

Reference: Coast to Capital Board Meeting
Date: 27 January 2022
Report Title: Executive Report
Report by: Executive Team
Item No: 7a
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to note the Executive Report and:

- **Approve** the re-appointment of Karen Dukes for a second Term as a member of the Coast to Capital Board, and **note** that Karen Dukes will continue undertaking the role of Interim Vice Chair. A formal process for the permanent appointment to this post will be brought to the next Board meeting for approval.
- **Approve** the Enhanced Redundancy Policy recommended by Finance and Resources Committee (Annex A).

1. Economic Context

Economic recovery in the UK slowed between July and September 2021 with only a 1.1% increase in gross domestic product (GDP) when compared with a 5.4% increase in the previous quarter of April to June. The 5.4% increase was attributed to the easing of restrictions and largest contributors to output were from retail, hospitality, education and health industries. Between July and September, the largest contributors to GDP were hospitality and arts, entertainment and recreation. Whilst output is still 1.5% below the pre-pandemic levels, this is lower than the 2.1% below originally estimated and initial estimates suggest GDP grew by 0.9% in the month to November 2021, illustrating the economy was recovering better than expected.

However, it is predicted that economic output will have significantly declined between November and December following the arrival of the Omicron variant and Plan B COVID-19 restrictions. Anecdotally we have heard from many businesses in our area that they experienced significant cancelling of orders and bookings in December, which is historically their busiest months for making income.

We have also heard from businesses that inflation, rising energy costs and supply shortages caused significant challenges and negatively impacted their revenue streams. Where firms were planning to use reserves to support their recovery and growth, many were forced to use their reserves to maintain daily operations or risk going under.

Whilst company insolvencies in Coast to Capital increased by 70% between October and November 2021, they then declined by 29% between November and December 2021. The increase in November could be linked to the closure of the furlough scheme and other COVID-19 support schemes in September, causing businesses to close without the continued government support. However, the total number of insolvencies for 2021 was still lower than the total number of new company registrations in 2021, highlighting the resilience of entrepreneurial activity in our region.

Final figures of the furlough scheme showed Coast to Capital had a slightly higher take-up rate of 5% when compared to the South East and England rates of 4%. Crawley continued to have the highest take up rate at 7%. Whilst Retail trade had the highest percentage of claims in Coast to Capital in September at 13%, the Transportation and storage sector followed closely at 12% of claims. However, Crawley had a much higher percentage of claims in the Transportation and storage sector at 38%, this is three times higher than the South East percentage (12%) and well above the England percentage (8%). Horsham also had a high percentage of claims in that sector at 26%, followed closely by Mid Sussex at 21%, illustrating the high concentration of impacted jobs in that sector in the towns around Gatwick airport.

Businesses continue to recruit for positions, but we are starting to see job postings activity plateau. There were a similar number of postings each month between October and December 2021, potentially illustrating long-term vacancies and the challenges businesses are having in recruiting to positions when there is an abundance of choice in the job market.

2. Corporate Update

2.1. Organisational Developments

The following changes have taken place in the Coast to Capital team:

- **Ellie Smith** has joined the EAN team as Enterprise Coordinator for East Surrey.
- Skills Lead **Millie Bew** has left the company.
- Chief Executive **Jonathan Sharrock** has left the company.

We currently have four vacancies – Head of Business Engagement, Project Lead, Skills Lead and Stakeholder Relationships Coordinator. However, until the LEP Review has

concluded and the ask from Government for LEPs is clear, we are not recruiting to any positions. Depending on the LEP Review and success of the Value Proposition, these roles may be different going forward.

We are currently awaiting a Schedule of Dilapidations for the exit of our offices at Pacific House, but have been assured that there is little work that will need to be carried out, that it will mainly consist of “de-banding” the office and therefore the costs should be minimal. In fact, we hope to be able to carry out the majority of the work ourselves.

We have researched potential future office spaces that would be suitable for the company needs as well as being cost effective. Serviced offices would be the best option and we have been offered a variety of spaces which we are considering within our budget. What size of office space will be dependent on our future funding and until we receive confirmation of what this will be, we will not be committing to any form of lease. We are planning for the potential of not having an office to move into immediately following the termination of our current lease and are looking into storage options as well as temporary “home based” contracts for staff.

2.2. Enhanced Redundancy Policy

The Finance and Resources Committee have agreed amendments to our current redundancy policy to offer an enhanced redundancy pay to employees (Annex A)

2.3. Communications

In November/December we:

- Hosted a successful [virtual AGM](#) which was viewed over 150 times (across platforms) to date.
- Launched the [2020-21 Annual Report](#).
- Launched the [Regional Projects Business Case Development Fund](#).
- Held our first in-person All Team Meeting for internal staff since the start of the pandemic.

We were featured in the following **press releases**:

- [Circus Street new cultural quarter opens in Brighton](#)
- [Coast to Capital looks to future at AGM](#)
- [Initial stage successfully completed in Manor Royal highway improvement scheme](#)
- [Crawley College opens new STEM Centre](#)
- [Coast to Capital award for Equality and Diversity](#)
- [Region wins prestigious Institute of Technology bid](#)

In total, we were mentioned 129 times in regional publications.

We issued the following **newsletters**:

- [EAN](#)
- [EAN \(Ofsted special\)](#)
- [Coast to Capital](#)
- [Growth Hub](#)

On **Social Media**:

- The Coast to Capital Twitter account was mentioned 139 times with 8,900 views on tweets and followers increased to 4,700.
- Trending topics on Twitter included promotion of the Annual Report 2020-21, Equality and Diversity award and AGM.
- The Coast to Capital Growth Hub Twitter account was mentioned 86 times with 19,800 views on tweets and followers increased to 1,703.
- We now have 1,893 followers on LinkedIn with 413 visitors during this period.

3. **Governance Update:**

- Our **Company Risks** are being actively managed, with top risks identified in Annex B. We are now working with the new risk structure from our Business Plan 2021/22 and have a schedule of reviews planned during the year to keep the register updated.
- We held our **Audit and Risk Committee** and the **Skills 360 Board** on Wednesday 12th January. With the conclusion of the Audit and Risk Committee, we completed a full governance calendar for 2021.
- The **Finance and Resources Committee** was held on the 8th December.
- We are working on the process for our **Annual Performance Review** with Government and have submitted all of the relevant documentation required. As of yet there have been no issues of non-compliance identified.
- We are working on a draft **Local Assurance Framework** version 9. Whilst this has been delayed by the lack of result from the LEP review, we will endeavor to keep our Assurance Framework updated to best reflect the organisation and its business plan.
- We have no live **Complaints**.
- We have responded to a **Freedom of Information** request received over Christmas. Highlighting the LEP's work in being transparent with our work.

- We are undertaking our first **Internal Audit** for 2022 on Payroll. The Audit and Risk Committee will also be discussing how to map out a 3 year audit plan at its meeting in March.

3.1. Board Development:

Since our last meeting, Cllr Dan Humphreys has resigned from his position on the Board. Cllr Humphreys was a valued member of the Board and will be missed.

The Articles of Association set out the recruitment process should any District Council Director resign from their post. Therefore, we contacted all our District Council representatives from our Southern Area (Arun, Adur, Chichester, Worthing and the South Downs National Park) to ask for another representative to the Board. They unanimously voted Cllr Shaun Gunner to be appointed as the District Council representative and he was duly appointed on the 8th December 2021.

Tony Middleton has been registered as a director of Coast to Capital on Companies House, in his role as Acting Chief Executive. This includes having full powers of the CEO as bestowed by the Board, and will count as a full Board member with voting rights.

In addition, on the 31st January Karen Dukes will have completed her first term as a Director on the Coast to Capital Board. We ask that the board **confirm her re-appointment** for a second term of 3 years to the Board, and that she continues in the Interim in undertaking the role of Vice Chair until a formal appointment is able to be made.

3.1.1. Nominations Committee

Given the changes to membership of the Board, there is currently not enough members of the Nominations Committee to undertake specific delegated Board functions including Board recruitment.

Therefore, members of the Board are asked to put themselves forward if they would like to formally join this committee.

3.2. Assurance Framework

As highlighted previously in the paper, we are beginning work on a new version of the Assurance Framework to help encapsulate the significant changes the business has undergone since version 8 was published in 1st April 2021.

This new document will provide key updates that align more succinctly with the National Assurance Framework and our Articles, such as the recruitment of future

Board members, and the Vice Chair. These updates will be taken to the Audit and Risk Committee at their March meeting ahead of the April Board. We can confirm that, the amendments approved by the Board on the 14th October do ensure that our current Local Assurance Framework complies with the National Local Growth Assurance Framework published by Government.

3.3. All Party Parliamentary Group for the South East

Ahead of publication of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper, the All Party Parliamentary Group for the South East has launched an inquiry – *Financing for the future – what does levelling up mean for South East England?* The inquiry has sought views from organisations and individuals across the region on expectations, requirements and concerns related to the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

The Coast to Capital team worked within a short timeframe to produce a written submission, on behalf of the Chair, which was made to the APPG. This summarised our role and significant contribution as a LEP, in strategic and delivery terms, toward the regional economy to date. It set out the nature of some of our short and longer term regional economic challenges that should not be overlooked in terms of future UK growth and prosperity. It set out our thinking in relation to the Levelling Up White Paper, and future distribution of regional investment funds and our role as a LEP, as reflected in the work on our value proposition.

We also refer to our role and contribution to the wider South East as a founding member of Catalyst South, the group of six LEPs who together represent over a fifth of the UK economy and are collaborating to support future regional and national economic recovery. Members of Catalyst South have made their own, individual submissions and together are looking to make a joint representation to a forthcoming meetings of the Inquiry.

Our submission to the APPG is attached for Board members as Annex C.

4. Growth Hub Updates

4.1. Diversity Disaggregation

The Growth Hub continues to utilise the mnAI platform as part of a pilot trial which enables us to identify women business owners in the Coast to Capital area. The data provided by the mnAI platform has helped Coast to Capital identify, record and report on our engagement with women business owners and will enable us to track our improvement over time in this area.

Our influence on the development of the platform has meant that exporting businesses, Innovate UK grant recipients, furlough funding recipients and COVID funding recipients can be identified.

Coast to Capital is working closely with mnAI to inspire further developments to the platform which include ethnicity disaggregation, rural and urban business analysis, identifying trading as well as registered addresses.

4.2. Core Growth Hub Funded Activity

Enquiries from businesses have reduced since the early stages of the COVID pandemic and the end of the successful business recovery grant programme.

The Growth Hub completes weekly reports to the Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU) provided intelligence on business issues. The chief concerns from business are related to:

- Staff recruitment and retention issues
- Staff shortages due to illness
- Rising costs of materials and utilities
- Supply chain and logistics costs
- Increased complexity of EU export documentation

Despite the decline in inbound enquiries, the Growth Hub team have made excellent progress against our internal key performance indicators seen in the table below;

KPI	Apr to Dec 21 Performance	Apr to Dec 21 Target
Intensive support to growing businesses	65	93
Diagnostic reports	22	46
Light and medium intensive support	635	825
Support Taken Up	51%	50%
Number of companies referred to national providers eg DIT	435	375
Number of businesses referred to support providers	717	375

The table below relates to the numbers of referrals to partner organisations by support type. It identifies that finance and funding enquiries are the most requested type of support;

Business Support referral topic	Number of businesses referred in Apr to Dec 2021
Finance and Funding	307
Skills and Training	80
Innovation/R&D	62
Mentoring	48

4.3. Growth Hub Case Study

Lithe Audio Ltd in Redhill is growing exponentially and in just five years since establishment has sales in 45 countries, plan to increase the workforce by 25% this year. To sustain its growth the operations director asked for support on business planning and exporting.

- We introduced them to Innovate edge who were able to secure a loan of £400,000 on favourable terms to enable them to fund stock holdings in the USA, their largest potential market
- Following an introduction to DIT they were awarded an Internationalisation fund of £8,000 to support trade shows in Spain and the US.
- We identified areas to develop in their business plans (particularly innovation environmental) following facilitation of growth mapper report with the management team

Please see **Annex D** for further Growth Hub Case Studies relevant to female led business's.

4.4. Peer Networks programme

Despite the challenges faced by businesses six full cohorts have been established to date. Participating businesses will receive 18 hours of peer to peer mentoring and 3.5 hours of individual coaching.

The key topics being discussed by the cohort members include HR recruitment and staffing, sales and marketing, finance and leadership.

BEIS has announced that, following the spending review, they will not be funding a Peer Networks programme in the next financial year. The focus is now on the Help to Grow programme as the main mechanism for improving business productivity nationally.

4.5. Expert in Residence

We are working with Luke Cartwright, our banking expert in residence, who helps promote the Growth Hub support to women business leaders. Karen Tyrrell, one of our Growth Relationship Managers, is presenting to NatWest's Women In Business Networking For Sussex And Kent on 25 January 2022.

5. Diversity Statement

Any position on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion has been covered above in this paper.

6. Legal Statement

This paper has been reviewed by the Brighton and Hove City Council as the Accountable Body.

7. Finance Statement

There are no further financial considerations of the paper other than those mentioned.

Annexes:

Annex A – Enhanced Redundancy Policy

Annex B – Company Top Risks

Annex C – Coast to Capital submission to the APPG for the South East inquiry into Levelling UP

Annex D – Growth Hub Case Studies

	Risk Grouping	Risk Examples	Risk Owner	Inherent Combined Score	Key Current Mitigations	Residual Combined Score	Planned Actions	Due Date
1	Change in political climate creates remit, funding and strategic priority uncertainty	<p>Uncertainty on the ask of LEPs, including potential boundary changes in light of the Governments LEP review.</p> <p>Lack of clarity around the LEP involvement and link to the 'Levelling Up' agenda, causing difficulty to strategically plan longer term, including budget planning without certainty of core funding.</p> <p>Political uncertainty: around the principle of the Government devo white paper, that will confirm the context of LEPs following LEP review.</p>	AM	16	<p>Engagement with local authorities to build regional identity.</p> <p>Working closely with local businesses on strategic projects for the region.</p> <p>Board mandate to develop a regional programme that aligns to Stronger, Smarter Greener; leading the development of strategic investments for the region.</p> <p>Engagement with the LEP Network, MPs, stakeholders, ministers and senior civil servants around the regional programme, and LEP workstreams to raise our profile, and to help influence decisions.</p> <p>Proactive work through Catalyst South, to ensure that our analysis, collaborative work and influence sets the right context across the wider South East.</p>	16	<p>Coast to Capital is being proactive, and building our identify: developing tools to increase our influence.</p> <p>Understanding how the LEP can be agile to changing political climate/funding through scenario planning.</p> <p>To prioritise the regional programme workstream to include consultancy work linked to income generation.</p>	01 December 2021
2	Coast to Capital does not continue to be a going concern	<p>Expected income streams are not realised.</p> <p>Government do not provide core funding to the LEP</p> <p>Local authorities facing their own significant financial challenges, meaning likelihood of future contribution to the LEP is uncertain.</p> <p>Ongoing costs become unmanageable, and the various income streams and funding requirements make it difficult to organise structure in the business.</p> <p>Unplanned costs materialise. (Cost are not aligned with income).</p>	ST/AM	16	<p>Company reserves allowing a period to continue operation.</p> <p>Chair & Chief Executive working closely with the LEP Network to secure longer term income commitments</p> <p>Head of Finance ensuring strong financial governance in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Budget, followed by quarterly forecast - Quarterly review of cash flow and adoption of Treasury Policy - Formal tracking and monitoring of income put in place <p>Monthly Reporting to the Board.</p> <p>Weekly management team meetings to look at future planning</p>	16	<p>Update Board & Committees following the announcement in January</p> <p>To seek external advice to understand options for future planning.</p> <p>Value proposition work</p>	
3	Lack of resources, prevents delivery, inhibits growth, or reduces morale	<p>Workload on team members cannot be adequately met by current resourcing following the restructure, which is made more uncertain with the existing freeze on recruitment.</p> <p>Teams are not able to meet stretching objectives, and are not resilient to staff absence/ peaks of work. Delay in corporate projects because of peaks in demand</p> <p>Resources are limited, so unable to respond to increases in demand. Staff unable to complete all aspects of complex tasks, leading to ambitious business plan not being fully achieved.</p> <p>Current uncertainty around LEP review, mixed with limitation on staff rewards, talent management, investment in staff leads to poor staff retention.</p> <p>Staff overloaded leads to decline in morale, well-being, long term sickness, mental and physical health issues.</p>	AM	16	<p>Business planning exercise for 21/22 financial year. Includes budget setting and use of contingency.</p> <p>Reviewing performance management process for 2021/22 to ensure objectives are clear and system is easy to use.</p> <p>A training programme is in place focusing on management, professional skills, and linking to our Values.</p> <p>Staff welfare policy and wellbeing of staff</p> <p>Prioritisation of key business areas will be implemented and reflected in the 2021/22 Business Plan.</p> <p>CE and Chairmans Committee forum to discuss key business areas.</p>	12	<p>CEO to review pay strategy in light of 21-22 budget.</p> <p>Review of resourcing requirements following outcomes of LEP review.</p>	Ongoing
4	Inability to obtain value for money from key services	<p>Services are not fit for purpose and therefore are not achieving value for money.</p> <p>Overpaying for Accountable Body service (either financial or legal), in light of changing role of LEPs</p> <p>Overpaying for services</p> <p>No Audit's undertaken to ascertain Value for Money within business and no clear way of measuring this.</p>	ST/AM	12	<p>Procurement policy in place for contracting new services</p>	12	<p>To look at Auditing key services to ensure VFM.</p> <p>CE to have a discussion with the Accountable Body regarding the service required following LEP review announcement.</p>	
5	Coast to Capital suffers a breakdown of internal control and/or approval processes	<p>damage reputation and effectiveness of Business.</p> <p>Lack of clear internal control increases likelihood of financial mismanagement</p> <p>High numbers of Complaints, FOI or Whistleblowing from poor operation meaning a large undertaking of staff time and damage to C2C reputation</p> <p>Litigation resulting in high cost for the Business</p> <p>Litigation due to failure to meet basic legal requirements for the treatment of staff. Possible Employment tribunal taking staff time and incurring company cost</p> <p>Rogue Employee</p> <p>Accountable Body not delivering in service resulting in disrupting to day to day business</p>	KS	12	<p>Internal controls, checks, risk management and audit for LEP investment lifecycle: Strong and robust investment committee in operation.</p> <p>Fully compliant Assurance Framework which details decision making processes annually reviewed.</p> <p>Media handling arrangements in place for complex cases including GFP.</p> <p>Robust Complaint Policy and Whistleblowing Policy in place.</p> <p>Employee handbook launched on 1 January 2020. Strong contract management in place with SME Adviser.</p> <p>Strong contract management with Accountable Body.</p> <p>Contingency in place including sign off and payments. Delegation of Authority determined.</p> <p>Risk Policy updated and risk appetite confirmed.</p> <p>Procurement Policy approved and implemented</p>	8	<p>Audit Plan to be agreed by Audit and Risk Committee (Nov 2021)</p>	
6	Coast to Capital is no longer able to achieve its business critical operations	<p>COVID-19 outbreak in staff leading to business operations declining in output.</p> <p>Continued uncertainty of the LEP Review mean lack of planning for future operations.</p> <p>Unexpected major emergencies (either environmental, economical or political) stopping business operations through a lack of emergency planning.</p> <p>Faulty Laptops, crashes in Microsoft 365, broadband issues or lack of support from Uptime causes mass IT issues leading to staff not able to conduct work</p> <p>Little contingency following absence of CE organisation structure unclear and staff overworked.</p> <p>Key staff with key knowledge not replaced caused skills shortage meaning an increased workload.</p> <p>Redeployment of staff to major projects results in other business areas being neglected.</p> <p>Lack of joined-up, collaborative working between teams reduces success of business plan and reputation of the LEP.</p>	KS	12	<p>COVID 19 Business contingency plan developed and implemented.</p> <p>Strong IT support provided by Uptime in addition to 365 system in place.</p> <p>Contingency plans developed and implemented for vital work areas, including written processes where required.</p> <p>Clear workflows in policies to allow for delivery of business operations.</p> <p>Weekly management strategy meetings to address key operational issues</p> <p>Scenario planning for various responses to the LEP Review</p> <p>Acting CEO appointed.</p>	9	<p>Plan for move out of current office after notice expires (01/04/2022)</p> <p>All day management meeting to discuss future business plan (07/12/2022)</p> <p>Board strategy afternoon (10/11/2021)</p>	

7	Inability to attract, retain and motivate the right staff to achieve Coast to Capital's Business Plan	<p>Negative Staff Morale due to current working conditions and short-term uncertainty, around new company structure and LEP review, leads to underperformance in company and dissatisfied staff who may leave.</p> <p>Excessive recruitment, such as from re-organisation drains time and cost from Business.</p> <p>Necessary incentives and adequate pay for the retention of Key staff and suitably Skilled employees to adequately deliver the business plan.</p> <p>Unclear staff review process to identify progression opportunities effects motivation of staff and effectiveness of employees</p> <p>Lack of management of staff to identify poor performance and violation of policies from employees resulting in litigation against the company</p>	KS	12	<p>Regular staff meetings and updates as well as staff events. (JD)</p> <p>Clear, transparent communication with staff regarding LEP review, including positive messaging on company financial position (CEO)</p> <p>Company restructure improves cross team working.</p> <p>Competitive benefits package for staff, reviewed annually.</p> <p>Salary benchmarking completed for all roles to ensure market value competitive salaries for staff</p> <p>Appropriate objective setting and review process implemented, including reviewing development/training requires for staff.</p> <p>Clear recruitment process to save time and costs, managed internally.</p> <p>Comprehensive Employee handbook and other policies in place with scheduled review</p>	12	<p>Mid Year Reviews to review objectives (15/12/2021)</p> <p>Office lunch to meet directors to improve working relationships (23/11/2021)</p> <p>Staff Christmas Part (10/12/2021)</p>	
8	Regional projects pipeline and agreed programme of LEP involvement does not deliver new investment for the region.	<p>A minimum of six projects cannot be identified and developed for funding this financial year.</p> <p>Pipeline of projects do not align with broad government policy agenda, and specifically within the context of levelling up.</p> <p>Regional projects do not address local barriers to productivity and growth, as set out in Stronger, Smarter, Greener framework.</p>	MW	12	<p>Working in a collaborative and agile way with partners to pool expertise and resource.</p> <p>Themed and prioritised projects which have the closest fit with regional and national strategy, and are scaleable.</p>	6	<p>Regular conversations with partners to define the opportunity to work together.</p> <p>Keeping up to date on significant regional and national developments which relate to the projects.</p> <p>Continually assess the pipeline to make sure we are prioritising projects with most likelihood of progressing.</p>	31 December 2021
9	Negative perception of the Careers Hub and Coast to Capital reputation as a result of not delivering on the expansion of the Careers Hub.	<p>We are unable to source match funding required to recruit additional ECs to expand the Careers Hub to other areas of the region, therefore unable to meet ambitions of the Careers and Enterprise Company by 2024.</p> <p>Reputational impact due to loss of goodwill and relationships with partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Projects and initiatives delivered by the Careers Hub and EAN fail to have the desired impact and/or are not received well by employers and stakeholders.</p>	KT	12	<p>Explore opportunities for match funding of the programme with external partners, businesses and stakeholders (LM)</p> <p>Research projects and initiatives in the planning stage to identify objectives, impact measurements and potential uptake. Share the Careers Hub Strategy with the Hub Steering Group and other stakeholders for direction and collaborative support (LM)</p> <p>Ensure risks are identified and mitigated when planning projects and initiatives with providers to support the programme (LM)</p>	9	Share the Careers Hub Strategy with the Hub Steering Group and other stakeholders	
10	The European Structural Investment Fund strategy does not result in significant investment or impact for the area	<p>Pipeline projects are withdrawn, rejected or not contracted by the deadline date, particularly as a result of COVID-19</p> <p>The remaining central pot of ESF has little or no impact locally, especially failure to support recovery from the impact of COVID-19</p> <p>Existing ESF projects fail to support the recovery from the impact of COVID-19</p> <p>Inflexibility of ESF application and appraisal processes delay future ESF projects meaning delivery is too late to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 or projects do not have sufficient time to deliver by deadline of December 2023</p>	KT	12	<p>Maintain regular contact with DWP regarding all pipeline and impact of existing projects</p> <p>Support ESIF Sub-committee to influence progression of projects in the pipeline</p>	9		



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All Party Parliamentary Group for the South East

Sent by email

12 January 2022

APPG Inquiry: Financing the future - what does Levelling-up mean for South East England?

Dear APPG Members,

We are very grateful for the opportunity to present this submission to the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry. This is a topic which is of relevance and concern to us, as a Local Enterprise Partnership, working with our regional partners to create prosperity within our area and across the South East.

In summary, we would ask Government to consider the following, in order to avoid the risk of inadvertently 'levelling down' areas of the South East, like ours, in the pursuit of addressing regional disparity, and particularly given the economic unknowns and uncertainties still arising from the pandemic:

- Equal access to funding for the South East to ensure swift recovery and future productivity growth, toward the success of 'Global Britain'
- Continued support for LEPs in the form of core Government funding (without which there is a real risk that LEPs will cease to exist)
- Additional support for regional economic development in areas where there is no Mayoral Combined Authority or forthcoming 'County Deal'

Background

Coast to Capital is one of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in England. We are a business-led collaboration between private, public and education sectors, representing a large and diverse economy with a value of £46.6 billion, across East Surrey, Greater Brighton, and West Sussex. Like other LEPs, over the past decade we have been an integral part of the national economic investment infrastructure, working with and on behalf of HM Government.

Since 2015, we have invested over £300million in over 90 major [infrastructure projects](#). These include transport infrastructure upgrades, business space creation, residential site enablement, state of the art innovation facilities for HE and business, FE and charitable learning facilities, high-speed and full fibre digital connectivity. We have also played an

important coordinating role in the process of distributing significant European Structural and Investment Funds across the area.

A recent example of our impact was our £1.2 million Getting Building Fund grant to the University of Chichester's new School of Nursing and Allied Health. This state of the art, accredited training centre is run by the University in collaboration with health providers and was created in response to a real need for health practitioners. It recruited its cohort of 40 BSc adult Nursing students ready for September 2021, with 73% being mature students and 87% from the local area. This intake is being doubled for 2022 entry.

We have provided advice, support and funding to individual local businesses via our [Growth Hub](#), with roughly 1,800 new businesses engaged in 2021 alone. We have distributed over £4million of vital business grants through two separate funding schemes, supporting roughly 220 local businesses to adapt and grow in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

For example, we awarded Brighton based training provider Acceler8 a £10,400 Backing Business Grant to fund the equipment to move from a traditional, in person training model to providing online training. This allowed them to increase turnover and build their client base and in February 2021, Acceler8 won a contract for NHS Blood and Transplant. The money from Coast to Capital not only allowed Acceler8 to transform their service model, but it's also helping them to do the same, through training, for the NHS.

We are also proud to be pioneering work to disaggregate our business support data by gender and ethnicity, to be able to target support to underrepresented groups. This work has been flagged as best practice by the Rose Review of Female entrepreneurship commissioned by HM Treasury.

Scenarios for future investment

With the move to new regional economic investment streams, including Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we expect to see significantly less public investment in our places, as in the wider South East. Most of our local authority areas are in the lowest priority category for the Levelling Up Fund.

We recognise that two of our local authority areas, Arun District Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, were successful in securing funds totalling c.£30 million between them, reflecting Government's focus on coastal areas across the UK. However, Tandridge District Council (in East Surrey) is one of our higher priority local authority areas (Priority 2) for the Levelling Up Fund, and was unsuccessful.

We recognise that many parts of our economy have been historically prosperous, benefitting from and evolving in close proximity to London. However, previously productive parts of our economy have seen a reversal of fortunes during the pandemic, due mainly to the central importance and reliance of our economy on Gatwick airport, the second largest in the UK. This has been felt nowhere more so than in Crawley which, despite high productivity growth in recent years, had among the highest rates of furlough take up in the UK during the pandemic and also at the closure of the scheme.

However, prior to the pandemic, our area has not kept pace with productivity growth in the South East or some other comparator parts of the country for some time. Additionally, the current challenges of exporting goods to the European Market is a significant concern for

exporting businesses, of which our area has a higher proportion. All of these issues are important, and will require future investment in economic and social infrastructure if our economy is to recover and effectively increase GVA growth over the medium and long term.

Preparing for the Levelling Up White Paper

As we anticipate the release of the Levelling Up white paper, which will incorporate the findings and recommendations of the LEP Review, we are working actively with our partners to determine a sustainable model of LEP operation that will allow us to continue to serve the local economy and achieve the same broad aims, namely strategic economic planning and investment, business support services and careers and skills support.

We consider that, as a high performing and impactful LEP, we are in an excellent position to continue to provide high quality, value for money services to our partners, and we certainly hope this is one of the conclusions of the Levelling Up White Paper.

Beyond our own area, we are working collaboratively as part of Catalyst South, a strategic alliance of six LEPs (Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3, Hertfordshire, South East, Solent and Thames Valley Berkshire). Together we represent and provide advocacy for a globally connected economic region which generates almost one fifth of the UK's GDP.

We believe that, along with Government's ambition for greater local democratic representation and devolution, there is a continued need for regional economic planning, led also by the voice of business and education, to provide advocacy and convenorship across functional economic geographies like ours and at a much wider regional level, as with Catalyst South.

We consider there needs to be continued public investment in regional strategic economic infrastructure, that will increase confidence for private investment, to ensure effective and timely economic recovery and drive sustainable prosperity for all parts of the UK. This should include investment in sustainable transport and energy infrastructure, investment and incentives for business and innovation space, pragmatic housing targets, and investment in skills and labour market development for a green recovery.

Without continued support and investment to support the economy over the medium and into the long term, risks inadvertently 'levelling down' this part of the South East, which would seem to act against the core aims of Levelling Up as we understand them, to address inequality and raise prosperity in all places.

We hope this submission is of interest and benefit to the All Party Parliamentary Group and we very much look forward to reading the outcomes of your Inquiry.

Yours faithfully,



Julie Kapsalis

Chair,

Coast to Capital

Annex – Further information

Our latest Covid-19 economic data can be found on our [website](#) and our recent regional economic recovery and investment proposals in [Build Back Stronger, Smarter and Greener](#). Additional summary information on the present economic challenges facing our area, to support the case for investment in the South East, is provided below.

Covid-19

The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on the whole Coast to Capital economy, due to the significance of the aviation industry and its supply chains across the region. Estimates suggest our gross value added (GVA) could have declined by up to 12% in 2020, compared to a 9.9% contraction in the UK. The pandemic has a profound and extremely worrying impact on places like Crawley, which is home to Gatwick Airport and Manor Royal Business District, the centre for airport related supply chain activity and a cluster of leading, international advanced manufacturing companies.

The impacts of the pandemic have been felt across the Coast to Capital area, given the importance of and impact on the visitor, leisure and retail economy. This is true along our major coastal tourism and cultural centres including Brighton, Worthing, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis, but also in our rural destinations across the South Downs National Park, the Surrey Hills and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Rural deprivation and recovery as well as coastal deprivation should be a focus.

We recognise that in some parts of our area, particularly those with flexible, adaptable and growing digital and service-based economies – places such as Brighton & Hove and increasingly centres along the south coast and upward on the central M23 corridor – have fared relatively well during the pandemic or are able to recover more quickly. Nonetheless, the likelihood of continued delay and disruption to recovery based on international travel as well as domestic restrictions for business and leisure travel, all stand to slow the pace of economic recovery and future growth within our economic area.

Structural economic issues

Despite the historic significant of our economy to the UK, extensive research (in preparation for a Local Industrial Strategy) revealed a series of interconnected, underlying and concerning structural issues. Without coordinated investment in our major economic and social assets, these structural issues stand to further erode and undermine recovery and growth over the long term, causing a decline in productivity and contribution to the UK economy as a whole. They include:

- variation in skills levels with much lower skills (linked to deprivation) in certain areas – particularly in coastal communities
- a mismatch in places with higher skilled local populations and the higher wage labour market opportunities available in the area, meaning vacancies in key sectors
- lower levels of innovation grant spending (public, private and education sectors) despite the presence of high value, international market leaders
- commuter wages, to London in particular, distorting the cost of living and housing affordability in most areas
- historic underinvestment in transport infrastructure, particularly on the Brighton Main Line, the central rail corridor from London to the coast

- A decreasing younger population in key employment areas, as well as an ageing population, meaning further pressures on the future labour market
- Lower business and employment growth than many other parts of the South East and England, despite the position, size and complexity of our economy
- The exceptional and extensively protected natural landscape reduces opportunities for development
- Commercial and residential competition for limited development sites in many urban centres, with permitted development seeing extensive loss of commercial premises

New trade regulations with Europe

Exporting businesses are valuable to our economy where in 2017 the total value of exports represented 18% of our gross value added (GVA). This is higher than both the England level of 15% of GVA and 16% for the South East in that same year. Illustrating that exporting businesses in our region make a considerable contribution to our economic output.

However, the combined impacts from the coronavirus pandemic and new trade regulations with Europe has been causing significant challenges for those exporting businesses. Many of our local businesses have cited large numbers of cancelled orders due to new certification procedures and increased costs to deliver to EU countries, impacting on profit margins and elevating risk. With these challenges, more exporting businesses have been seeking business support through our Growth Hub. A third (36%) of businesses engaged by our Growth Hub between January 2021 and January 2022 were exporting businesses, this is ten percentage points higher when compared to the levels seen between January 2020 and January 2021. This illustrates the greater need for business support for exporting businesses in our area.

Women Led Business Case Studies

Beauty Cleanse Skincare, Crawley

[Beauty Cleanse Skincare](#) benefitted from Digital Champion support delivered by Malcolm Duffitt who supported them to sell online via Amazon and their website. They have been supported to expand to US and Australia and provided with shipping and VAT compliance advice.

Umbrella Insight, Bognor Regis

[Umbrella Insight](#) , a software company founded by [Louise Newman](#) 5 years ago, has been provided with a wide range of support including:

Reviewed their business plan and made recommendations

- A review of their marketing collateral
- Growth Champion support to help with website content, sales messaging and the sales process
- Connected them with UK Innovate Edge who are in the process of completing an Innovation Audit to see what support they can offer
- Introduced them to the Invest4 fund, they are currently attending the workshops
- Introduced them The Business Hothouse support with SINC, they are booking onto their Launch Roadmap workshop
- Connecting them with one of the West Sussex Business and IP Centre advisers
- Referred them to the DIT as part of their growth aspirations include selling their platform into the US

Testimonial - *“Hi Karen, thanks for your time today plus all of your emails, you have clearly spent a lot of time on this so thank you for everything. I just wanted to say how super impressed I was with your advice and guidance today, really appreciated. If you had our feedback service it would be smiles across the board.*

Wildling Drinks Ltd, Shoreham by Sea

[Wildling Drinks](#) were helped to access Get Set 4 Growth support and Invest4 funds. GetSet for Growth Coast to Capital provided the owner Roisin Meredith, with coaching and 1:1 support and she describes this as the point where she finally felt she had stepped into a business owner mode. GetSet for Growth Coast to Capital encouraged her to apply for an Invest4 grant to help make the most out of the money from the Start Up Loan as well as pay for a sales and marketing consultant to take her business to the next level.

Growth Hub Case Studies

Sam's Kitchen, Crawley

Sam French, owner of [Sam's Kitchen](#) has received Digital Champion and other support including:

- Brand positioning discussion
- Website review & input – Structure, navigation, content
- Ecommerce review - Product categories, Pricing, Bundles, Delivery, Payment & Checkout options, plus legal terms & conditions check.

- Technical SEO (on-site) support and reviewing/planning keyword research & content
- Traffic increase – support building an initial plan to drive consumer traffic to the website
- Creating of a marketing calendar - a document & structure to plan activity with to help drive traffic and create PR

This has already led to an increase in traffic to his website.

Lithe Audio Ltd, Redhill

[Lithe Audio Ltd](#) is growing exponentially and in just five years since establishment has sales in 45 countries, plan to increase the workforce by 25% this year. To sustain its growth the operations director asked for support on business planning and exporting.

- We introduced them to Innovate edge who were able to secure a loan of £400,000 on favourable terms to enable them to fund stock holdings in the USA, their largest potential market
- Following an introduction to DIT they were awarded an Internationalisation fund of £8,000 to support trade shows in Spain and the US.
- We identified areas to develop in their business plans (particularly innovation environmental) following facilitation of growth mapper report with the management team

Green Gym Group, Brighton

[Green Gym Group](#) has been supported to access both the Invest4 fund and the LoCase fund. They have utilised the funding to create a personal training app, a diversification for the business which is now the focus for its future scaling.

5 Squirrels, Hove

[5 Squirrels](#) were supported to access the Invest4 fund. 5 Squirrels was originally a management consultancy which was set up to help medical aesthetics professionals to launch and grow their own brands of skincare.

During COVID 19 however, their supply chain began to dry up and they realised that we needed to pivot into manufacturing our own skincare products. They now produce anti-ageing, clinically effective skincare products which treat signs of ageing, acne, pigmentation, skin laxity, lines and wrinkles.

The Business Hothouse advised on setting up and running a small-scale manufacturing facility and advice on how it could be financed.

The Invest4 Grant Fund provided 40% of the capital expenditure required to refit a derelict building, purchasing manufacturing vessels and building a Research & Development laboratory.

Business is flourishing now, they survived the pandemic and even saw strong growth which continues to accelerate - sales are up 50% on last year mainly due to in-house manufacturing and broadening their service offering but also due to the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

As well as the introductions to the Invest4 funding, the Growth Hub supported the business in accessing funded training for management and Health & Safety for their team, helped them access the Internationalisation fund which they are using to develop their USA sales with a trip planned soon and linked them into Help to Grow and have had early invitation to access the Help to Grow Digital programme.

Posh Totty Design, Brighton

[Posh Totty Designs](#) were supported to gain access to the DIT Internationalisation fund to help them develop international sales. They were also introduced to Innovate UK Edge who provided support in developing new products and processes. Another introduction to Clean Growth UK helped them with sustainability advice. The Posh Totty Designs team were also helped to access funded training opportunities for their team.

Coast to Capital

Reference: Coast to Capital Board Meeting
Date: 27th January 2022
Report Title: Chair's Report
Report by: Julie Kapsalis
Item No: 7b
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to note the Chair's Report.

1. Chair's Report

Since our last Board meeting in October, much has taken place. It has been a transitional time for the business, but I am delighted with the progress the team is making despite these changes. I am pleased to provide the following summary of my activity as Chair during this period.

Catalyst South

- Attended meeting with Catalyst South Chairs and CEOs on 16th November.
- Took over as Chair of Catalyst South from 1 January 2022
- Held initial meetings with the Catalyst South lead CEO, Adam Bryan (CEO of SELEP)
- Coordinated response to All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry: Financing the future - what does Levelling-up mean for Southeast England
- Continue to Chair the EDI Board Champions Group.

External Stakeholders

On behalf of Coast to Capital I attended the following external events/meetings:

- Attended the mid-Year conversation with BEIS.
- Calls with Local Authority Leaders.
- Calls with region's MPs – this was followed up by a series of one-to-one calls in October and November.
- Continue to work with mnAI on the disaggregation of data and our commitment to the Rose Review.
- Contributed to the Kreston Reeves Influencer Forum - Shaping Your Future

- Supply Chain meeting and editorial for Business Platinum Magazine.
- Contributed to the Kreston Reeves Influencer Forum, Shaping Your Workforce & Staff Resources and editorial for Business Platinum Magazine.
- Took part in an Inward Investment Proposition meeting with Coastal West Sussex Partnership and Gatwick Diamond Initiative.
- Regular meetings with the CEO of Gatwick Airport Limited
- Took part in a meeting with the Gender Index Steering Group.
- Met with the CEO of The Surrey Wildlife Trust.
- Spoke at the Greater Brighton Climate Change Summit.
- Spoke at the East Surrey Virtual Climate Change Summit.
- Visited the University of Chichester's School of Nursing & Allied Health.
- Met with the outgoing Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex to thank him for his support to Coast to Capital.
- Met with the University of Chichester's Business Hothouse Team.
- Opened the Crawley College STEM Centre

Board Engagement

I have had an induction call with our new Board Member, Cllr Shaun Gunner of Arun District Council. I look forward to working with him and the skills and expertise he will bring to our Board

I have had meetings and calls with several Board members including:

- Jane Longmore
- Amanda Jones
- Karen Dukes
- Frances Rutter

I will be setting up calls shortly with those of you who I haven't yet been able to speak with this year. Please do also always feel free to ring me direct if there are any matters you would like to discuss.

Internal Meetings

- I continue to hold weekly meetings with the Acting CEO.
- Chaired our AGM and Board strategy Day in Redhill.
- Took part in the Coast to Capital All staff team meeting in November (in person) and January (online).

2. Diversity Statement

I was exceptionally proud that our collective work on equality, diversity and inclusion was recognised by the Institute of Directors in November 2021 with the awarding of Director of the Year prize (London, South & Southeast)

3. Legal Statement

This paper has undergone a legal review by the Accountable Body

4. Finance Statement

There are no decisions to be taken in this report and therefore no financial implications.

Annexes:

None

Coast to Capital

Reference: Coast to Capital Board Meeting
Date: 27 January 2022
Report Title: Committees Report
Report by: Executive Team
Item No: 7c
Part: A

Recommendation:

- The Board is asked to note the key updates along with any decisions taken at the various sub-committees of the Board:

1. Investment Committee

Key decisions and updates from the latest Investment Committee can be seen at **Item 4:** Consent Paper.

The draft minutes of the latest Investment Committee meeting can be seen at Annex A

2. Audit and Risk Committee

The last meeting took place on the 12th January 2022, previously rescheduled from November 2021. The Committee noted the movement in top company risks highlighted in Annex A of the Executive Report .

The Committee noted the Internal Audit progress, which includes a Payroll audit being undertaken in January, and a proposed further audit review scheduled to take place before March 2022, to help identify and shape an Audit Plan for the 2022/23 financial year.

The current Governance arrangements were noted to include the future work which will be conducted on the Local Assurance Framework. In addition, the committee noted the work on finding a new office, and reviewed the lessons learnt on the Innovation Centre project.

The draft minutes of the latest Audit and Risk Committee meeting can be seen are currently being reviewed and will be uploaded to our website [here](#).

3. Finance and Resources Committee

The Committee at its meeting on the 8th December 2021 discussed payment contributions from Local Authorities and any discrepancies in the budget.

Initial discussions were had over presenting a value proposition to the January Board at this meeting, with the Head of Finance going through the current income projections and financial position of the organisation.

The Enhanced redundancy policy was presented to the Committee with recommendations agreed.

The minutes can be found at Annex C.

4. Local Authorities Meetings

The local authorities (Adur, Arun, Brighton and Hove, Chichester, Horsham, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, Tandridge, West Sussex and Worthing) met with Anthony Middleton at the Coast to Capital Local Authorities Meeting which took place on the 20th December. Tony gave an update on Coast to Capital's operations and encouraged any scrutiny from any of the leaders. The leaders then had the opportunity to present updates on the economic development in their area followed by discussion.

5. Skills 360 Board – 12 January 2022

The Skills 360 Board noted progress on activities as set out in the Skills Update paper which features on the agenda at **Item 5**.

6. Diversity Statement

Any position on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion has been covered above in this paper.

7. Legal Statement

This paper has been reviewed by the Brighton and Hove City Council as the Accountable Body.

8. Finance Statement

There are no further financial considerations of the paper other than those mentioned.

Annexes:

Annex A – Investment Committee minutes

Annex B - Finance and Resources Committee Minutes

Coast to Capital

Finance and Resources Committee

Wednesday 8th December 2021

By Zoom Video Conference

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members:

Richard Hopkins (RH) – Chair; Anthony Middleton (AM); Rosaleen Liard (RL); Andrew Swayne (AS).

Apologies:

Paul Marshall (PM); Martin Harris (MH); Sarah Bosley (SB) BEIS (Cities & Local Growth Unit).

Other attendees:

- Stephen Trigg (ST) Accountable Body; Nigel Manvell (NM) Accountable Body (Brighton and Hove City Council).
- Nicholas Darwin (ND) Coast to Capital; Kristel Smith (KS) Coast to Capital.

1. Introduction

a) Welcome and apologies

RH welcomed the Committee to the third Finance and Resources Committee.

It was noted that apologies have been received from Paul Marshall and Martin Harris due to scheduling difficulties.

The Committee confirmed that, as per the terms of reference, this meeting was quorate even with these absences.

b) Declarations, Disclosures & Conflicts of Interest

RH read out the Conflicts of Interest statement and AM confirmed all conflicts of Interest statements were up to date. AM added that conflicts of interest forms would be sent out to committee members shortly after this meeting for updating.

ND confirmed that there are no conflicts of interest applicable for any discussion at this meeting.

c) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Committee approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2021.

AM confirmed that all matters arising have been addressed or would be addressed in Item 2 of the meeting.

2. Acting CEO Verbal Update

AM began by providing an update on funding to be received from Government and Local Authorities for this financial year. All outstanding funds had been received such as the £250,000 core funding from Government, £85,000 from West Sussex County Council and £25,000 from Surrey County Council. West Sussex suggested repayment of fees in case of unused funds and questioned the payment of the Accountable Body for their services, to which Brighton and Hove City Council agreed on a rebate of £10K. In addition, Surrey County Council expressed a desire to withhold 15% of their funding as they believed service levels had dropped, this would be resolved by AM before the next meeting. The Committee questioned if the articles specified repayment of funds if the company was to wind up, to which AM noted it was the Board's decision. The committee also questioned if Government would give a directive on repayment of unused funds.

AM raised a concern that a figure of £523,000 had been placed in the budget for consultancy fees under Business Engagement and Regional Projects. AM discussed an incorrect figure in the budget for consultancy income, but this would be addressed further in Item 3. AM updated the committee that the LEP review was likely to be delayed. In addition, negative media publications on the role of LEP's had been published and these articles were to be shared with Committee members.

AM closed by stating that a future value proposition was being developed to be presented to the Board in January. Should this be agreed, AM gave an approximate timeline as to testing this proposition to identify interest in a consultancy offer developed by the LEP. It was noted that the uncertainty caused by the LEP review harmed this process.

Committee members offered help in developing the value proposition in advance of the January Board. AS highlighted the need for this offer to acknowledge how the LEP developed the functional economic area and provided a regional strategic overview and AM confirmed that this was a priority. RH acknowledged how the delayed LEP review would cause difficulty in conducting a redundancy process should this be necessary.

3. Latest Post Financial Results

ST further explained the paper circulated to the Committee. ST recapped the cash receipts with £1.17m received and noted that the key risks had now been addressed given that withheld funding had now been granted. In addition, ST noted that the consultancy income target of £100K now looked realistic as £90K of orders had

been received. ST raised that the LEP will now need to be registered with VAT after passing the threshold.

ST moved to present on the income. Noting a forecast has not yet been approved and this paper was based on the previous budget, there are variances in the figures provided. An expectation was given that the company would break even or turn a small profit.

ST noted a £23k profit year to date, with an expectation to stay around break-even to the end of the year. A balance sheet was provided for the first time to the Committee, illustrating current assets and liabilities including Grant positions and that the reserves remain around £1.1m. It was noted that fixed assets are for the office refurbishment, which will need to be written off.

The Committee expressed a desire to get a forecast for the end of the year to help plan strategically, plus the desire for more narrative around fluctuations in the budget which was agreed for future meetings.

The Peer-to-Peer networks programme had shown no billing to date and ST explained how that programme could only be billed when the Cohorts had completed. It was brought to the Committee's attention that the original budget had not been discussed in detail with the Senior Management Team, especially around the allocation of £460k of Regional Project income which would not have been achievable in any circumstance, the committee expressed their disappointment and ST stated his resolve to ensure budgets and forecasts are agreed with the Senior Management Team before being put in front of the F&R Committee in future. It was noted this would cause a shortfall and the figure was amended to the accurate target of £100K.

ND then left the meeting

4. Enhanced Redundancy Policy – Confidential Item

This item was tabled as confidential, and KS presented the paper and its recommendations followed by a discussion by the Committee.

All Committee members felt an enhanced policy was the right thing to do for employees based on the current uncertainties surrounding the LEP review and discussed the specific recommendations.

ST confirmed affordability for the recommendations and AM expressed his support for this policy, that it was fundamental to employee retention at this time.

The Committee agreed to the recommendations with the stipulation that the policy not be triggered until the appropriate point. The Committee tasked KS with producing appropriate wording for this stipulation, which will be sent to the Committee members for approval.

5. Close

a) AOB

It was noted that the next Finance & Resources Committee was not scheduled until 31 March 2022 and that it would be likely that an “exceptional” meeting would need to be called in advance of this date.