



Minutes

Name of meeting

Economic Development Board (EDB)

Date and time

Tuesday 9th April 2024, 10am-12pm

Venue

Building 41, Cowes

Attendees

Colin Rowland, Julie Jones-Evans, Phil Jordan (from 11), Ian Stevens (all IWC), Will Myles (VIOW), Janet Stevens (IW College), Dominic Ward (IOW tech group), Rob Sauven (Business Net Zero Hub), Nicola Kildunne (regional FSB), Graham Biss (Natural Enterprise), Mark Lee (IOW Chamber representing Steve Holbrook), Gavin Stride (Creative Island)

Apologies

Observers Chris Brammall, Alex Minns, Lee Mathews

Rachel Randall (Skills Board)

1.

Election of Chair

- Julie Jones-Evans was elected.
- It was noted that the TOR would establish that the chair would rotate annually.

2.

Introductions

The members of the board introduced themselves and outlined the role of their organisations.

3.

Economic Development board – Council update – Cllr Julie Jones-Evans

Cllr Julie Jones-Evans outlined the reasons for refreshing the EDB. The council was under intense financial pressure and had had to make savings. As Economic development was a non-statutory service it was under intense resource pressure, despite its importance to the Island community as a whole. As a consequence, it was vital to work in partnership with the organisations around the table and beyond to ensure the most effective use of scarce resources. External funding from regional and national sources will be vital in delivering services and the expanded EDB will enable a consensus view on any application coupled with a strategic response that would focus on the critical economic needs of the Island.

The regional situation with the replacement for the Solent LEP not yet approved by government has added an additional area of unknown but hopefully this will be resolved soon.

Dominic Ward posed the question if it was truly possible to transform aspirations into definite actions. The feeling of the meeting was that it was possible, but it would be vital for all organisations to work smartly and in partnership to ensure the maximum benefit being achieved.

At this point as he had an engagement at 11, Gavin Stride gave his update. He circulated the Cultural Strategy and outlined its' key areas. It's approach was that it is about the quality of life as a whole for the Island as opposed to "just art". It had partnership working at its' heart and look to take a positive stance as opposed to a deficit view.

The meeting agreed that all the stakeholders around the table should have an opportunity to give a 15 minute presentation about their areas of interest and issues faced. The following timetable was agreed:

- July meeting – Chamber, FSB and Natural Enterprise
- October – VIOW and IOW Tech
- January – Skills Board and IOW College
- April – Creative island and Business Net Zero

4

TOR and governance

The TOR were reviewed and past as presented to the meeting.

It was agreed that the TOR would be reviewed annually at the April meeting.

5

Regional developments - Solent LEP/Solent partners – Colin Rowland

Colin Rowland outlined the current situation with the transition from Solent LEP to Solent Partners:

- Government had yet to confirm arrangements but had indicated it preferred the Solent Partners route with PCC, SCC and IWC as the upper tier authorities.
- Hampshire wanted a whole county solution.
- The decision was being resolved against a background of the move to devolution.
- There is an October deadline for the creation of a regional economic strategy and, despite the lack of clarity from the

government, Solent partners have begun that work. IWC is involved to ensure that the Island's needs are reflected.

- The board recognised the importance of Solent Partners and how working in partnership with the stakeholders within Solent partners was vital in supporting the Island's economy.
- Colin agreed to circulate the cabinet papers on the issue to provide further background.

Current projects update

a. UKSPF

i. Building 41 - Chris Brammall reported that the Building 41 was running well. Tesla, in association with a tenant was now using the building as a contactless test drive centre

ii. Go for Growth – Chris Brammall reported that Go for Growth was now contracted and had got off to a great start with 50 companies signed up already since February. The project is being delivered by Digital Islands in partnership with the IOW Chamber.

iii. Inclusive Island – Chris Brammall reported that Inclusive Island is now being delivered as part of Go For growth. A strong network of companies has been developed and it is hoped a code of practice will be drawn up later this year with a drive to get companies signed up.

iv. Local area action plans were being developed for Newport, the By and Ryde and the council had set aside a fund to support activities in these areas.

b. Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) – Chris Brammall presented the details of the Rural SME grant fund. The guidance and application forms were adopted with the addition of a VIOW representative being added to the Local Action Group. With the board's approval, the scheme will be launched immediately.

c. Youth Hub – Lee Mathews reported that the youth Hub was now fully contracted with DWP and operation should commence on 1st May.

d. Levelling up fund

i. East Cowes – Alex Minns reported that the east Cowes project was progressing well and that we were performing better than many other LUF1 projects.

ii. Greenway – Alex Minns reported that the council was gearing up to deliver this project, but we were hindered by the government not formally committing the funding. The project is actually a collection of projects which will provide a sustainable greenway from Ryde to Yarmouth.

e. Ryde Town Fund – Alex Minns reported that the Town Board has been set up and work was begun on the development of the Ryde Investment strategy.

7

Updates from partners

Rob Sauven raised the following:

- Net Zero and the Biosphere should be at the heart of any strategy developed.
- How can the Connected Wight project be brought to a satisfactory conclusion as pace around it has slowed.
- The board should be included in activities around developing the Island Plan.

8

AOB

Future meetings were agreed to be as follows:

- 23/7/2024,
- 8/10/2024,
- 7/1/2025