

Coast to Capital

Board Meeting

Thursday 9 July 2020

By Zoom Video Conference

Meeting Minutes

Board Members: Tim Wates (TW) – Chair; Julie Kapsalis (JK) - Vice Chair; Jamie Arnell (JA); Karen Dukes (KD); Martin Harris (MH); Richard Hopkins (RH); Daniel Humphreys (DH); Amanda Jones (AJ); David Joy (DJ); Colin Kemp (CK); Rosaleen Liard (RL); Paul Marshall (PM); Claire Mason (CM); Manju Shahul-Hameed (MS) – representing Tony Newman (TN); Frances Rutter (FR); Jonathan Sharrock (JS); Adam Tickell (AT).

Attendees: Cavendish Elithorn (CE) – Department for Transport; Cath Goodall (CG) - Cities & Local Growth Unit, BEIS; Lisa Taylor (LT), Accountable Body, Croydon Council; Toni Wootton (Toni W) Cities & Local Growth Unit, BEIS.

Coast to Capital attendees: Malcolm Brabon (MB); Kate Edwards (KE); Anthony Middleton (ALRM); Hazel Nicholmann (HN); Katie Nurcombe (KN); Kirsten Trussell (KT).

Part A items will be published. Part B items will also be published unless specified otherwise.

1. Introduction (Part A) – This item will be published

a) Welcome and apologies

TW welcomed Board members to the first Board meeting held by Zoom, which also marked his final as LEP Chair. Apologies were noted from Mark Brunt; Tony Newman and Nancy Platts. Toni W joined the meeting during Item 2, and MS for Item 3. JA and CK needed to leave the meeting ahead of the intended finish time.

TW paid tribute and special thanks to CG upon her upcoming retirement. It was noted that she had had a long and distinguished Civil Service career. As Area Lead for Coast to Capital, the LEP had benefitted greatly from her wisdom and experience. Toni W would be covering aspects of the role until successor arrangements were fully in place.

JS explained Zoom protocols to members.

b) Public Comments

None.

c) Declarations, Disclosures & Conflicts of Interest

TW read out the Conflicts of Interest statement (see Annex A).

The following conflicts were declared: trivial conflicts for CK, PM, MS and JS for Item 3 (Local Growth Fund Consent Paper). JS was however satisfied that there would be no conflicts arising as substantive decisions were a matter for the Investment Committee rather than the Board meeting; and also JK for Item 5 (Chair Appointment).

TW indicated that any conflicts arising would be handled appropriately during the meeting.

d) Chairman's Committee Minutes (Part B)

The March and June 2020 Minutes were noted.

2. Chief Executive Report

JS stated that Board Forums had helped plug the gap and maintain collaboration since the January Board meeting. Overarching themes were how hard LEP team members had been working during the pandemic which had seen a significant uptick in workloads and responsibilities. Contributions made by Board members had not gone unnoticed, both for regular business and additional activity. The collective effort had contributed to the growing success of the LEP and JS expressed his thanks to all involved.

The tenure for both the Higher and Further Education sector roles were due for review in the autumn and a consultation with the two sector bodies would be taking place. FR and AT expressed their willingness to continue in their roles if asked to do so. The Board welcomed these proposals and felt that continuity was important over this time. The appointment of AJ as member of the Growing Places Fund Committee was approved.

TW emphasised the significance of the outcome following the LEP Annual Performance Review. The rating of 'Exceptional' for Governance was a notable achievement and signalled that the organisation was going from strength to strength. TW paid credit to all involved.

JS gave an overview of Communications related activities including the new 'OfficeVibe' initiative for team member feedback. Consultations were taking place on working from home arrangements with the aim of a return to the Office in September.

JS gave an overview of the LEP's Backing Business Grants Fund (BBGF) which was early on the initiative and one of only two LEPs to pioneer the concept. As a result 161 businesses across the region who had met the advertised criteria were successful. Due diligence was currently being carried out with the companies to ensure compliance with spend. It was noted that the Brighton and West Sussex areas featured strongly but an analysis would be done of the East Surrey area with the aim of a greater take up rate in the future.

JS stated that the BBGF had helped broaden Coast to Capital's network with businesses, and had drawn interest via social media case studies. Compliments were paid to LEP team members who had been heavily involved with the Fund and instrumental in delivery of this project. [The link to the website pages which sets out the full allocation is available here.](#)

Toni W joined the meeting.

JS gave an overview of a further intense period of activity which involved the detailed preparation of an Investment Project Portfolio as part of the PM's 'Build' campaign. Within the one week time limit the LEP had shortlisted an initial list of 116 'Shovel Ready Projects' (valued at £300m) to 27 (valued at £40m) which subsequently had to be ranked. It was noted that the upcoming Investment Committee would decide how the £19.2m which had recently been awarded would be allocated; and that Government would have the final say. The award was higher than other areas of the South and comparable regions; and had gone some way to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the LEP area, including Gatwick and the coastal strip.

As with the BBGF, members felt that there was a lesser geographical spread of projects from the Surrey region. Board members agreed that there should be a focus on areas of deprivation; areas of under employment and where communities had been hit the hardest. The initial long-list would also serve as a useful pipeline for future funding should this become available.

KD and JK both highlighted the importance of good governance surrounding this project, which due to its nature was outside of the existing LEP's Assurance Framework document. Members agreed that a robust process had been applied in exceptionally tight timescales, however an Assurance Statement should be produced to manage the process and recommendations in a transparent way. Once the wording was defined it would be agreed by the Board through correspondence. Governance would then be devolved to the Investment Committee. TW again paid credit to all involved with this project to date.

JS summarised further key LEP developments as outlined in the Report, including the excellent work delivered by the Growth Hub team and the enhanced service to be delivered through the new Careers Hub. The Annual Report for 2019/20 was also subsequently approved.

3. Delivery

Local Growth Fund Consent Paper (*Part B – this item will be published*)

MS joined the meeting.

JK updated members on the Fiveways Croydon project, in which the Investment Committee had recommended the commencement of a Funding Withdrawal protocol which was agreed by the Board.

The Board was also appraised on the status of the Business Finance (Growth Grants Programme) which had been halted due to the impacts to local businesses and a resultant lack of demand for a matched funded scheme. Government had agreed that the £2.25million allocation for 2020/21 could be converted into a second round of a BBGF which would help support further businesses as part of economic recovery. The Board approved the approach, which would be subject to bringing back full detail of the grant scheme to the Investment Committee in July for approval. CM was exempted from voting on the BBGF as a potentially eligible business as to avoid any future conflict of interest. The Board noted the remainder of the consent paper which included the decisions taken at the Investment Committee on 25 June.

There was a short break ahead of the next Item.

4. Strategy

JS presented on the LEP's ongoing work to develop a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) recovery.

The Board had previously agreed the creation of a designated fund from Coast to Capital reserves to support the delivery of the business cases to promote the LIS. Evidence during the pandemic had further demonstrated the disproportionate effect on the area compared to others in the South East. Crawley was most severely affected due to the cessation of the aviation based economy which surrounds it.

Hatch Regeneris were preparing an evidence base of the impact of the crisis, working with Local Authority and sub-regional partners. The aim was to identify elements of an effective COVID-19 economic recovery plan that would address the pandemic and the major structural weaknesses already identified through LIS activity. JS emphasised the importance of this work for the LEP in illustrating both the level of ambition to Government and relevance in the national debate.

The Board approved the approach outlined above and delegation to the Chief Executive of £175,000 from the designated fund, for use on research and investment cases to support regional economic recovery.

JS provided an overview of the branding model under the umbrella of 'Catalyst South' which was being developed by six LEPs as a basis for engagement with Government, including in the run-up to the Devolution White Paper. The aim was to be comparable with the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine brands, and to meet the Government's manifesto commitment to the development of 'growth bodies' for England. The Chair facilitated an informative discussion with Board members on the proposition which was noted.

AT lost connection and subsequently re-joined.

TW reflected on the need for the southern LEPs to have a collected voice and a strong and clear identity. Dialogue would continue with Board members on the topic.

JA left the meeting.

5. Governance (*Part B – this item will be published*)

KE introduced the Finance related papers. The Board reviewed the draft financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 and recommended their approval, following prior oversight by the Audit Committee.

CK left the meeting.

AJ gave an overview of the work undertaken to finalise the accounts and expressed her thanks to KE for her efforts under the auspices of the new Auditors.

JK was conflicted and left the meeting.

MH updated members on the Chair Recruitment campaign as outlined in the papers. Recognition was paid to all those involved in the successful delivery of this project, including the role of both the Working Group and the subsequent Nominations Committee who interviewed the candidates. The Board fully endorsed the recommendation to appoint JK as Chair from 1 August as a worthy successor to TW.

JK returned to the meeting and was updated on the decision.

6. Close (Part A)

JS and JK paid sincere and fulsome tributes to TW given his 9 year-long tenure. His vigour, passion and diligence had struck a chord with members and stakeholders alike.

Board members additionally praised TW for his exemplary leadership, including across a large and disparate Board. This together with his role with the Chairs of the Southern LEPs had made a real impact on Coast to Capital from its inception to where it is today.

Best wishes were also conveyed to JK as she embarks on the role during a critical time for the LEP.

There was no further business.

Annex A: Declarations, Disclosures & Conflicts of Interest Statement

'Can I ask members now to declare any interest they may have and to say which item or part of an item on the agenda the interest relates to. If a member realises a need to make any declaration later on during the meeting they may do so. If any member requires any assistance on how their interest affects their contribution to the meeting we will deal with it as the item arises. Are there any declarations please?'

Unconfirmed minutes – to be approved at the next Board meeting.