

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

**21 April 2023**

**from**

**9.30 am – 12.00 via teams**

**Board Attendees:**

Alan Denby - Director of Pride in Place, Torbay Council (AD) alternate for Cllr Steve Darling  
Cllr David Woan- Associate Lead Member for Economic Development & Inward Investment  
Somerset Council (DW)

Helen Higgs - Head of Construction Skills Capability, EDF Nuclear New Build, EDF (HH)

Jane Dumeresque – Non-Exec Director (JD)

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)

Mark Bolton – Principal & CEO, Yeovil College (MB)

Cllr Mark Shayer – Acting Leader, Plymouth City Council (MS) departed 10.30am

Paul Coles – CEO, SWBC (PColes)

Cllr Phil Bialyk – Leader, Exeter City Council (PB) departed 11am

Cllr Rufus Gilbert -Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills, Devon County Council (RG)

Stuart Brocklehurst – Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Business Engagement and Innovation,  
University of Exeter(SB)

Vince Flower – Non-Exec Director (VF)

**Officers in attendance:**

Amanda Ratsey - Head of Economy, Enterprise & Employment, Plymouth City Council, (AR)  
accompanying Cllr Mark Shayer

Claire Gibson – Head of Delivery, HotSW LEP (CG)

David Ralph – Chief Executive, HotSW LEP (DR)

Eifion Jones – COO, HotSW LEP (EJ)

Janet Powell – Executive Assistant, HotSW LEP (for minutes)

Keri Denton - Head of Economy & Enterprise, Devon County Council (KD), accompanying Cllr  
Rufus Gilbert

Mickey Green - Executive Director for Climate & Place, Somerset Council (MG),  
accompanying Cllr David Woan

Sally Royle - Area Coordinator, Cities & Local Growth Unit, SW (SR)

Suzanne Bond - Area Lead – Heart of the South West, Cities and Local Growth Unit - South  
West (SB)

**Others in attendance**

Helen Hart - LSIP Project Executive, Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce (HH) for LSIP  
presentation

Phill Adams - Programme Lead, Devon, Plymouth & Torbay County Deal, Devon County  
Council (PA) for Devo update

**Apologies:**

David Bird, Isca Ventures LLP (DB)

Jason Vaughan – Director of Finance, Somerset Council (JV)  
 Paul Crawford – Chief Executive, LiveWest (PCrawford)  
 Richard Stevens – Managing Director, Go South West (RS)  
 Cllr Steve Darling – Leader, Torbay Council (SD)  
 Cllr Val Keitch – Somerset Council  
 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>8. Chief Executive's Report</b>	i) Agree on the next steps with reference to the Chancellor's statement.	The Board agreed.
	ii) To hold a Member meeting to agree on amendments to the Articles for extending private sector representation immediately after this meeting – if Directors can't attend it is important that their vote is made (through proxy)	The Board agreed.
	iii) Note the need for an ongoing exemption in our diversity requirements not least in light of Lisa Roberts handing over to Stuart B and the resignation of Mel Squires	The Board agreed.
	To seek legal advice about the LEP's assets.	The Board agreed.
	To agree upon the changes to the OIC TOR.	The Board agreed.

Agenda	Action
<b>1. Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> The Chair welcomed Cllr Mark Shayer, acting Leader of Plymouth City Council.  Formal thanks were given to Mel Squires for her support over the last years, especially for chairing the Place Leadership Group and for being the rural champion for the Board. Mel has resigned to take on a much larger role within the NFU with greater responsibility and unfortunately can no longer remain as a Board member.  Apologies as above.  Helen Higgs volunteered to fill in the Board effectiveness meeting review form.	
<b>2. Declarations of interest</b> 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. No further declarations were raised.	
<b>3. A little bit of Culture</b> David Woan played his guitar and sang a self-penned song entitled 'Positano'.	
<b>4. Draft minutes of 27 January 2023 Board meeting and actions arising</b> Actions concerning the Devon Carbon Plan:-	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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.</li> <li>➤ To add the Devon Carbon Plan as a future agenda item for the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP).</li> <li>➤ VF to discuss further with Emily how to communicate the plan to tourism businesses via the GSW Tourism Partnership.</li> </ul> <p><b>It is assumed these have been picked up and this item is now closed.</b></p> <p>Action:- concerning the Rural Prosperity Fund and understanding Devon and Somerset's proposals – Devon's is complicated with funding for each district, but there is an update from Somerset which was recently signed off by Gov't for £3.24m over 2 years for 2 funds to be created:- a business fund and a community fund.</p> <p><b>Somerset has forwarded a PowerPoint presentation and this is available to anyone that wishes to request a copy.</b></p> <p><b>This item is now closed.</b></p> <p>Action:- Annual Performance Review, the outcome of this has just been received and will be picked up in the CEO's report.</p> <p><b>This item is now closed.</b></p> <p>Action:- around Key Asks for the Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Skills re-accelerating SPF and the apprenticeship levy – this will be picked up through the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP presentation later on but hasn't happened yet).</li> <li>➤ Infrastructure re – Road Infrastructure Strategy 3 has not been published yet, nor has the Rail Strategy.</li> <li>➤ Digital – re the weaknesses in project Gigabit which may not extend into the 'hard to reach' areas as it's too expensive. This has been raised with BDUK and there is ongoing dialogue as to how this is rolled out.</li> <li>➤ Innovation - re Marine Environmental Science Accelerator (MESA) which SB will pick up later.</li> <li>➤ Business support re –Growth Hub (GH) - the hope was for 2-year funding but 1-year funding has been confirmed (but conditions and format are currently unknown).</li> </ul> <p><b>This item is now closed.</b></p> <p>Action:- around Governance Review is on the agenda later.</p> <p><b>This item is now closed.</b></p> <p>The rest of the minutes were taken as accurate.</p>	<p>DR/ALL</p>
<p><b>5. Questions from the public</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<p><b>6. LSIP Update – presentation by Helen Hart, LSIP Project Executive from Devon &amp; Plymouth Chamber of Commerce</b></p> <p>The slides were circulated before the meeting and presented by Helen Hart and covered:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is a Local Skills Improvement Plan?</li> <li>➤ Developing the LSIP – where we are now?</li> <li>➤ Key priorities for employers</li> </ul>	

- Stakeholder events – to determine whether the emerging themes accurately reflect the situation, the step changes that are needed, collective achievement and the role of organisations and working with Somerset Chamber to make this happen.
- How to stay in touch?

VF: The Chair of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) thanked Helen and her team for the approach taken, especially the inclusion of many face-to-face stakeholder events which gained good engagement and helped the process. A full update will be given at the next SAP meeting on 22 May. Initially, the plan was too Devon-centric but this was overcome by inviting the Somerset and Dorset training provider network to contribute and to take into account the report highlighting the differences between Devon and Somerset.

Following discussion, the skills team at Devon County Council have agreed to continue to provide the secretariat to SAP for the foreseeable future, (with VF continuing in the role of Chair), not least because the current LSIP work finishes in July and although an LSIP team will be in place it is felt this will bridge the gap until the format of LSIP teams is known in the future. SAP also focuses on other work not included in the LSIP remit.

Other comments:-

The Dept of Education (DfE) messaging has been consistent across the LSIP process - to not be data-driven, reinforced with the green jobs delivery group of which the Dept. for Education (DfE) is a member. H Higgs explained she sits on the power and networks working group (set up under Energy security, one of the 4 objectives within the Powering Up report). One of its first actions is to produce an NMI critical skills report to cover; on/offshore wind, solar, nuclear energy, and batteries, from construction through to operation and maintenance which is due out in June and will produce a heat map of the skills needed. The second action is to provide feedback on current interventions driven by industry and education and will also help to support the LSIP report.

A draft proposal is being discussed with LSIP to take forward the skills legacy and learning from Hinkley, mapping out the net zero technologies and common competencies with current and future regional bodies that are involved in skills governance (i.e SAP, LSIP and the Institutes of Technology), to work together and continue to map and deliver the transfer of assets ensuring they are fit for the next project. HPC only has a window of 3 – 4 years to act upon this before the benefit of what has been built up is lost.

The Skills Launch Pads, the Freeport skills element and Centres of Excellence are great assets for the region having received a lot of time and investment – do employers think these are valuable resources and are they fit for purpose? (Plymouth's Skills Launchpad has been a great success with good feedback from businesses and people helped). The LSIP process is looking at specific sector skills partnership routes in providing feedback.

Somerset Council are increasing their business engagement, (supported by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and Somerset Chamber) including with FE colleges, to help shape Somerset Councils' future support. The key is collaboration between business and education to get things moving. Any cross opportunities or insight into the LSIP process to optimise respective agendas would be very welcome.

<p>Helen Hart was thanked for her presentation and exited the meeting.</p> <p>It was confirmed that SAP will continue to be involved in the process and will review the improvement plan before it's submission in May. VF: will feedback on progress at the next Board meeting in July and hopefully, more information will be forthcoming from DfE as to the next steps etc.</p>	
<p><b>7. Chief Executive's Report</b></p> <p>The Board were reminded there is a Member's Meeting at 12 noon to agree to changes to the Articles, which needs to be agreed here first before the Member's meeting commences. Anyone not able to make the meeting needs to ensure they have given their proxy vote to the Chair.</p> <p>Updates since the report:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yesterday, an update presentation was given by Hinkley on how they are joining up with Sizewell where two further EPR nuclear reactors are to be constructed and developed by EDF Energy and which share major similarities. This year Hinkley will see the dome installed and the control room going in, the mechanical and ventilation engineering phase starting at the end of the year together with the commissioning stage. Recent visits by ministers and shadow ministers have all made positive comments.</li> <li>- The recent announcement from Jaguar Landrover (JLR) confirms it will become the "anchor partner" of a planned Giga factory for electric vehicles (EVs) in the Midlands. Tata, who own JLR the Indian group is mulling over a choice for the site of the potential battery plant and a decision is imminent.</li> <li>- The Growth Hub funding was confirmed for this year (23/24).</li> <li>- There was a presentation this week by X-Links (the £18b investment project to bring an underground cable from Morocco to UK) which will bring as much power into the UK as Hinkley and looked at where the cable will land in North Devon – feedback for the LEP's energy transition.</li> <li>- The Gov't published its "Powering Up Britain" Paper and not surprisingly most announcements now have some connection to future-proofing energy security.</li> </ul> <p><u>Annual Performance Review</u> – Gov't has now confirmed the previously provisional outcomes (as reported at the last Board meeting. The targets for strategy and governance have been 'met' but for delivery, there is 'cause for concern'.</p> <p>This is slightly frustrating as originally there was concern that the Getting Building Fund would need to be carried forward into 23/24 year but due to a lot of hard work from local partners including Torbay this is not now forecast and is unlikely to occur now. This outcome means the LEP will be monitored more closely going forward.</p> <p><u>The Chancellor's statement</u> expressed that he was not minded to fund LEPs beyond this year and that economic development responsibilities would move to local authorities with further guidance to be issued this summer - but no final decision have been made yet. As part of this process A questionnaire was sent out to local authorities, LEPs and other partners to gather initial relevant information (draft response attached – annex C).</p>	

Following some pushback, the deadline for completion of this has been extended to 19 May. The Gov't has also given outline approval to Councils in Devon for the submission of a level two devolution deal - which would not involve an elected mayor covering Devon CC, Unitaries, Plymouth City Council and Torbay BC and Devon's districts (known as the DPT partnership).

A number of conversations have taken place between Gov't and LEPs (convened through the LEP Network) to seek clarity over the completion of the questionnaire (as no LEP is the same). HotSW LEP is particularly complex with only part of the area currently progressing a devolution deal and because the HOTSW LEP is formally incorporated as a Community Interest Company (CIC) which brings the Asset Lock requirements set out in its Articles into Scope.

It's important to try to understand the timelines and decisions that need to be made.

- The first stage is to try and agree on the facts which concern the staff that are in scope with partners (approx. 30 mostly part-funded which includes the full-time core team members)
- Future Governance - impact on Board Directors and their duties and understanding the destination (which is still a little uncertain at the moment).
- Functions that are involved and transferred, what continues and what is handed over.
- What happens to a range of assets?

Hopefully, further guidance from the Chancellor during the summer will enable this to be brought to the next Board meeting in July, enabling decisions in the Autumn and implementation during the Winter. It is thought the whole process of transition is likely to take approx. a year. It was stressed that it is important to keep the discussions around GSW separate from that of the LEP. Whilst there are links, there are no direct independencies even though KT is the Chair of both the HotSW LEP and the GSW PRP and DR is the Executive Officer for both.

The papers accompanying the CEO report remind the LEP about CIC Asset Lock principles. It is necessary to clarify who owns the assets – is it the Accountable body or the LEP? Gov't has said this is for the LEP and Accountable Body to decide locally.

Somerset's accounting policies are clearly set out in their Accounts. However, it is proposed that legal advice is sought over how to treat the assets for absolute clarity.

Part of the CEO's role is to protect the Company and its Directors and make sure the LEP adheres to corporate governance responsibilities. The Board member's responsibility is to act within the corporate governance rules of an incorporated company. The work of the LEP needs to be protected to ensure the delivery of its workplan and projects and adjustments have been made to the business plan for more management time to aid both delivery and the handling transition.

KD – confirmed that the CEOs of the DPT Partnership have agreed on a single set of advice across all partners that can be relied on and are happy to contribute towards the costs.

The LEPs Gov't sponsor are aware of the complexities surrounding the HotSW LEP concerning its geographies, the Devon Devo Deal and Somerset Unitary and have made the Dept. for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) aware of them highlighting the importance of keeping them in the loop as talks progress.

Update on the DPT by Phill Adams, Programme Lead, Devon, Plymouth & Torbay County Deal

A level two devolution deal was offered in March 2023 and after the initial reluctance by Gov't to accelerate those in tier two, this is now being negotiated at pace with the hope that a deal can be agreed by the end of the year. It is a non-mayoral deal.

NB:- Cornwall Council has confirmed that it will no longer be pursuing a 'level three' devolution deal, including the introduction of a directly-elected mayor. Instead, the Council will negotiate a 'level two' arrangement without any changes to governance. Other areas with deals for combined authorities and mayors seem to be having some issues. Work is ongoing with department colleagues on details i.e housing, economic development, business support, SPF, skills and the adult education budget plus a few other strands (approx. 6 /7) which will all be devolved.

Further discussions are needed to understand how devolved authorities might carry out innovation and inward investment, how this will work between skills and LSIPs and includes some links into the GSW PRP sector work. The inclusion of the business voice element forms part of the governance piece and will include a seat on the Board for business and probably education too.

The Board will be led by the 3 constituent authorities with seats for the district councils with Boards for business and skills plus some other 'soft Boards'. Leader approval can't be given until they return after the May local elections with the hope of advancing this by early Summer. As the Act is currently going through Gov't there are several unknowns including the legislative timetable and therefore LEP transition which could slow things up.

Match funding is not a condition of Gov't for a level two deal, but understanding what other private investment it could trigger is important. The DPT are confident there is leverage, especially around housing.

An update on Somerset Council was given by Cllr Dave Woan – Somerset became a unitary Council on 1 April 2023 and it's business as usual. Decarbonisation, Climate and Place are prime areas to focus on for the LEP-related agenda. Decisions are keenly awaited on Gravity and the Council is keeping a close eye on the outcome of Devon's Devo Deal. In the meantime, the Council have secured some regeneration levelling up funding for work at Minehead and Bridgwater and the Rural Prosperity Funding for Somerset has been confirmed by Defra, (awaiting formal paperwork) before presenting to stakeholder groups next week with a proper launch in May.

DR: reminded members that transition needs to be developed not only with Devon but to understand what this also looks like in Somerset too under the new Unitary Authority for people and assets.

**The Board agreed to the 3 recommendations in the CEO's Report included in the decision table above and also to seek legal advice about the LEP's assets.**

It was emphasised that the LEP is not only about business engagement, it has a much wider stakeholder plan (and with representation from FE and HE on its Board) with a range of partnersthat seeks to represent the views of both Business, HE and FE into Gov't.

All



**Action: To assist the move through the transition from a business-led model to a local authority-led model, it would be useful for the LEP to have a SWOTs analysis from the authorities to help understand the implications. Also, a stakeholder plan ahead of determining structures to understand how this will be progressed.**

A Governance review is necessary for 3 reasons:-

To extend the maximum term of 6 years for 2 business Board members(part of the 2017 contingent) to ensure continuity during the transition on an ongoing basis, subject to agreement by the Board via a Members meeting to amend the Articles.

To seek confirmation from Somerset Council on the number of representatives for the Board going forward. As there are no longer any districts Cllr Dave Woan is in attendance as the representative for Somerset Council as the continuing authority - this may necessitate a further Members Meeting at the Board in July.

To ensure the working groups are fit for purpose for the future – hence merging the Finance and Resources Group with the Strategic Investment Panel which is now called the Operations and Investment Committee (OIC) and making some changes to its Terms of Reference (TOR). SAP as previously mentioned will continue for at least this year. With the confirmation of GH funding for a further year the Business Leadership Group chaired by Richard Stevens will continue in its overseeing role. The HotSW LEP Innovation Board is looking at transitioning to a GSW Innovation Programme Board.

**The Board agreed on the changes to the OIC TOR.**

**The Chair proposed Judith Petts as Vice Chair, seconded by SB and agreed by the Board.**

The Board has sought an exemption from Gov't for gender balance and diversity. During this transition period, the LEP has felt reluctant to recruit private members and ask them to give up their time especially now the Gov't is minded not to fund LEPs after next year. It is therefore important to recognise the Board is not well represented, in diversity or gender balance and that this is taken into consideration when making future decisions.

## **8. Build Back Better**

### **Work Plans and Performance Report – Eifion Jones**

Included within the papers circulated is a six-month Oct 22 – March 23 performance report which largely confirms that all the OKRs for 22/23 have been delivered. Two items not started relate to the implementation of the Marine & Environmental Accelerator and are dependent on Government funding to progress. Amber items relate to the timeframes for LEP transition planning being different from when the plan was written or where other work has started but completion will now be in 23/24, for example, options around future GPF.

Highlights:- work over the summer will look at the impact of LEP investments (Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund) the number of jobs etc. and will inform a broader piece on the economic impact of investments as a legacy piece for both the immediate and long term.



### Business and Inclusive Growth

The Growth Hub funding was underwritten by the LEP to end September '23 but Gov't has now confirmed funding at a similar level for 23/24 although it is unknown whether there are any conditions.

The Business Leadership group has the LEP funding to commission a peer network programme (6 networks with up to 11 SMEs on each to learn from other successful businesses) facilitated through Chambers, Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) and the Universities. Talks are underway with specific partners and the programme will start in June.

Access to finance remains a major issue for SMEs and the LEP has commissioned a study into existing business support, networks etc to identify gaps and identify a prospective angels programme and is also developing an online finance platform to better connect businesses, prospective funders and professional advice with the launch targeted to align with the British Business Bank SW fund. The platform is currently being built but it needs some active engagement to encourage businesses to use it, so probably looking at a 2-year run-in to get it up and running to develop a commercial model.

Inclusive Growth The LEP has commissioned a scoping study on what a potential HotSW area social impact fund could look like, drawing from Growing Places monies and learning from best practices from places such as Greater Cambridge, Bristol and others. Work has started and the study will report by July. A query was raised about how closely the skills work and career path mapping will link to social mobility and the understanding of this. Part of the work of Achieve Good, (the company appointed) will be to set out what the fund will do and can cover which will be based upon speaking to a whole range of stakeholders to understand the issues and develop the proposition.

Risk register – one change, the risks between short and medium term have been separated. Despite mitigation, some risks remain high but this is out of LEP control.

### **Transformational Opportunities – Claire Gibson**

Aerospace – continuing to develop a route map for the future aviation test zone with good engagement from the Sustainable Aviation Programme Board, technical input from the Connected Places Catapult and the LGA Sustainable Aviation Special Interest Group to take proposals to a workshop with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in June for a better understanding of the regulatory impact of a test zone.

The LEP continues to support Somerset Council with the development of the iAero Centre in Yeovil with plans to hold a 1st-anniversary event in June.

Also marketing the offer across the region; attended the Sustainable Sky World Summit last week and picked up several leads which are actively being followed up; An Irish Drone Company visited the patch and getting ready for the Paris Airshow in June.

Photonics- Following on from the High-Value Engineering Deep Dive in March one of the key messages from this was the importance of the production employment site (the grow on space for tenants of the nearby EPIC Innovation Centre (without this there is a risk they will leave) which is for the photonics sector. Therefore, written into the LEP's business plan is support for Torbay to secure funding for the electronics and photonics production park. In 2018 research on mapping

the electronics and photonics sector across the LEP footprint showed assets stretching across into Somerset too. A question was raised as to whether a company like Gooch and Housego (which have sites in Torbay and Somerset) could allocate this funding to their other sites. As this was from an unsuccessful 2<sup>nd</sup> leveling up fund this money is specifically ringfenced for the Torbay site only.

**Action: to see if other sites across the patch could form part of a wider investment plan for photonics which needs further investigation.ing into further.**

DR

Marine – awaiting a decision from Innovate Uk on the bid for the Ocean Futures Launchpad (a £7.5m grant programme) targeted at the marine and maritime sector across the GSW area. A decision is imminent with the funding package awaiting Gov't approval. If successful, co-design of the grant programme will commence in time for a launch in Summer, with applications to be submitted by the end of the year.

More formal conversations around Smart Sound have been requested on the potential operating models (for those parts the LEP has invested in) to ensure that it is financially sustainable when the LEP funding ends.

Food, Farming & Natural Capital – Following this Board's agreement to the Public Sector Food Procurement Declaration – thanks were given to Devon County Council and Somerset Council who have both signed up. Other public bodies and the LEPs of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and Dorset will be written to encourage them to sign up too. A food summit is hopefully being planned for the Autumn, which will feature the food declaration and discuss any potential barriers to its implementation.

A SW Agritech showcase was held at Exeter Racecourse yesterday with over 120 delegates attending with lots of activities across Devon and Somerset which the LEP helped to organise and fund.

The £1m loan fund for Natural Capital will go to the OIC meeting in June with a funding proposal.

Tourism- A brief is being drafted to engage and consult with Destination Management Organisations (DMO), local authorities and key stakeholders in the region to establish a business case and what the options are for Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) in Devon and Somerset. Visit England is also inputting into this.

Destination Plymouth has appointed Acorn T- Stats to be the consultant to deliver the Tourism Data Hub being funded by the LEP. The feasibility work will be presented in July to OIC potentially with a decision to proceed or not.

Digital- The University of Plymouth has appointed Sonardyne Int. Ltd to provide the sub-surface comms and navigation technology for the Smart Sound Connect Sub-Service project (also funded by the LEP). The Environmental Living Lab – all parties have now signed the collaboration agreement with the Satellite Applications Catapult.

Four business cases for the Digital Investment Programme under Build Back Better are being put forward to the next OIC meeting on 2 May:-

- AI-enabled Co-design in Engineering Laboratory (ACE-Lab)
- Cyber-Resilience of Offshore Wind Networks (CROWN)
- HotSW Digital Reverse Engineering And Metrology (HotSW DREAM)

- Exploring cross-sectoral opportunities for Innovation Led Growth in High-Value Engineering and Manufacturing (iAero and EPIC)

On community triage – still trying to find some additional resources to help this and in discussions with the Devon Districts and Somerset Council to see if there is a way to pool resources/ pay for some resources directly through the authorities with the hope of taking a proposal to the June OIC.

#### Energy-

Nuclear - The Hinkley Point C Inward Investment has been extended with SWMAS to target and support the 70 companies in the pipeline. The Hinkley C Legacy Prospectus is nearly complete just waiting for it to be signed off by partners.

The design outcomes from the Celtic Sea FLOW opportunity have been agreed upon with local authority partners, together with an initial set of priority actions to deliver this. The next stage is to agree upon a budget and bring this back to a future Board meeting.

A recent X Link briefing was attended at the invitation of Torridge District Council which indicated their main focus is on submitting a planning application in the summer for the 2 converter stations adjacent to Alverdiscott and the associated onshore cable route. Interestingly, National Grid has determined that the optimal connection point is Alverdiscott and has suggested to X Links this would take up all the potential capacity at Alverdiscott. This leaves a serious question as to where the other FLOW projects would connect, leaving Cornwall and Wales in a prime position. Further discussions and a debrief with partners are required to understand possible implications. The Gov't has remained quiet on X Links until publishing its 'Powering up' paper but has now said they are considering the viability and merits of the project to understand how it can contribute to UK energy security. X Links will now pursue a negotiated contract for differences with the Gov't, similar to the Hinkley arrangement. There have been no discussions about supply chain plans and local content and its imperative the LEP join forces with its local authorities partners with a collective voice to engage with X Links further.

The next Energy Programme Board on 15 May will discuss tidal energy partly due to its obvious opportunities and is timely as the Western Gateway has just appointed a chair and a coordinator for its Severn Tidal Commission. Also, the Welsh Gov't have launched their £750,000 tidal lagoon research challenge fund for 3 research projects focusing on the deployment of tidal lagoon technology to help address the barriers to this development.

A lot is happening in this arena which the LEP needs to both engage with and feed into and a small sum of money (allocated last year) has been carried forward to support the work in this area. NB resource has also been added within GSW to support the activities around marine, energy, high-value manufacturing and the rural, food, farming and fishing,

Comments were as follows:-

- The response to the Data Hub launch has been excellent across the GSW group and Acorn T-stats the consultants have started well with many meetings already undertaken. Acknowledgement was also given to PC for his role in assisting in the procurement.

**Action: The team behind the LVEP were thanked for their hard work with a final version due soon and highlights the need for a comms plan which needs to involve the LEP Comms team.**

CG/VF

- Need to look at Energy through a GSW lens, not a HotSW one- the single greatest opportunity for the GSW to make a name for itself. There are many discussions currently

ongoing around P2X technology which uses clean electricity obtained from renewable energy sources, such as wind or solar farms, to turn into something else – this is more significant than just increasing the supply of energy into the region. Conversations around Ports including those in Dorset and Floating Offshore wind (FLOW) are becoming increasingly interesting. If GSW can deliver supply chain and skills opportunities this alone will be transformational.

- At the last HotSW Energy Programme Board the topic of becoming one programme board for the whole GSW region was proposed but received a few adverse comments in that there were topics that members wished to discuss only relevant to Devon and Somerset. The implications of this need further working through until there is more confidence in what GSW does.
- It will be imperative to engage X Links with the Energy Board. It is confusing when 5 companies have reportedly obtained grid access into Alverdiscott for FLOW. If X Links now have priority, National Grid needs to explain how it carries out its prioritisation.
- Marine Launch Pad – looking promising, challenging to navigate through and not duplicate what was in the clean, maritime demonstration fund nationally.
- The Regen energy generation study being done for GSW (final due July 2023) will cover ports, infrastructure etc. as well as the actual generation.
- To answer the National Grid question, apparently all offers were made on a first come, first served basis (X Links back in 2021) with accompanying deadlines and milestones and these will fall away as they turn into formal agreements. Celtic Sea FLOW developer offers were made after this. However, it raises the question of how the National Grid can make such significant decisions which will have a local impact i.e. on potential clustering opportunities and the community benefits that flow from the connection point.

**Action: To seek a meeting with the National Grid for engagement and discussions around the implications of the Alverdiscott connection in N Devon etc.**

KT/DR/  
CG

- Grid/moving energy of all types around is a massive shared priority for the region and a theme where GSW can potentially add huge value.
- FLOW in Cornwall is initially 4.5 gw with the mining industry requiring 1 gw of this therefore there is a need to keep all of the electricity within the region.

#### Innovation Board update – Stuart Brocklehurst

The Innovation board is now acting at the GSW level (the HotSW LEP has now gone into dormant mode) and continues to speak to both the Gov't and opposition frontbenchers on the proposals around maritime autonomy, Environmental Science and the Technopole. It is felt that large projects are not the flavour of the month so a little redrafting is necessary to ensure these projects fit with current Gov't priorities for funding, as well as keeping an eye on the opportunities to capitalise on from a potential new administration next year.

Previous LEP Energy Programme Board members automatically transfer across to the GSW Energy Programme Board for continuity and additional representation is being sought to cover the GSW area. The next Innovation Board meeting on 27 April will be a GSW one.

Members were reminded that if they couldn't attend the Member's meeting following this to give their proxy vote to the Chair.

**Next Board meeting – 14 July 9.30am – 12.30pm via MS teams**