme, to encourage the creation of innovation-driven enterprises, seen as strong drivers of business growth. The MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) process is pre-ordained and looks at a cluster of businesses located around an area’s strongest research institution, (obviously the case for Boston, Massachusetts where the programme originates from). However, to focus investment solely around Exeter Uni would not meet the LEPs criteria for inclusive growth, nor tie into the levelling up agenda and may be contrary to recent trends showing the move away from physical meetings and office space. Therefore, the group will be proposing a distributed cluster for a HOTSW Technopole.</p> <p><b>Action: Board members interested in engaging with the Innovation Group work are welcomed and need to do so by the end of October in order for contributions to be considered.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Board members interested in the regional supply hub are welcome to contact SB who will indicate when the announcement is made public and the embargo lifted.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Plymouth CC indicated an interest in discussing innovation around Marine Autonomy- to follow up.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Prof Lisa Roberts (who ran the MIT team in Leeds) is keen to share her Experience, especially about a programme entitled ‘Leap into Entrepreneurship’ an initiative developed to aid post COVID recovery for businesses changing or failure due to the pandemic- to follow up.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Plymouth CC keen to brief the Innovation Group on 'Resurgam', Plymouth's COVID economic recovery plan - follow up.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Re virtual technopole UoP manages the Cornwall Innovation Centres as well as having Plymouth Science Park and Brixham sites and a local procurement initiative</b></p>	<p><b>Board &amp; officers to SB</b></p> <p><b>Board to Stuart</b></p> <p><b>TL/SB</b></p> <p><b>LS/SB</b></p> <p><b>TL/SB</b></p> <p><b>JP/SB</b></p>



**in Plymouth, so can talk about the challenges of working across areas - to follow up.**

Does the adoption of smart technology to aid productivity sit with the Innovation or Business Group? The Innovation Group deals specifically with research-intensive businesses, therefore, it is recommended that the Business group pick this up. To note that Petroc College were awarded BEIS funding to provide 'business basics' which supports SME's in adopting social media, moving to automated accounting etc.

**b) Skills Advisory Panel update – Fiona McMillan**

Yesterday's SAP meeting was well attended by all stakeholders, supported by Exeter University who provided a presentation on understanding the challenges, impact and future forecasts due to COVID. SAP provides the vehicle to pull together all the good work across the area and is a good example of the LEP and the region working collaboratively.

There is a Further Education (FE) White Paper on the way and the group hopes to provide useful information back to colleges to help inform these discussions.

Emerging issues from the meeting were: - the 'kick start' programme whilst receiving some positive responses from businesses, concerns this competes with the apprenticeship programme and needs Gov't and LEP help to encourage companies to think long term, not to terminate job placements after 6 months; the number of one-stop shops offering pro-active advice for a range of initiatives makes the landscape complicated to navigate; colleges warn of a decrease in entry and level one registrations for those not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs) work is needed to try and capture young people before they disappear into a black hole; the impending end of furlough will result in further job losses, support is required for people whose job no longer exists and to press Gov't to provide more flexibility in its adult education programmes; the lack of work experience affects youth motivation.

Next steps are to complete the skills strategy (a HotSW document) and submit to the Dept of Education (DfE) by March 2020. The intention is for a draft by October, run past the Employment & Skill Boards (ESBs) to gain their perspective and bring back to the Board and Joint Committee for December.

JP and LR recently listened into the White Paper discussion led by Gavin Williamson for the Higher Education (HE) sector, where it is clear he is advocating a seamless pathway for Education, with the integration of skills from level 4 upwards and people able to access or return to education at different levels and formats to underpin an ecosystem of education. It is recommended that this is noted within the developing skills strategy, mirroring current Gov't thinking.

**c) Infrastructure & Place update – Mel Squires**

Work has continued at pace with working groups organised tying into the themes of clean growth, climate change and decarbonisation) to report back at the next Place meeting. There is a call out for a programme of activity to look at requests for funding. The 3 Digital projects (mentioned in the paper) are contracted and about to go live. A specialist has

been invited to attend the next meeting to talk about the planning white paper to better understand the challenges. A rural task group is being set up with a rural officer appointed to support. However, the feeling is the group is still technically under resourced, particularly around natural capital with a likely request for more support in the future. Good progress has been made with a real opportunity to maximise the funding benefits for climate change and the green recovery when everyone is on the same page. The Group will work with the Innovation Group, other leadership themes and LAs to bring this work together.

Comments from the Board: -

- To be more ambitious and put pressure on the Gov't by setting timelines for new stations to open by.
- to work more pro-actively to support those businesses that look like they may have a tough time in the next 9 months.
- To co-opt an experienced officer from Devon into the Place group to further support work, thereby increasing engagement with the Devon Districts.
- To flag the issue of double VAT bills next March (deferred VAT and new VAT will need to be paid), significantly impacting many tourism and hospitality businesses who will have low cash reserves after the winter period and cause them to fail - for the LEP to raise with HM Revenue and Customs. .
- To ensure the extension for GHs proposed by BEIS doesn't just increase signposting but enables capacity to provide more handholding for businesses especially with increasing tensions around the dissatisfaction around the Kick Start programme.

The Chair thanked MS and the group for all their hard work and for making inroads into this important area.

#### **d) Business Environment update – Richard Stevens**

Work is focused on what business support is out there together with what the LEP can deliver in terms of interventions. Slides were shared with the Board online and covered the following points: -

The Growth Hub (GH) contract has already linked businesses with over 75 different schemes and delivered the years contract in the first quarter in terms of penetration and volume. The LEP currently manages the following support schemes: -Growth Support Programme, Scale-Ups, Inward Investment Support, Digital Utilisation, Kickstarter Grants and Be the Business Tourism Programme. NB Kick start grants have received far more interest than the COVID Business Support page.

Future new Business support programmes:- Peer Networks Programme (12 cohorts delivering peer network sessions across HotSW for different sectors and localities); ASBA ( Amazon Small Business Accelerator – working with Enterprise Nation to design a local branch of programme, emphasis on start-up, tourism, export); Clean Growth (retrofit housing – 5 billion coming online); Kick Start (helping young people into Kick Start support, notwithstanding earlier comments around apprenticeships).

Trends – National consistency (playbooks); Very quick turnaround on funding

(announcements with no guidance).

What to watch – furloughing coming to an end; leaving EU; Second lockdown/local lockdowns; loan repayments (e.g. CIBILS); the volume of work (for the LEP to recognise the huge officer workload to support the group).

Current Business support – what are the gaps? Start-Up (as unemployment rises); Access to finance/investor readiness (business borrowing who have never borrowed for the first time); Technological Adaption (digitalisation, automation, strong demand for advice); Manufacturing support (fall in productivity due to social distancing, impacted by furlough and leaving the EU); Chambers and other business support groups can support businesses but need funding.

Current Business support – what are the ask? UKSPF (fair share, locally led and delivered); Multi-annual GH budget (to enable long-term planning, greater penetration more than contractual 5%); More intelligence sharing with National programmes (what works what doesn't); Continued support to Businesses through C-19 pandemic, this needs to be flexible); LEP Board to agree and identify funding for additional business support needs and gaps as they arise.

Point of clarification from DR, there are 2 Kick Start programmes – i) Kick start for young people to establish a set of intermediaries to work on job placements, the responsibility of the SAP panel group to navigate. ii) Kick start business support programme (uses approx. £750,000 reallocation of ERDF monies), some for tourism-based businesses and other businesses with fairly constrained eligibility criteria. A first sift resulted in an average grant allocation of £19,000 per applicant. Concerns of being oversubscribed meant the grant was closed down fairly quickly, however the grant will re-open next week. Cornwall and Dorset LEPs are in a similar position.

The danger in recessionary times is that businesses stop investing in people and understandably go into survival mode. To reiterate, the LEP needs to encourage businesses and Govt to think long term around its ambitions for people, otherwise this will contradict the priorities of raising skills levels, greater engagement and raising aspirations to increase productivity. With apprenticeship starts low and many apprentices still furloughed there needs to be a clear picture of what this means for long terms skills development.

Statistics show that the level of furlough and level of grants to support SME's/sole businesses are disproportionately higher in the SW which causes grave concerns over the longevity, reliance and impact on these. High levels of job losses and unemployment are being reported for each of the four areas. The SW manufacturing sector also faces its highest loss of investment in business development and training compared to the rest of the country.

Prior to the Kick Start grant (for tourism/other businesses) launch the GH had approx. 1000 initial enquiries with applications being halted after 2 days of opening. Following triage this resulted in 350 applications, which left approx. one-third of funding remaining and, on this

basis, it was agreed to reopen again for applications, anticipating a small window for further applicants before closing again. Surprisingly, the level of each grant was lower than anticipated at approx. £19,000 and less take up from the tourism sector. At the risk of being oversubscribed again, the LEP/GH has been mindful of over raising business expectations.

Is there a lower limit of employees for an SME to qualify for Kick Start and is this the reason for the low take up from the Tourism sector?

**Action: To ascertain the lower limit of employees for SMEs to qualify for Kick Start funding.**

DR

The GH has been asked to prepare a comprehensive report, capturing valuable intelligence to provide the LEP with evidence for Gov't to request more money and flexibility (suggesting the using ERDF underspend). A response from Gov't re the query on the model used to allocate funding to HotSW LWP has admitted the process was not great, but there is no answer yet to the LEP's suggestion for using underspend.

#### **6e) Strategic Investment Panel update – Eifion Jones**

Getting Building Fund – all projects from the initial priority list have submitted business cases with SIP reviewing the appraisals and voting at the October meeting, at which point if there is any headroom, there will be a second tranche of appraisals for those projects in the business cases at-risk category for a SIP November decision.

A presentation was made by the British Business Banks giving an overview of the finance market, strengths and weaknesses, loan schemes e.g. CIBILS etc. There are opportunities to strengthen the business support side and to open up the financial market more regionally (as 75% of the equity funding is held in London and SE) to new regional bank entrants. British Banks are lobbying through their CSR response for a regional fund to sit behind these new entrants to mitigate the risks. This work is being taken forward via the management team and will be brought back to the Board in due course.

A HotSW LEP mid-year review will be carried out on the 28 September with BEIS and will look at progress to date since last annual review.

#### **6f) Finance & Resources update – Eifion Jones**

There was a sign off for a coordinator for inclusive growth which sits in the Devon team to bring this work together. Also, for additional resource for the growing workload on Aerospace around future flight and for the development proposal via DIT for Smart Aviation High Potential Opportunity (HPO).

F & R also agreed the team changes (written separately to Board members about) and the finance reports as circulated to the Board.

For clarification, the Board previously agreed that SIP could invite 3 GBF reserve projects (at risk) to submit business cases by the end of the month (1 has submitted, 2 outstanding). In light of possible headroom, SIP agreed in principle to invite 3 further

<p>projects which are next in line on the priority list, but these are still at risk. SIP will only decide on the approved list. Therefore, dependant on SIP decisions in October when there is more clarity on headroom, SIP may need to come back for Board approval (between Board? meetings) with a recommendation for further projects to be reviewed and appraised.</p>	
<p><b>7. ESIF update – Eifion Jones</b></p> <p><u>European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)</u> – of the 12 projects which responded to the call last Autumn, 4 are contracted (identified as a high priority), 8 remain to be contracted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities &amp; Local Government (MHCLG) by the end of the calendar year. As previously indicated, the LEP has set out options of how to use this underspend, currently being discussed between Ministers, using the framework the LEP put forward for potential to top up the Kick Start fund (Tourism).</p> <p><u>European Social Fund (ESF)</u> – of projects working through the process, only 3 left to be contracted. As there is still some potential underspend, a call is being set up with Dept of Work &amp; Pensions (DWP) on how to access this remaining money.</p> <p><u>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)</u> – remains heavily oversubscribed, (4 times oversubscribed nationally). There is a strong level of applications to work through and whilst normally a high dropout level, the LEP is confident that all monies will be drawn down.</p>	
<p><b>8. Response to CSR 2020</b></p> <p>This has been dealt with and agreed earlier in the CEX report.</p>	
<p><b>9. Proposal for Board Recruitment &amp; Appendix i) Draft Director Recruitment Pack – Fiona McMillan</b></p> <p>The proposal is to agree on a recruitment campaign for 4 private sector board vacancies. Recommendations will be brought to the 27 November Board meeting, commencing roles in January 2021. The pack draws upon skills sets for additional capacity and expertise and acts only as a gauge and can be flexible. It notes that private sector directors’ function as independent directors who bring relevant experience, not necessarily representing the sectors they come but are there to provide independent review and challenge. To aid in succession planning, deputies will be appointed to each of the key LEP sub-committees to help build knowledge and understanding of the LEP and this will be an annual approach. Co-opted Directors are not felt to be necessary at this time.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed the recommendations.</b></p>	
<p><b>10. Papers for noting</b></p> <p>No comments.</p>	
<p><b>11. AOB</b></p> <p>DR: Correction to CEX report under headline reports – the GSW APPG did meet in September, however, at the time of writing a meeting was due to take place between the Chairs of GSW, the Western Gateway and the Secretary of State which did not take place as the Minister, Simon Clarke resigned. No date has been scheduled for a new meeting with his replacement Luke Hall.</p>	

<p>BB: are comments posted on the chat facility noted in the minutes – YES.</p> <p>TE: Raised the significance of the high-profile launch event in Plymouth this week of the first autonomous ship named the Mayflower, marked by the American Ambassador appropriately with Plymouth Gin. It demonstrates the area’s commitment in terms of both R &amp; D and Innovation, masked by HMG who aggregate the R &amp; D funding figures for the SW (the majority of which goes to Bristol and Gloucester, with little for Devon and Somerset) and needs pressure from the LEP to level up the agenda and consider the role of defence research funding and how the area can increase its share.</p> <p>DW: acknowledges it is valuable to hear and be part of the conversation. Money for Recovery plans is tight, but provides an opportunity to redraw the map reflected by ongoing conversations in Gov’t. Previous comments about Gavin Williamson’s conversation with FE/HE for a more flexible approach to education are correct with new thinking emerging from Gov’t on this. He is keen for feedback on how additional business support needs and gaps can be framed in order that he may support this.</p> <p><b>Action: An offer was made to resurrect and facilitate a meeting with Rt Hon Michael Gove to listen to local concerns about transport of food, imports and exports.</b> NB - BB was promised a meeting in the Chamber but this didn’t take place. Approx. a year ago a local meeting took place between Michael Gove and James Heappey with local stakeholders.</p> <p>KT: With the AGM shortly – the minutes from last year (with no actions) will be tabled as true and accurate, together with the adoption of the accounts (reviewed at the last board meeting) will be moved to be approved, unless by exception. All were happy with this.</p>	<p>DW</p>
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**Next meeting: - 27 November 9.30 – 11.30 am via MS teams**