

**Draft Minutes of HotSW LEP CIC Board Meeting**

**27 January 2023**

**from**

**9.30 am – 12.30 via teams**

**Board Attendees:**

David Bird, Isca Ventures LLP (DB)  
Cllr David Woan- Associate Lead Member for Economic Development & Inward Investment Somerset County Council (DW)  
Jane Dumeresque – Non-Exec Director (JD)  
John Laramy CBE - Principal & CEO, Exeter College (JL)  
Prof. Judith Petts CBE– Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive, University of Plymouth (JPetts)  
Karl Tucker – Chair HotSW LEP and Chair Yeo Valley Farms Ltd and Yeo Valley Ltd (KT)  
Kevin Mowat – Director of Place, Torbay Council, as alternate for Cllr Steve Darling (KM)  
Prof Lisa Roberts – Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter (LR)  
Mark Bolton – Principal & CEO, Yeovil College (MB)  
Melanie Squires MBE – SW Regional Director, NFU (MS)  
Cllr Phil Bialyk – Leader, Exeter City Council (PB) departed at 11.07  
Richard Stevens – Managing Director, Go South West (RS)  
Cllr Rufus Gilbert -Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, Devon County Council (RG)  
Stuart Brocklehurst – Chief Executive, Applegate (SB)  
Tracey Lee – Chief Executive, Plymouth City Council, as alternate for Cllr Richard Bingley (TL)  
Cllr Val Keitch – Leader, South Somerset Council (VK)  
Vince Flower – Non-Exec Director (VF)

**Officers in attendance:**

Claire Gibson – Head of Delivery, HotSW LEP (CG)  
David Ralph – Chief Executive, HotSW LEP (CG)  
Eifion Jones – COO, HotSW LEP (EJ)  
Elizabeth Spence - Deputy Area Lead for HotSW & Dorset, South West Team Cities & Growth Unit (ES)  
Jane Portman – Chief Executive, South Somerset District Council (JPort)  
Janet Powell – Executive Assistant, HotSW LEP (for minutes)  
Karime Hassan - Chief Executive & Growth Director, Exeter City Council, accompanying Cllr Phil Bialyk (KH) departed at 11.07  
Keri Denton - Head of Economy & Enterprise, Devon County Council (KD)  
Paul Hickson - Strategic Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning, Somerset County Council (PH)  
Suzanne Bond - Area Lead – Heart of the South West, Cities and Local Growth Unit - South West (SB)

**Apologies:**

Paul Coles – CEO, SWBC (PColes)  
Paul Crawford – Chief Executive, LiveWest (PCrawford)  
Cllr Steve Darling – Leader, Torbay Council (SD)

Cllr Richard Bingley – Leader, Plymouth City Council (RB)  
 Anne Marie Morris, MP representing Devon MPs (AMM)  
 Ben Bradshaw, MP representing Devon MPs (BB)  
 Marcus Fysh, MP representing Somerset MPs (MF)

Paper	Decision	Decision agreed
<b>7. Chief Executive's Report</b>	<b>i) Agree on the priorities within the 23/24 business plan and other recommendations within the slide deck namely:-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the headline priorities and outcomes</li> <li>- notes that detailed actions will be worked up by the management team through F&amp;R</li> <li>- agrees to the total spend (detailed budget to be signed off by F&amp;R as per normal practice)</li> <li>- to seek confirmation from Local Authorities and other partners that both their support and financial/ in-kind contributions will continue</li> </ul>	Agreed
	<b>i) To agree to merge SIP &amp; F &amp; R and agree to revised TOR</b>	Agreed
	<b>ii) Notwithstanding the above, the Board agrees to conduct a broader Governance Review (to be completed by the Executive) reporting to the April Board via F&amp;R</b>	Agreed
	<b>iii) Appoint both vice-Chair and SME Board champion</b>	C/forward to Governance Review
	<b>iv) Hold a Member's Meeting either immediately prior or after the April Board meeting</b>	Agreed
<b>9. Food Declaration</b>	<b>i) Endorse the revised Public Sector Food Procurement Declaration of Intent</b>	Agreed

Agenda	Action
<b>1. Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>  <p>The Chair welcomed new Directors Helen Higgs, as an independent Board director from EDF and Mark Bolton the new FE representative from Yeovil College who takes over from John Laramy as he steps down at the end of this board meeting.</p> <p>Congratulations to JL and Exeter College for their recent outstanding Ofsted report.</p> <p>Thanks were given to KH for all his work and support as this is his last meeting as he's stepping down as Chief Executive from Exeter Council.</p>	

<p>This will also probably be the last meeting for VK as she is currently the Somerset District Council representative on the Board and with the districts subsumed at the end of March into the new Unitary Somerset Council they will need to confirm their representation and she was thanked for her continued support and input.</p> <p>Apologies as above.</p> <p>Helen Higgs volunteered to fill in the Board effectiveness meeting review form.</p>	
<p><b>3. A little bit of Culture</b> J Petts read out the poem “ Hold Fast” by an American poet Robin Beth Schaer.</p>	
<p><b>6. Presentation and role of the LEP in the Devon Carbon Plan by Emily Reed – Devon County Council Emergency Climate Project Manager.</b> This item was moved up the agenda due to the need for Emily to leave at 10am.</p> <p>The slides were circulated before the meeting and presented by Emily Reed:- how the plan was developed; what the plan covers; ways the plan can be viewed; overseeing the delivery of the plan; and how to keep in touch. The LEP was asked to endorse the Devon Carbon Plan and help monitor its delivery.</p> <p>The following comments were made:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The board was referred to Chris Skidmore’s net zero review <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chris-skidmore-launches-net-zero-review">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chris-skidmore-launches-net-zero-review</a> which focuses on the UK’s fight against climate change maximising economic growth – while ensuring energy security and affordability for consumers and businesses. A checklist against the recommendations in this report would be useful.</li> <li>➤ The link to Somerset’s documents was provided - <a href="https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency/somersets-climate-emergency-strategy-documents/">https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency/somersets-climate-emergency-strategy-documents/</a></li> <li>➤ With lots of investment now within the rail network, the barrier is now one of lack of capacity and how is this issue being communicated to the train providers? The team is in close contact with Devon County Council’s transport team who are working up a new transport plan and is also in the process of identifying stakeholders around transport who should be involved in the delivery and oversight of the Devon Carbon Plan which involves representatives from the train providers.</li> <li>➤ The need to look at this at a higher level than just Devon and Somerset, to join up the whole infrastructure piece across the Great South West (GSW).</li> <li>➤ An education initiative was highlighted - the “Green Schools Revolution” a Dept of Education (DFE) supported project over 3 years aimed at secondary schools to help them generate climate action plans, compulsory for all education providers by 2024/25. Plymouth and Weston-super-Mare have been identified (as 2 left behind areas in schools provision) specifically to work with schools and young people over the next 2 years on their climate action plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action - JPetts to provide contact details for Emily to touch base with the education community around school climate action plans to get some quick wins for the evidence base.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A further discussion about the role of the SAP in overseeing the delivery of the skills actions in the plan would be helpful, which could also pick up LSIP as the same key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>JPetts/ Emily Reed</b></p>



<p>country to do so and this is an important point to emphasise to Gov't especially with the disappointment of promised new rolling stock from the S East now not materialising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Since 2019 when work on the Devon Carbon Plan started, there has been a pandemic, major changes to the economy and how this operates in the future and the outcomes are not fully understood yet e.g hybrid working. The economy group needs to ensure the plan is still relevant to a post-pandemic world or is it still based on how people used to work.</li> </ul> <p>Emily provided her contact details:- <a href="mailto:emily.reed@devon.gov.uk">emily.reed@devon.gov.uk</a> and departed the meeting at 10.06 but discussions continued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Buses touch considerably more Devon residents than rail and if we want to decarbonise Devon we need to address the decarbonisation of buses as well as rail.</li> </ul> <p>The Board was asked to endorse the Devon Carbon Plan (DCP) and the following comments were made:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are lots of plans like this already in existence and many other funded activities in the area through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) eg. Low Carbon Devon, Gov't looking at business support, the education initiative previously mentioned, funding from Universities to support skills training within businesses, etc. There is nothing wrong with the Devon Carbon Plan but there is a need to understand the whole picture, is this plan a useful resource for different bodies and organisations, there is no new money to deliver this plan as money already exists in different places.</li> <li>➤ NFU has been part of the partnership involved in developing this plan. It is an important leadership position as a strategic body to endorse it, maybe with the caveat that we can't fund everything or do everything they would like.</li> <li>➤ The Colleges of Exeter, Bridgwater and Taunton, Strode, South Devon and Petroc are jointly delivering a Skills Development Fund 2 project to develop the green curriculum and the skills connected to this with the resulting EIBC skills report producing some excellent data.</li> <li>➤ How does this plan link into some of the key infrastructure projects in the region particularly the work of GSW?</li> <li>➤ What is meant by 'endorse'? If it is to raise awareness and continue to work on the delivery of the actions then that is fine but it shouldn't mean that this plan is above other plans. Any LEP endorsement should include a proviso that the plan links into all the other plans that exist supported with a simplified delivery arrangement.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board agreed to endorse the sentiment and intent of the Devon Carbon Plan and to work with the team to monitor its delivery but was clear that this didn't mean it was ranked above other plans for funding etc, particularly as the Board didn't have visibility of all the other plans and how they hang together.</b></p>	
<p><b>2. Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>All Board Directors submit yearly annual submission declarations of interest forms and these have recently been renewed. Only those conflicts of interest over and above those already declared are required to be raised. Members raised additional declarations under agenda item 8 Digital Funding:-</p>	





consider. Business representative organisations report the lowest level of confidence in the country with businesses facing stark challenges.

The LEP had its Annual Performance Review this week – thanks to DB and KT for attending. Normally a light touch process, the LEP faces a more in-depth analysis due to the amount of freedom and flexibilities that are carried forward (particularly to support delays in the Digital programme). The indicative assessment for Governance - broadly met (recognising the ongoing exemption of not meeting a 50/50 gender balance on the Board due to recruitment challenges caused by the uncertainty surrounding LEPs. On strategy, this has been met but the LEP is provisionally a cause for concern surrounding the amount of funding being carried forward under it's 'freedom and flexibilities'.

**Action: The LEP will write to Gov't to mitigate the APR cause for concern over carried forward funding to demonstrate this is work largely aligned with the Dept. for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) to deliver the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) digital infrastructure which has suffered delays with reassurance it will be spent during 23/24/25.**

The Board was reassured that whilst this project remains red-flagged on the risk register and consequently reviewed quarterly, a recent meeting with CDS and Somerset County Council (the accountable body) resulted in a new spend profile and confirmation from CDS that they will deliver a revised profile subject to the performance of contractors. The implication for the Board is that the LEP doesn't get a 'met' in all its APR areas and will be more closely monitored to track progress but feel there is no immediate risk to funding.

#### Key asks

To feed into Gov't ahead of the March Budget the asks for HotSW which can be expressed through 4 key themes which hopefully the Joint Committee will also sign up to:-

- **Spotlight on Skills** – one of the recommendations from the Social Mobility Report is to create a regional centre of excellence for technical skills and to ask to flex the apprenticeship levy to deliver this. To be clear this is not a building it's an ecosystem for this area to be recognised as having pathways to technical skills. Also to bring UK Shared prosperity funding (UKSPF) forward to year 2 rather than year 3.
- **Investing in Infrastructure and Places** – to push DCMS for a local flavour on project gigabit possibly around vouchers. Road Infrastructure Strategy 3 has been previously mentioned and focuses heavily on maintenance with the need to continue to hold Gov't to account to fulfil this and perhaps something around the core infrastructure around trains and buses (electrification and decarbonisation).
- **Targeted Business Sector and Support** – to ask for continued support for Growth Hub (GH) funding as a universal service and additional support to businesses to help them transition to net zero.
- **Commercialising Ideas and Innovation** – to ask for the maritime environmental science accelerator with the technopole in, the innovate launch pad cluster for marine and maybe something around Freeport around innovation.

#### **Feedback from the Board**

DR

- Apprenticeship levy which historically has been underspent is only modest this year, therefore the ask needs to be for more around flexibility not just focussing on underspending.
- The picture around Regional Skills Centres is complex, having one centre creates learner travel accessibility challenges. There are already 2 West of England Institutes of Technology in the region (one Yeovil College is part of, but not the other) with 2 sets of skills development funding and Yeovil College as it sits in both camps gets double funding and this could be seen as an opportunity. Wave 1 IOTs that have not started to be built are currently in discussions with the Dept for Education (DFE) around relicensing which runs out next year and perhaps there is an opportunity here for further capital requests.
- A centre of excellence needs to be based on demand and supply and link into partner activity across the patch, to have clarity of what is required before the next steps are taken, to pull out the gaps in the system and build these in.
- To think innovatively through pathways of connectivity supported by e.g skills boot camps and to build and evolve on the very effective networks of current IOTs forming a technical cluster.

**Action: to refine the HotSW 'asks' into a 1 pager and recirculate it so that at each fiscal event the opportunity is there to remind parliamentarians, the Gov't and the opposition of the things the LEP wants to see happen in this area.**

DR

#### What's going well, what isn't

- The LEP has finished its direct funding for the Hinkley Supply Chain but there is continued funding through the Chamber and EDF, with a little bit of inward investment support left for businesses coming into the region.
- In Somerset, the LEP is supporting the inward investment piece with the website due to go live soon, specifically assisting with iAero and also towards the mobilisation of the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre.
- The Chair and Chief Executive of Freeport have been appointed and the business case has been signed off.
- Levelling up funds have been announced - a mixed bag.
- There is a piece of work with 25 potential developers of floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea with a workshop day supporting their needs.
- Work continues on the Plymouth Brunel Plaza.
- Working with Exeter Science Park (ESP) around the loan agreements.
- The Tourism Data Hub project has appointed a project manager and work will begin on this.

#### Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Devolution Deal update – provided by Tracey Lee of Plymouth City Council

Currently in a holding pattern with Gov't with a new date set for a meeting with the Minister where it is hoped discussions will take place to see if there is any appetite for what is involved in Level 2 devolution or whether the Gov't is only interested in mayoral combined authorities.

#### Somerset re-organisation update- provided by Paul Hickson from Somerset County Council

The Gov't is starting to think beyond Wave 1 devolution deals and some technical conversations have taken place with Somerset. Deals are being looked at that have in principle been agreed upon



for Suffolk and Norfolk and how these can relate to Somerset. Not a great deal more to add at this stage. (Suffolk has pushed back to 2025 and it's likely Norfolk will follow suit).

Appendix 1 – Draft 23/24 Business Plan Slides (*commercially confidential*) -

A PowerPoint presentation by Eifion Jones (slides were shared in advance with the Board). This is a plan for continuity rather than transition which has been put on hold (but can be resurrected in case circumstances change), to provide direction and stability over the next 12 – 20 months.

EJ was thanked for a very useful summary of where we are and for future steps

It was clarified that the funding for the Careers Hub (which runs out in July) is a priority and is shown in the project's budget.

Comments from the Board:-

- It may be worth a conversation with FE institutions that have broadening responsibilities for careers and how this might help to support the Careers Hub.
- Referring to the Build Back Better plan – the people issue needs to be wider than just skills, particularly for businesses with rurality and connectivity issues i.e workforce development.
- How is success measured – this is against the 8 Gatsby benchmarks but the key is the quality of meeting these.

**Board decisions requested:-**

- **To agree on the headline priorities and outcomes within 23/24 business**
- **To note that detailed actions will be worked up by the management team through F&R**
- **To agree to the total spend (detailed budget to be signed off by F&R as per normal practice)**
- **to seek confirmation from Local Authorities and other partners that both their support and financial/ in-kind contributions will continue**

**The Board agreed to the above 4 decisions.**

Terms of Reference (TOR) for Governance review

There is a need to review this due to transition (as Somerset is changing to a Unitary Authority and to agree to Somerset representation and consider Devon Districts in the future), to consider gender balance and to note that SB is moving from a private sector member to become the University of Exeter representative instead of LR from March onwards. As the next Board meeting in April will be during a local election some LA's may need to submit proxy votes due to purdah.

**Board decision requested.**

- **The Board agrees to conduct a broader Governance Review (through the Executive in the absence of a Director to lead it reporting to the April Board via F&R)**

**Decision agreed.**

<p><b>Action: To seek a Board member volunteer to oversee the governance review and report back at the next Board meeting.</b></p> <p><u>Great South West (GSW)update</u></p> <p>There was an officer meeting on 31 January and there is a GSW Partnership Board meeting on 22 February. An annual performance review with Gov't is also due sometime before the Board meeting. The challenge has been around mobilisation, with the key opportunity to elevate the GSW pitch around what is investable and to influence policy changes to Gov't and other parties in readiness for positioning for the next election.</p> <p>The LEP's Gov't sponsor cautioned the GSW Partnership to remain focused in the short term on its green and blue prospectus the basis upon which it received funding and not to get distracted.</p> <p>The advert for a permanent GSW Chair will shortly be live supported by search consultants Penna.</p> <p>MB offered his involvement in GSW representing FE skills talent attraction and retention if it was felt this could offer value.</p>	<p><b>All to DR</b></p>
<p><b>8. Digital Funding (<i>all commercially confidential</i>) - Claire Gibson</b></p> <p>The papers provide an update on circa £22m of LEP investment in a whole range of digital activity. The Board was asked to note that the top-up voucher scheme approved by the Board in July 2022 is expected to end as Gov't have recently announced an increase in the value of the national voucher. This would mean a proportion of the £940,000 that is uncommitted would need to be reallocated, with options being taken to SIP before being brought back to the Board. The Board was also asked to note that the Mobile Boost scheme has been supported by a further £250,00 investment from the LEP, enabling the scheme to be extended up to March 2023. This has been delivering very effectively and the additional funding has come out of the original £8m digital investment programme.</p> <p>The Board was then asked to take the first of two decisions.</p> <p><u>Taunton Digital Innovation Centre</u></p> <p>As set out in the Board Paper at Annex A, SIP agreed at its meeting in November to use £235,000 of the £8m digital investment programme to fund the fit-out and mobilisation of the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre, in addition to the £65,000 from the Getting Building Fund that SIP had previously agreed. The Board was asked to agree to SIP's recommendation to provide this additional funding of up to £300,000 to the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre. The Board was informed that this is a key part of the Firepool regeneration project and an update was also provided on the construction programme which is progressing well. The Board was also reassured by the innovation ecosystem that is being developed in Taunton and the surrounding areas to help stimulate demand and ensure effective use of the building. NB. A second meeting date for the Digital Futures Programme Board is being organised and one of the topics for discussion will be how to further support the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre with advice and guidance.</p> <p>The Board was provided an update on the efforts to identify a delivery mechanism for Community Triage to provide digital advice to communities, with £215,00 currently allocated for this. The LEP is</p>	

currently looking at a scheme run by South Hams and West Devon with a digital officer that provides advice to communities, working with Connecting, Devon and Somerset (CDS) to understand the gaps and where to target support as well as developing an online tool where people work through options to improve digital connectivity. Other LAs are interested in expanding this and if there is sufficient interest this could be a resource deployed across the network and may help to solve the capital-to-revenue exchange with future proposals coming back to SIP.

A comment was made that there is lots of work going on within FE colleges to engage people in IT with boot camps etc. and it is important to ensure any new provision is a complimentary resource and an opportunity to join up this work.

#### Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Last November the Board agreed to a further call out for digital proposals to help accelerate the BBB plan for the remaining sum of money that was allocated to digital infrastructure that could be spent by Dec 2024/now March 2025. There was a larger-than-expected response exceeding the amount of money available. A summary of the 15 EOIs is shown in Annex B and Annex C is the paper that went to SIP in January proposing the approach to adopt for shortlisting, which SIP agreed to. The decision was taken to use a thematic approach to shortlisting (similar to the first call) again outlined in Annex C which also explains why some EOIs were deferred and some rejected. SIP agreed to shortlist the 4 highest scoring priority sector EOIs, which had been independently assessed. The Board was therefore being asked to agree to reallocate the £1.55m from the Digital Infrastructure strand to the Build Back Better strand of the digital investment programme to enable business cases to be requested for the 4 shortlisted projects. The aim for the business case appraisals is to be presented to SIP at its meeting on the 4th of April and hopefully contracted within a month.

#### **Board decisions requested:-**

- **To agree to SIP's recommendation to provide additional funding of up to £300,000 to the Taunton Digital Innovation Centre, £235,000 from the £8m Digital Investment Programme and £65,000 from the Getting Building Fund.**
- **To agree to SIP's recommendation to reallocate £1.55m of the £8m Digital Investment Programme from the Digital Infrastructure strand to the Build Back Better strand and invite 4 business cases. Delivery needs to be completed by March 25.**

**The Board agreed to the above decisions.**

#### **9. Food Declaration of intent for endorsement – Mel Squires**

A draft public sector food procurement declaration was presented to the Board at its November meeting. Several useful comments were received and this has been followed up over the last two months led by MS with several one-to-one meetings with concerned parties from the public sector who were thanked for their helpful input. Where possible, the comments have been taken on board with a revised Declaration of Intent and this was one of the recommendations from the food mapping exercise agreed by the Board representing a championship, leadership piece to encourage businesses and supply chains on how to do things in the future and links into the LEP's green and blue agenda.

<p>A comment was made that it was sad it has had to be watered down slightly although it was understood why. A question was asked as to who we expected would be able to sign up for this and it was hoped that all the LEP partners would be able to in the first instance.</p> <p><b>Action:- regarding the reporting arrangements it was proposed to amend point 5 to make it clearer that individual organisations will report via their normal corporate reporting arrangements.</b></p> <p><b>Action:- to revise the footnote on the declaration, which refers to a consultation document - it would be better to refer to the wording from the Food Strategy 22 which refers to local production or certification to higher environmental standards which are important to many local suppliers e.g coffee suppliers who don't grow the crops but perform important local supply role based on certified growers.</b></p> <p>The aim is for Board members to endorse the principle to show advocacy and leadership with the expectation that members will go out to their partners to ask them to sign up and endorse too. The next steps will be to look at which organisations can be strongly encouraged including i.e the MOD, NHS, etc. what tools and support are out there to help businesses achieve and deliver local food procurement aspirations and to share and showcase best practices along the way.</p> <p><b>Board decision requested:-</b>  <b>To endorse the revised Public Sector Food Procurement Declaration of Intent.</b>  <b>The board agreed to endorse the above.</b></p>	<p>MS/CG</p> <p>MS/CG</p>
<p><b>10. Standing reports</b></p> <p><b>a) Updates from Chair of Strategic Investment Panel (SIP) and Finance and Resources (F &amp; R) including TOR (<i>all commercially confidential</i>) – David Bird, including:-</b></p> <p><b>Annex A Financial Paper</b>  <b>Annex B Finance Dashboard</b>  <b>Annex C Core Reserves</b></p> <p>The Board was thanked for agreeing to the Digital Investment via SIP. SIP remains focused on delivering the outputs from the various investment projects. Annex B was highlighted as a really good dashboard and shows where the LEP is concerning finances and objectives. Finances continue to be tight and the risk register has been updated to red for the long-term financial position until more news is forthcoming on Gov't policy. In terms of short-term finances with reduced grant core funding from Gov't, the focus is now on the interest from the Growing Places loan fund but until this is paid in cash the status has changed from green to amber showing as a risk until the 23/24 business plan is signed off and interest due is paid. This is a real focus for F &amp; R and happy to share the updated risk register that was signed off from the Jan F &amp; R meeting.</p> <p>A question was raised about Income Commitments in Annex C Core Reserves. This shows the amount of income expected to come in: £1.063m in 22/23. The figure of £1.186m reported for 21/22 has already been received and should be added to the £773k in the Income Actual line; this will be updated for the next month's finance report which will therefore show the total income for 21/22 as £1,196,551, £62,500 above budget. The overall 21/22 total income remains unchanged and has been reconciled back to Somerset's SAP system.</p>	

**b) Build Back Better**

**Inclusive Growth – Eifion Jones on behalf of Paul Crawford**

The papers set out the priorities but the question is how to work this through and embed this more deeply and effectively into both the work of the LEP and its partners and businesses. This still needs thinking about and the Social Mobility Commission may have a role here to support.

**Business Leadership Group – Richard Stevens**

There's a BLG report in the papers and it's business as usual. To note that Sue Wilkinson from the FSB has left to go travelling for 6 months but hopefully will return as she's done a sterling job for the group and will be missed. Still waiting for GH funding to be confirmed and there is a piece of work to be done as to what this will look like (the LEP has underwritten this for the last 6 months). The inward investment soft landing package has now closed with a couple of outstanding projects just waiting to be signed off.

**Transformational Opportunities – Claire Gibson**

Floating offshore wind (FLOW) meetings have been progressing well with many interested developers having similar objectives and the Crown Estate is encouraging them to look at local supply chains and community benefit schemes. The LEP has met with many of the big players recently i.e EDF, Fred Olsen, BP, DP Energy and Orsted and surprisingly they all have grid connections into Alverdiscott, N Devon. Around March the National Grid will be announcing their design to take forward how they will connect the first phase of the Celtic Sea 4 gw project.

Hydrogen update – Carlton Power is awaiting a funding decision from BEIS and hopefully will be the first electrolyser project in the region and link into the Freeport.

The Greenfield study is underway with thanks to those who took part in the roundtable and replied to the survey over recent weeks and is due to report in March and will feed into the discussion in SAP and the LSIP process.

An important topic for the next Energy Programme Board meeting will be the split between LEP and GSW work and what that looks like.

Aerospace is progressing well as a group and they are looking in more depth into what a future aviation test environment might look like around Yeovil (with Leonardo) and working with Exeter Airport and the Met Office with good engagement with the Civil Aviation Association (CAA) who will ultimately need to consent to any test area.

Photonics – disappointing news about the levelling up fund bid no doubt there will be further conversations around ensuring the third attempt is successful.

Food and Farming – thanks to the Board for endorsing the food declaration and work continues with the Programme Board on how to develop the next actions agreed upon at the LEP Board last year. A Food Summit (similar to the Energy Summit) will also be held in the next couple of months.

**Skills Advisory Panel – Vince Flower**

Conversations have been taking place on behalf of SAP with LSIP partners to ensure there is no duplication of work and everything is linked up to make sure all the activities are feeding through.

<p>SAP is awaiting its future funding position – but has been told by Phill Adams of DCC to continue to schedule meetings for the next 12 months.</p> <p><b>Innovation – Stuart Brocklehurst</b></p> <p>A couple of weeks ago all the Devon conservative MPs wrote jointly to Grant Shapps the Business Secretary encouraging him to approve the maritime environmental science accelerator proposal and a request came back for a different version to demonstrate what this means to business and include some business leader quotes and this is being assembled with the help of the universities of Plymouth and Exeter. A group of business leaders is also being organised to meet with the Business Secretary to showcase their support for the proposal.</p>	
<p><b>11. Papers for noting.</b></p> <p>No comment.</p>	
<p><b>12. AOB</b></p> <p><b>KT- under agenda item 7 Chief Executive’s report the decision to appoint both a vice chair and SME board champion was missed.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Board members were asked to put themselves forward to volunteer for the vice chair and SME champion roles after this meeting.</b></p> <p><b>DR – also under agenda item 7 Chief Executive’s report the decision to agree to merge SIP and F &amp; R and agree on a revised TOR was missed.</b></p> <p><b>The Board agreed to this decision.</b></p> <p>JL thanked everyone for their support over the last few years and has learnt a lot from colleagues and is confident handing the reins over to MB at Yeovil College. In turn, JL was thanked for all his support by the Chair.</p>	<p>KT/DR</p>

**Next meeting – LEP Board Deep Dive into High-Value Engineering 10 March 2023 via teams from 9.30am – 12.30pm**