

Key Decision/Action Points from Board

D2N2 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, 23 March, 2022

Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7HY (with hybrid Teams dial-in)

Chair Elizabeth Fagan

Minutes Sally Hallam

Present and Apologies

D2N2 Board Members in Attendance

Graham Cartledge	Business Representative
Andrew Cropley	F E Representative
Tim Freeman	Business Representative
Cllr Mike Introna	Representative for Nottinghamshire County Council
Clare James	Business Representative
Cllr Chris Poulter	Leader, Derby City Council
Becky Rix	Business Representative
Cllr Simon Robinson	Rushcliffe Borough Council, N2 representative
Viv Russell	Business Representative
Prof Shearer West	H E Representative
Liz Wigley	BEIS Area Lead Derbys and Notts
David Williams	Business Representative/Dep Chair

Also in attendance

Scott Knowles	CEO, East Midlands Chamber
Simon Gladwin	Asst Director, Amber Valley Borough Council
Kath Marriott	CEO, Rushcliffe Borough Council
Nicki Jenkins	Director of Economic Development, Nottm City Council
Anthony May	Chief Executive, Notts County Council (until 11am)
Chris Henning	Exec Director, Place Derbyshire County Council

Officer Support

Will Morlidge	Interim CEO, D2N2
Tom Goshawk	Interim Head of Place, D2N2

Rob Harding
Frank Horsley
Eddie Robinson

Head of Marketing and Communications, D2N2
Head of Business and Innovation, D2N2
Finance Officer, Derbyshire County Council

Apologies

Apologies were received from Board members James Brand and Cllrs David Mellen, Lewis and Kevin Buttery. LEP Sponsor, Susan Caldwell also gave apologies.

1.1 Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth Fagan welcomed all to the meeting.

1.2 Declarations of interest

The Chair reminded all Members that Declarations of Interest should be stated to be recorded where an interest arose.

Prof West declared an interest in Item 2.3 (University of Nottingham PPROHLET low carbon project) and took no part in this item.

1.3 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January, 2022 were confirmed as a true record. Actions were confirmed as having been completed.

2. Strategic Discussion

2.1 D2N2 Chair's Report

Elizabeth Fagan introduced her Chair's report updating members on significant developments since the last meeting, including:

- LEP funding and remit;
- Response to the Levelling Up White Paper;
- Feedback from Nominations and Remuneration Committee;
- Advisory Boards: summary feedback

and drew Members' attention to the detailed notes under each item.

On LEP funding, Board noted that the letter from Government on core funding was still awaited. Liz Wigley confirmed that the letter was expected 'imminently'.

On Levelling Up, the Chair drew Members' attention to a summary of key elements of

the White Paper for LEPs and the regional economy, in preparation for the discussion to follow under item 2.2. Under this item Anthony May would update on discussions within local authorities to date. The future role of the D2N2 LEP in any new local authority structure would be determined and work would progress on this following today's discussion.

Board was updated on decisions made by the Nomination and Remunerations Committee at its recent meeting.

A number of changes had been discussed and addressed.

The Chair confirmed that she proposed to continue for her second term. This was agreed by the Board. The Deputy Chair would be stepping down, having come to the end of his extension term under the governance rules. EF thanked David Williams for his contribution and support to her. Discussions would take place later in the year on a replacement Deputy.

Some changes would also take place due to rotation. Prof West would step down and the HE representative's role would go next to NTU's Prof Edward Peck. Likewise, for the FE representative, current Board member, Andrew Cropley confirmed that in recent discussions with the colleges, Derbyshire colleges had confirmed their desire to take up the post in their discussions as a group of FE Leaders. Further discussion would take place and the outcome confirmed in the near future with their proposed nominated Board member.

Now that the White Paper had confirmed that LEPs would continue in local authority business partnerships, steps had been agreed to recruit to remaining vacant Board posts, starting with a voluntary-sector representative as a matter of priority. An advertisement was now live for new Board members, with a closing date of noon on Friday, 8 April.

In response to a question from Becky Rix, the Chair confirmed that Board was currently under-represented from the business community and was also looking to address its diversity mix when recruiting on the next round.

Members were referred to the detailed notes under each of the Advisory Boards.

Viv Russell for BGIAB drew attention in particular to the successful launch of 'The Future is Now' campaign and the work of the Innovation theme group on co-ordinating inward investment.

Prof West highlighted the positive addition of the dashboard in tracing KPIs, Reference was made to identified challenges for FE in recruiting suitable skills especially in AI, A sub-committee was now looking at how resources could be shared to assist with upskilling.

Board **NOTED** the report.

2.2 Supporting one or more devolution deals across the D2N2 area: discussion on next steps

The Chair welcomed Anthony May from Nottinghamshire County Council, who took the Board through a slide presentation on behalf of all 4 upper tier authorities on the context for the current plans for devolution and D2N2 LEP's role within that.

Government planned to grant devolved powers to every area that so wanted it by 2030. AM spoke to the 3-level Devolution Framework as appended to the Chair's report, highlighting that there are significantly more incentives at Level 3, which was the option being pursued. This option gives the area the best opportunity to address historic underfunding by Government funding for the East Midlands and enables more key decisions to be taken closer to the places and people which they will affect.

A meeting had recently taken place with Minister, Neil O'Brien MP which had confirmed the keenness of Government to progress such a deal for this region. A coherent ask had to be submitted to Government by 25 March 2022 as a high-level template forming the basis for future negotiations.

The process of how the LEP's powers and role would be factored into the deal had yet to be determined. The LEP CEO and Nottingham City Council's Corporate Director for Growth and City Development would be commissioned to produce a report setting out options on this for further consideration.

Assuming success with the first expression of interest, there would be intense activity over the spring and early summer, involving all stakeholders.

EF thanked AM for the comprehensive update and invited comments from the floor.

Cllr Robinson welcomed the opportunity for attracting inward investment and expressed a wish for all to get behind this unified approach to take the East Midlands forward.

Cllr Poulter echoed the sentiments, confirming that all 4 upper tier authorities were in agreement. He had been reassured by the clear commitment message from Neil O'Brien, MP.

Nicki Jenkins was invited to speak for Cllr Mellen in his absence. She confirmed the support of Nottingham City, which was committed to working with the LEP and other upper tiers on taking forward the proposal.

Chris Henning was invited to speak for Cllr Lewis in his absence. He also confirmed Cllr Lewis' support for the proposal, saying that Derbyshire welcomed the opportunity to take powers that already exist and manage them better at local level for the benefit of both local residents and businesses.

A short discussion took place on the development of plans alongside Freeport and the Development Corporation, with all agreeing that alignment of all would be important and key to success in presenting one unified message to inward investors to the region.

EF reiterated the LEP's readiness and keenness to play a significant role in progressing this exciting opportunity.

2.3 Capital Programme Update

Tom Goshawk took Board through his report updating on the performance of the D2N2 Capital Programme.

On Getting Building Fund, there was now an expected minor underspend of around £300k, due to delays in the Drakelow Park project. Government was aware. Chris Henning on behalf of Derbyshire County Council undertook to ensure that the local planning authority did everything it could to ensure that the project could complete.

TG also highlighted some projects now beginning to deliver on their outputs, eg Smartparc whose first occupier, Hello Fresh had been announced and reported strong interest in the site

EF congratulated him on progress made with this in such a short time.

Board further noted that 32 projects had been submitted to the LEP in response to its call for projects under the £6.5m Low Carbon Growth Fund. TG took Board through the details for 7 projects recommended for approval following initial approval at Investment Board on 16 March, namely:

- Springvale Hydrogen (Newark)
- PPROHLET
- Hydrogen Buses – the Sixes
- Hydrogen-fuelled waste collection
- Low-carbon Heating and Cooling
- Heat Pump Skills Academy
- Minewater Heat.

EF asked for any comments or questions.

Andrew Cropley queried the proposal to approve the Heat Pump Skills Academy in Bolsover, prefacing his comments with a declaration that West Notts College had been an unsuccessful project bidder. He cited a number of existing training facilities already around the region including in Ashfield and Mansfield and expressed the view that another one was not needed. He informed Board that West Notts College already provided a daily bus to bring Bolsover students to Mansfield in order to access training there. He also questioned how the bid could create 200 new jobs as claimed.

EF acknowledged his comments but was also mindful of the conflict of interest by a competitor in the skills market. She recommended a conversation between AC, providers GTEC and Bolsover DC to resolve identified issues and asked Board if they would approve subject to this proviso.

Cllr Introna provided useful personal insight into mine temperatures relevant to depth as he queried why the Minewater Heat project was not intending to use one of the deeper mines in the area to trial this project instead of the proposed Creswell mine. This information was to be fed back to the bid team, which includes the Coal Authority.

Cllr Poulter asked for clarification on the number of hydrogen buses to be within the Sixes project, referencing an identified funding gap for Trent Barton. TG confirmed that this was being worked on with the company and approval would be subject to its resolution. Further information could be followed up with the Member outside of the Board meeting.

Board **NOTED** the report.

Board **APPROVED** the 7 projects as listed above for acceptance onto the Low Carbon Growth Fund Capital Programme, subject to the following:

- For **Heat Pump Skills Academy**, final approval would be subject to a satisfactory resolution of issues by means of a conversation between Andrew Cropley, GTEC and Bolsover DC

ACTION: TG to facilitate discussion

- For Hydrogen Buses – the Sixes, final approval to be subject to evidence from Trent Barton of satisfactory resolution of the presently identified funding gap.

2.4 Interim Chief Executive's Report

Will Morlidge presented his report updating Board on items including:

- Completion of Local Skills Report
- Potential Digital Skills Partnership bid
- Low Carbon Growth Fund launch
- Future is Now campaign launch
- Inclusion;
- Marketing and Communications update;
- ESIF;
- Finance update

and referred Members to the detailed notes under each item.

He drew attention in particular to the Midlands-wide DCMS and Experian meeting as part of the National Data Strategy Forum, concerning gaps in all sectors in the region around data analytics. A piece of work was being started across the East Midlands to stimulate demand from businesses and match with provision from FE/HE.

Andrew Cropley commented that provision of training courses was not the issue, persuading students to study digital skills was.

He also addressed a second point to Scott Knowles regarding the challenge of getting businesses to offer opportunities for all students, including those with learning difficulties and offered West Notts College support in progressing this. SK acknowledged and agreed with this.

On the finance update, Board was advised that it would receive a detailed financial update at each Board meeting in the future.

Board **NOTED** the report.

ACTION: detailed financial report to be included as part of CEO report going forward (WM)

3. Freeport Update

Cllr Robinson gave Members a short verbal update on Freeport developments. The advertisement was now out for a permanent Chair for the Freeport board on an initial 3-year term.

Board **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the verbal report with thanks.

4. Future meeting schedule: proposal to move to quarterly meetings

WM spoke briefly to the proposal to move from 6 to a more traditional quarterly model for future board meetings.

EF supported this proposal given the diminishing capital programme work.

Board **AGREED** to move to 4 meetings per year going forward, with meetings to be in person.

ACTION: Schedule to be drawn up and circulated (SH).

5. AOB

AC noted that the Levelling Up Task Force was planning to visit the Mansfield and Ashfield area.

ACTION: LW to invite D2N2 to join the visit.

WM noted that the Analytical Group was looking for evidence of the impact of the war in Ukraine and would report back to a future Board when the evidence started to become clearer.

6. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed – likely to be in June 2022.