

**Minutes of LEP SIP Meeting  
01/03/2022 at 09:30 – 11:30  
Via Microsoft Teams**

**Board attendees:**

*Richard Stevens, (Acting Chair) Chairman Business Leadership Group, HotSW LEP Board Member*

*David Bird, HotSW LEP Board Member*

*Paul Hickson, Place Lead, HotSW LEP Management Team*

*Mel Squires, Chairman Place Leadership Group, HotSW LEP Board Member*

*David Ralph, HotSW LEP Chief Executive*

*Jane Dumeresque, LEP Board member (not a voting Member of SIP)*

*Julia Blaschke (deputising for Amanda Ratsey), Business Lead, HotSW LEP Management Team*

*Mel Sealey (deputising for Keri Denton), People Lead, HotSW LEP Management Team*

**Officers in attendance:**

*Eifion Jones, Chief Operating Officer, HotSW LEP*

*Claire Gibson, HotSW LEP*

*Mel Roberts, HotSW LEP PMO / SCC Officer*

*Tom Satterly, HotSW LEP PMO (minutes)*

*Richard Snell, HotSW LEP PMO*

*Ben Bryant, SCC Finance*

*Suzanne Bond, CLGU*

*Anne-Marie Spalding, SCC Officer*

*Agenda item guests*

*Shane Vallance, agenda item 4.2*

*Jamie Evans, agenda item 4.3*

**NOTE:** 4 voting members are required to be quorate. Number of voting members present in meeting: 6

**NOTE FOR AUTHOR**

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**These minutes and the accompanying decision/actions table are now required to be published onto the LEP website with 10 clear working days of the meeting taking place. This may be in draft if internal LEP processes require clearance before they are finalized. The final documents must be published within 10 clear working days of being approved.**

**Therefore, following the process outlined above, please send the documents to [LEPAdmin@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:LEPAdmin@somerset.gov.uk) who will upload them onto the website.**

Item No.	Agenda Item	Actions
1	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Keri Denton (Mel Sealey deputising) Ian Harrison Amanda Ratsey (Julia Blaschke deputising) Carl Wyard	
2	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Vince Flower – Torquay Gateway Julia Blaschke – Plymouth National Marine Park Paul Hickson – Digital call Build Back Better, Mobile boost Mel Sealey – Digital call Build Back Better, Mobile boost and Zebcat2 Richard Stevens– Plymouth National Marine Park	
3	<b>Minutes from Last SIP Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> January</b>	
	The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.	
4	<b>For Decision – Investment Programme Business Cases and Project Changes</b>	
4.1	<b>Growing Places Fund</b>	
	<p><u>Natural Capital Demonstration Fund – North Devon Biosphere</u> CG provided an introduction to this agenda item Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In January 2021, the Board agreed to allocate £1 million from the Growing Places Fund to pilot a new Natural Capital Demonstration (NCD) loan fund, to test mechanisms to attract private finance into environmental projects and deliver clean growth.</li> <li>• EOI's were invited March 2021 but it only attracted 1 submission which did not meet the criteria.</li> <li>• This was because the loan fund coincided with an Environmental Agency Natural Capital Investment Readiness grant fund</li> <li>• North Devon Biosphere Foundation is an online platform to unlock natural capital by connecting landowners and farmers with nature-based interventions, funding and a route to market for ecosystem services.</li> <li>• Recognise there are risks and some extra due diligence is required before committing to funding</li> <li>• Recommendation – invite North Devon Biosphere to submit a business case to SIP</li> </ul> <p>Points raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No alternative funding opportunities currently on the table.</li> <li>• Need to fully understand the 'product' to be able to understand the risks.</li> <li>• NFU have concerns around asset management and want to ensure land managers / owners are signing up with a full understanding of what they</li> </ul>	

	<p>are signing up for, e.g. this could be a multi-generational commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carries risk as it is early-stage funding</li> <li>• Project is attracting interest from across the country with other organisations looking at learning from this project.</li> <li>• Biosphere foundation have reached out to Somerset authorities, wider engagement with stakeholders is formative rather than mature. The Biosphere could benefit from support from the LEP to fully engage with stakeholders across the area, especially Somerset</li> <li>• Need more information on their engagement strategy and how they can market their offering across the whole HotSW area.</li> <li>• Unsure of who the beneficiaries are meant to be.</li> <li>• Need to understand who will be underwriting the loan</li> <li>• Potential for the LEP to be more specific in what might be commissioned through the Biosphere to cover some of the points discussed</li> </ul> <p><b>DECISION</b> - Invite the North Devon Biosphere Foundation to submit a Business case for review at May SIP.</p>	
4.2	<b>Growth Deal</b>	
	<p>Mobile Boost Voucher Scheme Variation AMS provided an introduction to this agenda item.</p> <p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pandemic has caused delays in this project.</li> <li>• Slow take up initially but now picking up the pace</li> <li>• 409 completed installations with a further 77 in the pipeline.</li> <li>• The project has renewed its request for an extension through to December 2022.</li> <li>• Recommendation is for greater clarity on pipeline and to review progress in 3 months.</li> </ul> <p><b>DECISION</b> – Support the recommendation to review the project in 3 months</p> <p>Digital Build Back Better EOI Review CG provided an introduction to this agenda item</p> <p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In October 2021, the Board agreed an £8 million comprehensive digital investment programme comprising funding to improve digital skills, increase digital business utilisation, improve digital connectivity in very hard to reach areas, and help deliver the Digital transformation programmes in the Build Back Better plan.</li> <li>• EOI staged closed early February and 9 responses were received.</li> <li>• SV reviewed and scored EOIs</li> <li>• 2 possible ways forward proposed in the paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invite business cases from 3 top scoring EOIs</li> <li>Or</li> <li>○ Thematic approach – encourage applicants to put together a combined proposition under 2 themes – Environmental Intelligence and 5G marine Innovation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Points raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beehive project – small amount of funding requested. Is it worth carrying</li> </ul>	

	<p>on a conversation to see if the LEP could support them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we cap the theme bids to £1m each?</li> <li>• Bidders requested to explain how they would benefit the wider HotSW area, recognising that whilst Smart Sound has an obvious Plymouth focus with some links across to Somerset, environmental intelligence could apply across the HotSW area</li> </ul> <p><b>DECISION</b> – Support the recommendation to the thematic approach with the points discussed as part of the feedback to applicants</p>	
<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Getting Building Fund (GBF)</b></p>	
	<p>Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Variation JE provided an introduction to this agenda item.</p> <p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay on delivery on the electric boat charging facilities</li> <li>• To spend the GBF money on time PCC could incorporate public toilet facilities into the funding., however this would change the output profiling.</li> <li>• Alternatively, LEP could utilise freedoms and flexibilities to fund the electric boat charging points.</li> </ul> <p>Points raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public toilets would not usually be funded</li> <li>• Freedoms and flexibilities still needs to be managed</li> <li>• PR risk funding public toilets</li> </ul> <p><b>DECISION</b> – Utilise freedoms and flexibilities to fund electric boat charging points</p> <p>Torquay Gateway Variation JE provided an introduction to this agenda item.</p> <p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torquay Gateway variation submitted</li> <li>• no change to outputs or GBF spend. Just a delay so required to reprofile</li> <li>• Appointed a contractor however the terms of the contract could not be agreed so have needed to go back out to tender.</li> </ul> <p>Points raised</p> <p>Concerns that the total project cost has risen from £2.8m to £6.1 but the outputs have stayed the same</p> <p><b>DECISION</b> – more information required relating to change of total project costs before a decision can be made</p> <p>Zebcat 2 Variation AMS provided an introduction to this agenda item.</p> <p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zebcat is a project which undertakes a deep retrofit on buildings.</li> <li>• Requesting utilising £1.6m of freedoms and flexibilities</li> <li>• Significant delay due to covid and locating further funding to manage the increase in materials</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern over the VFM of the project and the history of delays &amp; changes since the project was first considered for GBF</li> </ul> <p><b>DECISION</b> – request a full project review before a final decision can be made.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Investment Programme Delivery</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Investment Programme Report</b>	
	<p>RSn provided an overview of the investment programme report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£69k underspend to be allocated to smarter carbon style project</li> <li>Total GBF spend to date is £20.8m</li> <li>Q3 spend was £6.46m</li> </ul> <p>EJ provided a brief GPF update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Millfields have agreed to restart payments from April</li> <li>DC Homes -possibly requesting a 2 year extension period 2027 – 29. Payments to restart from April as previously agreed and valuation to be progressed. Recalculation to then be done and position to be reconsidered.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Amber Project Review</b>	
	Zebcat2 and Mobile Boost are currently amber. All other projects are green.	
<b>5.3</b>	<b>SCC Update</b>	
	No update	
<b>5.4</b>	<b>CLGU update</b>	
	No update	
<b>6</b>	<b>Strategic Agenda Items</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>ESIF Update</b>	
	<p>EJ provided a brief update –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DLUCH have additional Transition funds available: Devon County Council have submitted a bid for NDEC expansion, Petroc (Centre of Technology &amp; Innovation) and University of Plymouth (Marine Business Technology Centre) also likely to submit extension requests. DLUCH will provide further details once more information is available</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	None raised.	

**Next Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022**

### Table of Decisions

SIP Paper	Decision Required	Decision Agreed
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Natural Capital Demonstration Fund – North Devon Biosphere	Whether or not to invite ND Biosphere foundation to submit a business case for GPF funding	Request North Devon biosphere to submit a business case to review as recommended in the paper
Mobile Boost Voucher Scheme	Whether or not to approve the extension of their timeline	Review in 3 months time as recommended in the paper
Digital Build Back Better EOI Review	Next steps for the EOI responses	Supported the thematic approach recommended in the paper.
Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Variation	Whether to utilise freedoms and flexibilities or fund the creation of public toilets	Utilise freedoms and flexibilities to fund electric boat charging points as agreed in GFA
Zebcat 2 Variation	Whether to approve the utilization of F&F	A full project review is to be requested