

**(Draft) Minutes of HotSW LEP CIC Board Meeting**  
**27 November 2020**  
**from**  
**9.30 – 11.30 am**  
**Via Microsoft teams audio/video calling**

**Board Attendees:**

David Bird, Non-Exec Director  
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  
Sarah Cook - Vice President of UK Government Business, Leonardo  
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  
Paul Hickson - Strategic Commissioning Manager – Economy and Planning, Somerset County Council, officer accompanying Cllr David Hall  
Kevin Mowat – Director of Place, Torbay Council, officer accompanying Cllr Steve Darling  
Tracey Lee – CEO Plymouth City Council, officer accompanying Cllr Tudor Evans

**Others in attendance:**

Anne Marie Morris MP – representing Devon MPs  
David Warburton MP – representing Somerset MPs  
Elizabeth Spence - Deputy Area Lead for HotSW & Dorset, South West Team Cities & Growth Unit  
Janet Powell – Executive Assistant, HotSW LEP (for minutes)  
Suzanne Bond - Area Lead HotSW, Cities and Local Growth Unit - South West

**For Presentation only**

Ian Harrison – HotSW LEP Transport Consultant

**Apologies:** Ben Bradshaw MP – representing Devon MPs

**Table of decisions**

Paper	Decision	Decision agreed
Presentation-Commercialising Innovation paper	The Board to agree on the recommendations so that detailed implementation plans may be drawn up.	The Board agreed.
Agenda item 5. CEX Report – appendix 1, Board recruitment	The Board to confirm the appointment of New Private Sector Board Members recommended by the Nominations Committee.	The Board agreed, noting the comments and action for future recruitment.
Agenda item 5. CEX Report – appendix 2, Build Back Better	The Board to agree to the draft and consult on Build Back Better including the Framework for Future Intervention and Investment.	The Board agreed.
Agenda item 6c. i) Proposal for a Natural Capital Demonstrator Fund	The Board to endorse proposals for potential investment for Natural Capital pilot project.	The Board agreed with the principle of a demonstrator programme and asked officers to develop clearer proposals including what funding is available.

Agenda	Action
<p><b>1. Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> 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.</p>	
<p><b>3. Draft Minutes of 17 July 2020 Board meeting and actions arising</b></p> <p><b>C/f Action: Follow up note from last Board meeting from discussion with S 151 officers from Somerset County Council around declarations of interest– note re dispensations to follow.</b> This was only received from the monitoring officer last night with no time to absorb the detail, therefore a guidance note will follow.</p> <p><b>C/f HotSW Brexit meeting with the Rt Hon Michael Gove.</b> David Warburton MP agreed to pick this up directly with the Minister and report back. This has been difficult due to COVID. DR offered to send a note to DW outlining the issues. As yet nothing has been set up but will be communicated back to Board members when there is more news.</p>	<p>DR</p> <p>DW /DR</p>



The following formal written question was submitted to the LEP regarding the non-publication of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The question and the proposed response was circulated to the Board before the meeting.

Question:- This relates to Appendix 2 of item 5 on the agenda on 27 November.

In the interests of transparency and inspiring trust, the Board needs to explain publicly the reasons for the delay in publishing the Local Industrial Strategy. The year-long delay appears to have been caused by BEIS insisting that it needed to sign off the LIS then changing its mind and deciding the LEP could publish on its own account. If this is correct - and I have nothing to suggest it is not – surely it is important that businesses in the HotSW area are not given grounds to assume that BEIS was so dissatisfied with the Board’s draft proposals that it took a year to resolve?

Answer:- The LEP has already set out publicly at the AGM the delay in the publication which stated as follows: One of the primary responsibilities last year was to prepare with Government our LIS which we completed in October 2019. However, we were unable to secure sign-off by Government which was disappointing particularly as we felt we had used this as a tool to respond directly to the climate emergency and secure greater buy-in from all partners about prioritising and committing to clean and inclusive growth to help our recovery.

We have therefore now decided to publish the LIS directly to set out a clear priority going forward to deliver this agenda. This was discussed at Scrutiny Committee where they recorded disappointment that the Government had not signed off the LIS. Also, the Government has publicly stated as follows: *“Much of the work done on developing the Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) programme was done before the Coronavirus pandemic. The draft HotSW LIS was finally settled in late January 2020 ready for cross-Whitehall consideration”*. *“The issues facing the government since March 2020, such as how to restart the economy whilst maintaining social distancing, are inevitably not included in the LISs. It is only right that the Government adapts its focus to consider the current needs for local areas in light of the changing local and national priorities”*. *“The government remains firmly committed to levelling up growth across the whole country to drive productivity, empower communities and rebalance opportunity”*.

The interpretation suggested in the question is therefore incorrect and our decision to publish, what is regarded as a well-evidenced, well-presented strategy, as a part of our a recovery plan is a consequence of a changing national policy context not least as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**The Board approved the response.** The LIS has now been published on the LEP’s website with a small press release due next week. A copy of the response will be circulated to the questioner. As normal, upon completion of the draft minutes, these will be publicly available on the HotSW LEP’s website.

HotSW LEP Board members were assured that work on the Industrial Strategy which is led by the Dept for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) team within the local Cities and Local Growth Unit is underway with progress on the national picture due in the

New Year with hopefully an indication on the future direction by Easter.

### **Presentation**

**Commercialising Innovation – by Stuart Brocklehurst**, a cover paper & report was circulated in advance of the Board meeting, to which Stuart talked to and asked for agreement of the recommendations contained within the report, so that detailed implementation plans may be drawn up.

It has been 2 years since the LEP Board agreed to establish an Innovation Board, to focus on research and development (R&D) and the economic benefits of R & D businesses. Following a couple of false starts, earlier this year Stuart was asked to lead on this as part of the HotSW participation in MIT's Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP – Lite). Many thanks to the team and especially to Chris Evans and her colleagues at the University of Exeter for pulling together over 150 pages of data and analysis to support this report.

This report is not a total innovation plan, it focuses on particular areas, nor is it about day to day innovation (upgrading an IT system) nor a research plan for universities, but about how the LEP commercialises benefit from R&D intensive businesses in the region.

### Need

- Research from BEIS in the decade leading to the financial crisis shows that 50% of productivity was gained through R&D
- HotSW: business investment in R&D is just a third of the national average per head
- The UK R&D Roadmap produced on 1 July by BEIS to inform Whitehall reflects a largely empty map for the HotSW region and does not convey the wealth of research assets in the area, therefore the LEP needs to familiarise Ministers more with these to better position the area.
- The bigger point here is that R&D intensive businesses can make an outsize contribution to MIT, using the tale of two entrepreneurs to demonstrate:-
  - Bob opens a pizza parlour and has a new innovative crust. This business is likely to be profitable sooner, grow steadily, providing quality jobs but growth will be linear.
  - Mary has developed a type of compound that ensures mobile phone screens never crack. This business is more high risk, more likely to fail but if successful growth could be expediential. They will pay more, employees will spend more money in the local economy and MIT calculates there is a 5.1 ratio of benefit.

Mary's business is a type of R&D business which can provide economic growth and limits the brain drain from the region with people moving out of the area as they can't find jobs.

### Nature of the problem

- The region has great research assets and capabilities but is poor at commercialising them.
- The problem is a business one: the lack of people wishing to create and scale businesses, it's not to say there aren't any but disproportionately they go elsewhere.
- Entrepreneurs have to have certain characteristics:-

- Providing ideas for groundbreaking technology
- They have to give personal guarantees to banks and suppliers which is financially illogical – if something goes wrong, they will suffer from lack of income even foreclosure on homes to put up to provide security to lenders
- Surveys reveal that the real motivation is the drive and desire to build and create things, to change the world

#### What's the answer?

The paper covers the full recommendations but focuses on two:-

- The creation of **an SW Technopole**, a virtual science park to pick up where the Growth Hub leaves off. It will be important to deliver inclusive growth across the geography, to ensure people can create high growth businesses in the peripheries, particularly in Somerset which traditionally tends to get left out. Great work is already being undertaken with the Somerset accelerator but this needs boosting and supporting further. There are opportunities to reap the benefit from the move away from physical offices, particularly in rural areas (i.e people working at home during the pandemic) and this change cannot be underestimated and is unlikely to be reversed. The Technopole provides an opportunity to protect the investments the LEP has made in Science and Innovation parks by encouraging wider use to the community and making it easier to start & grow an R&D intensive business and creating a density to attract corporates and investors.
- To declare **specialisms** in marine & environmental intelligence. Currently, the Gov't interest is in place based/building specialisms for R&D and any 'ask' has to be pronounced and clear. There is a temptation for a long list to say the LEP is leading on Agri tech, Marine, Defence, Nuclear, Aerospace, Data Analytics, Renewables etc but this doesn't provide distinctness or help with an elevator pitch to key decision-makers in Whitehall, and not being credible by asserting world-leading capability in these areas. The last time 6 Strength in Places proposals came to the Board the decision was made to endorse all, however not all were successful and this was due to a lack of a clear focus and message from the business community, LEPS, the broader environment and the political world to say that this is what our area is about which is what other successful proposals had.

The area has true global strengths in the UK Hydrographic Office, Plymouth Marine Lab, the Met Office and the Mayflower Autonomous Ship (MAS) with world-beating capabilities and is truly regional with Taunton & Plymouth each strengthened by the other. To be more effective the area needs to see its leading research institutions as assets for the whole region, not just their home city or town with benefits across the whole patch with significant funding opportunities. There are businesses in the area that couldn't work without these.

#### To conclude

An example was provided to support why innovation is so important. In 1992, Estonia, an old Soviet country was very poor. In 2002, now the Republic of Estonia it embarked on Tiger's Leap a project with a total focus throughout the whole country on technology and

development of entrepreneurs including expanding its computer and network infrastructure, with particular emphasis on education. With less than three-quarters of the British population, they have now produced **four** billion-dollar **unicorns**: Skype, Playtech, Transferwise, and Bolt.

These proposals are commended to the Board and if approved, work will commence on planning the implementation of these.

The Chair thanked SB and the team for a well written and articulated report, opening up for further discussion and comments.

- This is a useful component of an Innovation Strategy but needs to consider the wider infrastructure, traditionally including start-ups, investor networks, larger innovative growth companies that innovate and draw smaller companies into their ecosystem, the skills talent pool, attracting inward investment and the research coming out of the universities and science parks. For it to be a LEP innovation strategy it requires further development to see how it all fits together, starting with a technopole but picking up the other elements with an additional resource to move this forward.
- The HotSW innovation and ecosystems naturally cross boundaries with Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and even into Dorset (Great South West), conversations with them are important.
- Early work is required into the brands already in the area around marine and environmental intelligence, digital and the impact centre, what do these mean, and how to articulate them into a strategy to demonstrate the story between the support networks that already exist.
- The two universities wish to strongly support and lead on the development of a Strategy with Stuart and the Innovation Board and remind that physical aspects need to be taken into account e.g access to the innovation centres and science parks, the knowledge base and graduate start-ups which need to be drawn together.
- To think about what support, resource and money are put into the next stage of developing the technopole alongside the larger strategy work and how to capitalise on Gov't opportunities?
- Whilst there is a need to be expansive, entrepreneurs base themselves around catalyst centres the technopole focus must be on joining up the research and innovations assets and capabilities – to think about the talk around easy access to the expertise and not dilute this by going too wide.
- Branding to ensure the Technopole stands out to attract both UK and overseas people to base themselves in the region, and how and who will host it. This must be separate from the public sector which entrepreneurs perceive as too slow to act.
- Marine and Environmental Intelligence must be identified as the USPs, these are the regions' national research leading assets, to define the proposal, what is the LEP trying to achieve before lobbying Gov't.
- Business skill development is an issue and how it interconnects with the work being done by the business, skills/people and innovations strands which tend to operate distinctly. The Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) can play a significant role in supporting business and entrepreneurial skills across the patch, bringing together the skills activities and focus from across Devon and Somerset to enable them to be joined up.

<p>➤ To not ignore the high potential opportunity area for marine autonomy and environmental specialisms which centres on Plymouth but also stretch into Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly – needs building upon and currently there is Gov’t appetite for this, with a workshop being organised between the LEPs and Gov’t to explore this further.</p> <p>The paper will form a key strand of an overall Innovation Strategy. Procurement is currently underway to provide officer support to the Innovation Board and combined with help from the two universities will enable the LEP to work up a full holistic innovation piece.</p> <p><b>Action: Agree on timelines for finishing the Innovation Strategy in the New Year with further support from the Universities.</b></p> <p><b>The Board agreed to all the recommendations.</b></p>	<p>SB/JP/ LR/ DR/KT</p>
<p><b>5. Chief Executive’s Report</b></p> <p>Congratulations are due to SB and his team at Applegate in picking up two awards at the Tech South West Awards ceremony last night:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) For Hero of the Year - which was primarily about the response to COVID in supplying PPE - very impressive and making a real difference.</li> <li>ii) For the Cluster award - the top prize for North Devon Innovation.</li> </ul> <p>Also, the HotSW Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) (launched just over 2 years ago) chaired by Julie Hawker of Cosmic with Charlotte Collyer, the HotSW lead officer also received the award for Services to the Community, going above and beyond during the Covid pandemic by producing online courses e.g Coursera and Bounce Back Digital targeted at people on universal credit across the patch. There is no doubt the DSP is having a tremendous impact.</p> <p>The LEP gives recognition to the efforts of all stakeholders and individuals in dealing with what has been a challenging year in supporting businesses and to the local authorities (LAs) for stepping up. Across the patch, access to good data and information has provided a well-coordinated and effective response. However, there remain several specific business challenges and also Brexit issues, which could also offer opportunities.</p> <p><u>Appendix 1 – Nominations for recruitment of Board Directors</u> – paper circulated (<i>commercially confidential</i>). This was handed over to the HotSW Chair to introduce this section.</p> <p><u>Appendix 2 – Covid response, recovery plan and Building Back Better &amp; Appendix 3 – HotSW Draft Impact Report</u> – (this one commercially confidential) papers circulated and taken together.</p> <p>Recent CSR announcements (for a single year only) referenced some positive news around Transport investment, Edginswell and other new local stations, the A303, even the A358 and highlighted the relevance around science and innovation principally being the tool to stimulate growth.</p>	

The LEP's role in recovery framework was published in June and subsequently, it's 'Building Back Better' plan builds on the Local Industrial Strategy to outline our key propositions to deliver future growth and Gov'ts levelling up agenda and possibly UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSIP).

There is little information currently on how the Levelling-Up Fund will be operated. If it were to be a £4 billion fund, using normal metrics based on population etc. this would suggest the HotSW region secures some £140m- £160 million. However, Gov't will have their priorities around where levelling up needs to be applied, which may result in lots of competing bids all trying to do and claim different things. It would be helpful to have some local and national coherence. Concerning the LEP's Building Back Better (BBB) plan, this is trying to achieve two things – plans for the medium-term recovery and to highlight the key strategic role the LEP can play (not underplaying the immediate priorities for supporting jobs and people at risk of unemployment).

- i) Growth opportunities that require resourcing and development (trying to prioritise the areas to concentrate on)
- ii) Operating as an investment that could form a material consideration for how the future investment pipeline (Levelling Up fund and UKSIP) with how they relate to the building back better plan? E.g if someone comes forward and wants to focus on levelling up with a low carbon retrofit housing programme, this ticks the box as the LEP recognises this is one of the priorities within clean and inclusive growth.

Whilst the above would provide some coherence, the LEP cannot force areas to do this, but if it believes clean and inclusive growth is the key to our areas future growth then it is important to model this.

What role does the LIS play in this? – The LIS has now been published on the LEP's website and forms part of the evidence base and framework for the Building Back Better plan and identifies those areas of intervention that the LEP thinks are important. Does the Board think the activities and interventions that relate to it are a useful tool to do this?

Further comments were highlighted:-

- The key is in the detail and when more is known, queries can be addressed to MPs who can support the LEP in terms of the area's needs and can take this back to Whitehall. AMM has offered to lead on this work with MPs.
- Concerning the innovation presentation and areas of focus, it is obvious that not all MPs will be happy with the priorities identified but partnership is vital to success. SB and AMM to have a conversation on how to deal with the sectors that aren't prioritised.
- The Impact Report makes it apparent there are large differences across the region both in the gross domestic product (GDP) and gross added value (GVA), what does levelling up mean for the area - is it levelling up or levelling across the LEP needs to decide its view? The funds directed in the past have they achieved what the LEP has wanted them to do and what direction are we going?
- Will the levelling up fund become politicised with local projects, as it has to have the support of MP, does this mean MPs can veto projects, therefore what is the role of the LEP? LEPs should be the mechanism by which Gov't distributes the levelling up fund flows

as these were set up to be apolitical, have the view of businesses, stakeholders and politicians in the area.

- The LIS was designed to set out the LEP's overall views, will it be confusing with the BBB document? Are 15 programmes too many – some of these are enablers that support and cut across the sector areas – i.e skills, innovation ecosystem; connectivity etc are not separate projects?
- Clear direction is needed to truly level up. Statistics from the Impact report clearly show the main areas of growth, highlighting the two extremes being from Exeter to Torrridge. Does the LEP concentrate all the money in one area – however levelling up may mean some areas are brought up whilst others are brought down. It is clear the growth is in the travel to work areas and this needs sufficient debate to succeed in a joined-up approach.
- Within the BBB document the Energy Futures section – wording needs to change from being the first clean growth cluster to establishing one, as Clean Tech South already exists and there are several others.

**Action: if there are any comments concerning wording or inaccuracies within the BBB document to take these offline and please feedback to DR.**

All/DR

- The LEP needs to understand the difficulties that may arise e.g if a Technopole is put forward as a LEP wide proposition – as this will require MPs to put aside their geographical bias and will no doubt draw more conflict than if the decision was taken to prioritise to a smaller area.
- The focus needs to be on what difference will this make in real accountable and measurable ways i.e what dynamic change will this affect?  
It's a false dichotomy in terms of whether the LEP places the money in Torrridge as a more deprived area, it could be that if the money is spent in Exeter this drives the benefits into Torrridge (likewise Plymouth or Torbay etc).

In conclusion:- the LEP the LIS and Build Back Better prospectus:

- provides a strong evidence base, needs to be made public and has recently been updated in response to COVID but broadly the challenges identified remain the same for the area.
- It demonstrates the move from growth for growth's sake, to delivering clean and inclusive growth which should reflect in the LEPs investment priorities. If the LEP genuinely believes the future growth scenarios are related to maximising the opportunities in clean growth to the benefit all its citizens, then it must invest differently going forwards.
- There is nothing particularly new in the BBB document but it starts to drill down into which of those priorities in the LIS are closest to 'shovel ready' and which will make the most difference. Does the Board recognise these as the areas it can make the most difference in with funding in the next four to five years?
- Concerns that the levelling up fund may return to projects instead of programmes.
- Use as a tool to make clear the LEPs priorities to MPs.
- Recently the LEP has been actively seeking to strengthen its capacity to deliver on priorities (recent appointments e.g new Digital Futures Sector lead, a Rural officer, Head of Delivery) but there is still a gap in Energy Futures.
- Need to be agile in response to the Gov'ts levelling up fund and UKSIP is in the future

Whilst not advocating one single bid across the patch there could be a plethora of individual

<p>projects put forward by individual LAs, 2 National Parks, all backed by individual MPs (this emphasises the two extremes)? It is acknowledged that it will be hard to get MPs to back one strategic project for the whole area. There may be a feeling there are too many priorities, however, just unpicking Nuclear legacy is a significant piece of work which needs joining up – i.e making the most out of Hinkley, the supply chain, the emerging nuclear fusion agenda and notwithstanding the role of submarines in Plymouth and their decommissioning.</p> <p><b>Action: To publish the Building Back Better document as it, ensuring its links back to the LIS are demonstrated, invite for consultation and bring feedback to the Board for discussion in the New Year once more detail of CSR spending is known.</b></p>	DR
<p><b>6. Standing items – reports from LEP Sub-groups</b> (circulated in advance)</p> <p><b>a) Innovation Board update</b> -already covered earlier</p> <p><b>b) Skills Advisory Panel (People update) – Fiona McMillan</b> The first draft of the Local Skills Plan is available at the SAP Board next week and draws upon the experience of the local Employment and Skills Boards and national emerging issues to pull together a regional plan. As it needs to be submitted to Dept. for Education in March the latest iteration will need to be brought to the Board in January.</p> <p><b>c) Infrastructure and Place update which included a PowerPoint presentation – Mel Squires, Paul Hickson and Ian Harrison.</b> This outlines the complexity of place the huge amount of policy area and infrastructure, what it covers, the number of specialist partners involved and fit to the LIS to identify the key priorities to secure funding for the future. It shows the current work being undertaken with partners, progress and next steps set into the context of wider rapidly changing policy i.e National Infrastructure Policy which was published since the presentation was put together. <u>Digital</u> - more information on the outcome of the Connecting Devon and Somerset Partnership (CDS) 2<sup>nd</sup> phase delivery re-procurement will be shared with the Board in January. <u>Transport</u> – strategic connectivity is key for business growth due to the area’s peripherality and the region has suffered from under resilience and investment. Working with stakeholders, LAs and other LEPs there have been recent successes e.g GWR timetable improvements, the start of the Dawlish wall and the Stonehenge Development Consent Order (DCO) as well as bringing key sites forward like Gravity/Nexus 25 and supported housing across all the major settlements, as well as working with the Western Gateway for transport corridors. <u>Energy infrastructure for clean growth</u> – this emphasises the opportunities from the LIS in terms of clean and inclusive growth. Similar to Transport the LEP works across areas i.e on grid issues and regional distribution capacity responding to emerging opportunities. There is more work to be done to shape particular asks. Work with the SW Energy Hub has seen over £200k worth of investment in community energy fund projects. <u>Natural Capital</u> – This emphasises the regions natural capital base and its quality and diversity in terms of assets. Important to acknowledge here the work of the Universities in</p>	

the NERC funded South West Partnership for Environmental and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP) to develop the regional knowledge base about natural capital.

Rural Productivity - This focuses on a particular strand of activity with fresh work in establishing future priorities and opportunities for the Rural economy.

Employment sites and workspace – again working with LAs and key players for the fulfilment of Enterprise zones and updating implementation plans. The LEP facilitates shared learning and collaboration bringing mutual benefits. Post planning white paper the LEP will work with planning authorities and commercial partners to agree and take action from the employment land study.

Future Places – the LAs lead on the statutory aspects of planning, the Joint Committee have the strategic role e.g in housing delivery and LEP support brings the economic dimension to place-shaping to support local partners to access funding.

The group is keen to continue partnership working and needs to reflect on skills, innovation, natural capital and the environment to ensure the LEP is not missing a vital component and that everything is joined up.

At this point, the Chair apologised to everyone as the meeting was over-running, due to prior topics which had involved some pretty weighty discussions. It was noted that several Board members and MPs exited the meeting at various stages from 11.30 – 12 noon due to other commitments.

The following comments were made:-

- Concerns over grid capacity which will affect the LEPs ambitions for clean electricity.
- The recent Network Rail announcement towards a resilient railway west of Exeter with work on Teignmouth Beach has now been scrapped due to local concerns. The earliest alternative proposals for cliff dismantling would now not be until at least 2027. No urgency and this wouldn't be tolerated in the North of England.

**Action: Critical concerns over grid capacity and railway resilience to be discussed at the next Board meeting, to highlight to local MPs and elevate its urgency to Gov't.**

KT/DR

There was insufficient time to discuss and endorse this the proposal for the Natural Capital Demonstrator Fund.

**Action: The proposal for a Natural Capital Pilot etc will be explored further and can only be done on a loan basis, not a grant from the Growing Places fund and reported back to the next Board meeting.**

DR

**d) Business Environment update – Richard Stevens (paper circulated).**

Due to the meeting over-running and Richard Stevens departing earlier, this could not be discussed.

All/RS

**Action: Any questions on the Business update to contact RS directly.**

**e) Strategic Investment update – verbal David Bird commercially confidential**

The Getting Building Fund has already been discussed earlier in the meeting. The Board

<p>were thanked for their unanimous support for the recommendations, together with the officers who analysed the final business cases.</p> <p>An excellent presentation was carried out by Richard May (Head of Oceansgate and Marine Investment at Plymouth City Council on Oceansgate and this forms part of an ongoing thematic project review every SIP meeting on a major project. The document is readily available and recommended to Board members to read and shows Phase 1 and 2, although a couple of months behind should complete by the end of January 2021, with Phase 3 detailed feasibility study due out imminently.</p> <p><b>f) Finance and Resources – David Bird (papers circulated) commercially confidential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ At every meeting, consideration is taken to ensure the LEP is still a going concern. There is sufficient funding through to March 2022 pending the next release from Gov’t of funding.</li> <li>➤ The recent Audit review was broadly very positive with a couple of minor issues e.g to hold registers of decisions taken at SIP and F&amp;R, already been addressed. The audit review is available to Board members to read if interested.</li> <li>➤ A few budget allocations to note:- support for secretariat funding for the Innovation Board (won by the University of Exeter); reallocation of funding for the Ocean Institute Project Manager from marine mapping; approval of the additional budget to support the GH, including some extra budget for Plymouth City Council due to provide capacity for the number of contracts they are having to deal, a strategically important as this is an important project.</li> </ul> <p>With the advent of new board members starting in January – further support on SIP and F &amp; R will be much appreciated.</p> <p><b>Action: The Board were reminded of a standing and an open invitation to join any SIP or F &amp; R meetings in the future if desired.</b></p> <p><b>Action: The Chair confirmed that DB has agreed to conduct the next Board effectiveness review and will be contacting board members over the next month or two for conversations.</b></p>	<p>All</p> <p>DB</p>
<p><b>7. ESIF update plus appendices a) ESF, b) EAFRD, c) ERDF papers circulated all commercially confidential – Eifion Jones</b></p>	
<p><b>8. Papers for noting.</b> No comments.</p>	
<p><b>9. AOB</b> DH: To note that the recent National Infrastructure Strategy document has dropped the Gov’ts pledge for total gigabit-capable broadband by 2025. Whilst Openreach intends to overlay its network with fibre to the premises to those that already have broadband this does nothing to improve the gap for those areas not broadband enabled (a big issue highlighted COVID pandemic). <b>Action: To go back to Gov’t, highlighting the importance and priority broadband capability with the support of local MP representation.</b></p>	<p>DH/DR</p>

DR: The recent spending review confirmed future funding for LEP core costs and GHs which is positive but exact funding amounts will not be known until next year.

The Chair thanked everyone for their support and hard work in such a challenging year with further challenges due to the ramifications following the exit of the EU. Special thanks from the business community to LA's who have had to face enormous pressures in dealing with the pandemic. Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas and look forward to a productive 2021.

**Next Board meeting – 22 January 2021 from 9.30 – 11.30 am via MS teams**