

Project Board Meeting

MINUTES

Date: 9 February 2011, 17:00 – 18:30

Location: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present		Apologies	
John Bridge (Chair)	Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce	Gillian Beasley	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Huntingdonshire District Council	Nigel Brown	Greater Cambridge Partnership
Helen Briggs	Rutland County Council	John Hill	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Fred Brown	East Cambridgeshire District Council	Jean Hunter	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Marco Cereste	Peterborough City Council	Cllr Sara Mildmay-White	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Martin Clark	Social Enterprise Representative	John Onslow	Cambridgeshire County Council
Neil Darwin	Opportunity Peterborough	Matt Schofield	Cambridge Network
Cllr Nick Daubney	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Malcolm Sharp	Huntingdonshire District Council
Ray Harding	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Richard Tunnicliffe	CBI
Nigel Howlett	RSL Representative		
Antoinette Jackson	Cambridge City Council	Substitutes	
Dick Jarvis	Federation of Small Businesses	Helen Donnellan	For Malcolm Sharp
Cllr Terry King	Rutland County Council	Martin Garratt	For Nigel Brown
Mark Lloyd	Cambridgeshire County Council	Hugh Parnell	For Matt Schofield
Cllr Ray Manning	South Cambridgeshire District Council		
Michael Mealing	Federation of Small Businesses		
Cllr Alan Melton	Fenland District Council		
Chris Parkhouse	Institute of Directors		
Alex Plant	Cambridgeshire Horizons		
Cllr Sian Reid	Cambridge City Council		
Prof Alan Sibbald	Anglia Ruskin University		
Robert Swann	Cambridge Angels / EEDA		
Cllr Jill Tuck	Cambridgeshire County Council		
Prof Ian White	University of Cambridge		
Ally Dodd	Greater Cambridge Partnership (<i>note taker</i>)		
David Burnip	Forest Heath District Council		
Laura Halstead	Cambridgeshire Horizons		
Cllr Richard Searle	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk		
Neville Reyner	LEP Chair-Elect		

1. Welcome and Introductions

JB welcomed all to the meeting and members introduced themselves.

2. Update on Chair / Board recruitment

JB introduced Neville Reyner who has been appointed as LEP Chair commencing 1/3/11. JB summarised NR's experience including Chairman of Anglia Components Ltd in Wisbech, President of the British Chamber of Commerce and Fellow of the Institute of Directors. Other members of the Board confirmed their endorsement of NR's appointment.

Advertisement is out for Board members and has already generated significant interest. Deadline for applications is 25/2/11. Guidelines for the selection and appointment of Board members were discussed and the following questions/comments arose:

- TK suggested that the Birmingham LEP model be used for Board member terms of office – everyone will serve 1 year in the first instance, thereafter Board members will be appointed to either 1, 2 or 3 year terms. This would help ensure continuity of representation.
- It was clarified that the role of Board members is to serve the interests of the LEP not just one particular sector.
- SR felt that under “skills”, collaboration and work across organisational boundaries should be added.
- It was agreed that Board appointments should ensure both geographic and sector coverage although there was a view that perhaps sector coverage was more important. JB confirmed that appointments would be made on merit but the appointments panel will endeavour to ensure a balance across the geography and sectors. AP reminded the Project Board that the proposed Advisory Forum could help address any perceived shortcomings in Board representation, given that with only 7 business representatives it will be hard to ensure complete geographic/sectoral coverage. This issue would be picked up by the Shadow Board in due course.
- It was felt that NR’s appointment could bring the necessary inclusiveness to the Board.
- The business representative organisations on the panel for the Chair appointment are stepping down so as to allow them to pursue Shadow Board appointments if they wish. The appointments process and panel will be co-ordinated by NR going forward. It was agreed that councillors with business backgrounds should join the appointments panel.

IB provided an update on Board nominations from local authority members. 7 expressions of interest have been received for the 5 available roles. Leaders to continue discussions to determine the final 5.

Decisions:

- a) IB proposed NR be appointed as chair, TK seconded and the vote was carried.
- b) JB to continue to chair the Project Board until the Shadow Board is in place, with NR attending Project Board meetings in the interim as part of handover arrangements.
- c) The Project Board voted to accept TK’s suggestion that the Birmingham LEP model for Board member terms be followed.
- d) AJ & ND to amend Board member selection criteria to address Project Board feedback.
- e) Councillors wishing to join the appointments panel should come forward.

3. LEP Core Team/Resources

John Bridge introduced the report on resourcing the LEP. He advised that offers had been made on an “in-kind” basis for Alex Plant and Neil Darwin to act as interim directors for 2 to 3 days a week in the short term.

Mark Lloyd reported that he planned for the new County Council Executive Director of Environment Services to have support to the LEP as part of its role in future.

The Project Board made the following comments:

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- It was premature to agree a permanent structure now. This would need to be considered in more detail by the new Board
 - While the proposed loan arrangements were welcomed for the short term, the new Board would need to review arrangements going forward
 - 4 posts appeared to be too top heavy
 - The sub group structure could be too bureaucratic

All expressed thanks to the two individuals, and to their employers who had made the directors' time available.

The Board discussed financial contributions and agreed all local authorities should contribute a minimum of £7,500. A number of authorities indicated they would also give support in kind, including Rutland offering general support on economic development and Cambridge offering support on spatial planning in the greater Cambridge area and support to the proposed Greater Cambridge sub-structure. Others indicated it would be a financial contribution only.

Decisions:

- That Alex Plant and Neil Darwin should act as interim directors on a part-time basis
- To request the interim directors to develop further work on a more permanent structure with the new Board when in place
- That all LAs would make a minimum contribution of £7,500
- The interim directors to work with each authority to confirm the in-kind support available

4. Regional Growth Fund Update

The Fund was hugely oversubscribed with applications totalling £2 billion, compared to the £300 million available in the first round funding. BIS have indicated that a decision will take 50 working days. It is anticipated that a second round will be announced shortly (April?).

5. Communications Update

A summary of communications activity to date was presented. In follow up to the Summit held in November 2010, and to update businesses on progress, it is proposed to hold a series of breakfast briefings throughout March. When the Board is in place a large event (launch) will then be held to continue engagement with the wider community.

Questions and comments:

- SR pointed out that the LEP sub-structure, such as the Project Board, could also be used as a communication channel.
- News of the appointment of a Chair has already started to leak so a press release to be issued confirming NR's appointment from 1/3/11.
- AM suggested some of the "public sector language" in the documents be removed

Decisions:

- a) Press release to be issued regarding Chair appointment, including a quote from NR.
- b) The language of the communications paperwork to be refined to remove jargon.

6. Wider LEP Issues

A paper outlining the importance of collaborative working with neighbouring LEPs, especially in relation to strategic issues, was discussed. To date the LEP has been open in talking with colleagues in the area.

Questions and comments:

- It was emphasised that no new arrangements have been proposed for LEP chairs to meet – instead they will use existing channels and meetings that have already been planned.

Decisions:

- a) Open communication with other local LEPs to continue.

7. EEDA Transition: Update

AP and many others attended an EEDA workshop to share and receive information in relation to skills, business support, innovation, EU funding etc. Feedback had indicated that EEDA's openness and willingness to help the transition was appreciated. There will be many EEDA staff leaving on 31/3/11 but in the meantime they will continue to assist the LEP.

Questions and comments:

- MC is part of the Regional European Panel and has already raised the need for 5 seats to be held for representatives of LEPs.
- HP asked if arrangements could be made to transfer data from EEDA into the LEP, the data protection act notwithstanding, to prevent the LEP having to start its research from zero.

Decisions:

- a) AP to discuss with EEDA if their data can be transferred to the LEP before they close.
- b) Follow-up work on specific priority issues to be taken forward with EEDA colleagues through the workstream leads

8. Minutes from 12 January 2011

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

9. Any Other Business

ND notified the Project Board that in a phone call today, East Northhants has indicated a firm interest in joining the LEP.

JB advised that the next meeting of the Project Board will be its last, with the Shadow Board taking over from April.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 9 March 2011, 17:00 – 18:30, Opportunity Peterborough, Stuart House