

**Welcome and Apologies**

**Present**

Ian Knowles (IK) Acting Chair

Robert Griffiths (RG)

**Officers** - Ruth Carver (RC), Laura Spittles (LS), Louise Higham (LH), Caroline Illingworth (CI)

**Guests** - Martin Collison - Agri-food Specialist (MC)

**Apologies:**

Stephen Deville (SD); Linsay Hill Pritchard (LHP)

No declarations of interest were declared.

The minutes from the previous minutes were agreed and signed off by the Committee.

RC stated that a campaign will be actioned to recruit further members of the Finance and Audit Committee. Ideally there should be about 5/6 members to cover the meetings. Then to be quorate there must be at least 1 public and 1 private member present at each meeting. CI/LS to take this further.

A new Chair also needs to be recruited for the Committee as the previous Chair has now stepped down from the role. CI/LS to take this forward.

Matters Arising - the discrepancy, highlighted through the recent audit, has now been clarified and the additional money owed to the LEP will be transferred imminently. This money will be added to the LEP Balance Sheet. The Committee will need to sign off this discrepancy after seeing the revised accounts summary from the Auditors - RC to circulate.

The Auditors for next year will need procuring soon. IK stated that he would like to see this done ASAP. LS/CI/LHP to take this forward and procure for the LEP. Details will be emailed to the Committee in written procedures and will then be discussed at the meeting held early next year. RG stated he is happy to be involved in this process and review the submissions.

## Financial Report

RC presented the Committee with an overview of the financial position of the LEP and summarised the financial income and expenditure for the period 1st April 2021 - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

The LEP are currently showing a spend of roughly 1/3 of the allocated budget. This is slightly behind where it should be, but a piece of work is currently being undertaken to identify areas in the delivery plan that haven't yet been actioned. A revised core operating budget for 2021/22 will be proposed to the LEP board in October identifying expenditure to amount of £1,538m. This will be funded by a combination of Core funding, earmarked reserves, grant income, fee income, interest and partner contributions.

Most of the projects under the SLGF programme are completed or are near completion. The outputs achieved are also extremely positive. Further Project claims have been submitted for the April to June period and these have now been processed by the team. £393k was released in this quarter.

£2.3 million has been released to projects on the GBF programme following the first claim submissions. The claims process took slightly longer as many of the projects were new to the reporting structure. Full support has been given and we are confident that all projects have been fully trained in preparation for the next claim cycle expected 11th October. The GBF programme is now fully contracted and must be delivered by March 2022 with all grant funding having been drawn down by the 31 March 2022. LH to provide the Committee with a further update once the Q2 claims have been processed.

The Committee approved the contents of the report and recommended that the information is taken to the next Directors Board Meeting.

## LEP Reserves

RC updated the Committee on the reserves held by the LEP and the latest ask from the Directors Board. With the current issues facing the economy the LEP were tasked by the Board with undertaking a piece of work that involved highlighting any available resources in the reserves that could be used to fund projects that use innovative solutions to the labour market shortages. These would need to be new solutions, not something that is already currently available. The second part of this project would be a Net Zero Accelerator Fund to take these proposed solutions forward in our sector areas.

The LEP Core Reserve has been slightly increased due to the recent expansion of the LEP Core Team. A provision needs to be made for redundancy and pension strains.

Another provision has also been made for a Hardship Fund for any projects that may struggle due to the recent issues with the economy.

## Martin

Martin Collison works alongside the GLLEP as an Agri-Food Sector Consultant and presented the Committee with an update on the UK Food Valley.

The UK Food Valley is a key part of the GLLEP Covid Recovery Plan. The aim is to position this

cluster as a global top 10 food cluster. The County has the largest fresh produce cluster.

In the recent years there has been a lot of development and investment in this sector in our area. There is a wide breadth and scale with poultry and meat processing, plant proteins and Agri-Robotics. There are new centres and facilities opening in various locations to expand this work even further.

Recently the Lincoln Institute for Agri-Food Technology was created and is already the largest one of its kind in Europe.

### **Risk Review**

The Risk Register has recently been presented to the Directors Board. Overall the Board were happy but did highlight a couple of ratings that they felt could now be lowered with reference to the Covid situation.

CI will be taking an in-depth look at the register going forward.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

9<sup>th</sup> February 2022