

Western Gateway partnership board meeting

Monday 16th October 2023 10:00-12:00

In person (Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult, Innovation Centre, Imperial Park, Newport) and on Teams

Attendees	<p>Katherine Bennett, Business Representative (Chair) (KB) Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Gloucestershire County Council (Vice Chair) (MH) Cllr Jane Mudd, Newport City Council (Vice Chair) (JM) John Wilkinson, Secretariat (JW) Steph Jary, Secretariat (SJ) James Cooke, Secretariat (JC) Sara Pritchard, Secretariat (SP) William Mansfield, Secretariat (WM) Barbara Jackson, Secretariat (BJA) Fiona Williams, Secretariat (FW) Tom Burton, Secretariat (TB) Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Monmouthshire County Council (MAB) Cllr Rowena Hay, Cheltenham Borough Council (RH) Cllr Rob Stewart, Swansea Council (RS) Cllr Huw Thomas, Cardiff City Council (HT) Cllr Claire Young, South Gloucestershire Council (CY) Richard Bonner, Business Representative (RB) Ruth Dooley, Business Representative (RD) Lhosa Daly, Business Representative (LD) Paul Moorby, Business Representative (PMO) Prof. Ian White, University Representative (IW) Richard Ennis, West of England Combined Authority (RE) Naomi Lynch, Bristol City Council (NL) Gareth Newell, Cardiff Council, (GN) Gavin Powell, Cardiff Capital Region (GP)</p>
Apologies	<p>Joe Ball, Secretariat (JB) Cllr Mike Bell, North Somerset Council (MB) Cllr Richard Clewer, Wiltshire Council (RC) Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset (KG) Cllr Jim Robbins, Swindon Borough Council (JR) Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority (DN) Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council (MR) Ian Edwards, Business Representative (IE) Ben Pritchard, Business Representative (BP) Sally Edgington, Cities & Local Growth Unit (SE)</p>
In attendance	<p>Joe Coyne, Cities & Local Growth Unit (JC) Jo Jenkinson, GW4 Alliance (JJ)</p>
Chair	Katherine Bennett, CEO of HVM Catapult (KB)
Minutes	Tom Burton, Western Gateway (TB)
Venue	Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult, Innovation Centre, Imperial Park, Newport
Start time	10:00 am
Finish time	12:00 am

Item	Summary of the discussion held and decisions made	Deadline
1.0	Welcome, apologies for absence, and declaration of conflicts of Interest	
	<p>KB thanked Board members for attending the meeting and welcomed SJ as Western Gateway's newest Deputy Director to the Board.</p> <p>KB stated BP had declared an interest, noting that ARUP are the lead consultants for the Western Gateway Strategic Rail Vision 2050 but noting that he was not involved in the appointment and would not be engaging in potential phase 2 arrangements.</p> <p>KB read out the names of those who had sent their apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.</p>	
2.0	Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	
	<p>Addressing the actions from the previous meeting, JW stated that these had been completed or were to be addressed on the meeting's agenda.</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>Action 1: The Board to provide the Secretariat with potential topics for the Western Gateway's next annual conference.</p> <p>Action 2: JW to bring back information about progress towards a regional institute to the next board meeting.</p> <p>Action 3: Secretariat to attend this year's LGA Conference.</p> <p>Action 5: JW to seek views of CCR and IBB prior to speaking to Chief Executives about future attendance at MIPIM.</p> <p>Action 6: JW to speak to Local Authorities' Chief Executives to understand the level of support for the Partnership to attend MIPIM.</p> <p>Action 7: JW to speak to UK Government to discuss their potential support for attending MIPIM.</p> <p>Action 8: The Board to make comments on the draft role description for the chair to john.wilkinson@western-gateway.co.uk.</p> <p>Action 9: Board members to email suggestions for the role of Chair to the Partnership's Secretariat.</p> <p>Action 10: Board members to indicate their interest in becoming Vice-Chair for the Hydrogen Committee by emailing the Western Gateway Director.</p> <p>Action 12: JC and Severn Edge team to follow up with CFS regarding their recent site visit.</p> <p>Action 13: Board members to provide suggestions for roles of Chair, Commissioners and key experts for the Severn Estuary Independent Commission.</p> <p>No longer required:</p> <p>Action 4: DS to organise separate hydrogen-focused Teams meeting with Board members.</p> <p>Action 11: DS to contact GFirst's Advanced Manufacturing Business Group about the dispersed Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans.</p>	<p>31.07.23</p> <p>09.10.23</p> <p>05.07.23</p> <p>10.07.23</p> <p>10.07.23</p> <p>10.07.23</p> <p>30.06.23</p> <p>31.08.23</p> <p>07.08.23</p> <p>18.07.23</p> <p>31.07.23</p>
3.0	Director's update	
3.a	Activity update – FOR AGREEMENT, Item 3	

JW informed the Board of the general activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the last Board meeting.

JW and Board members provided positive reflections on the Partnership's experience of the 2023 party conferences. JW thanked Board members for representing the Partnership by sitting on panels at Western Gateway fringe events as well as others. JB will contact those who attended to gather feedback to start planning for next year's Conference season.

He mentioned several meetings that had occurred over the past few months. Among others, this included: meeting with newly elected Council Leaders, meeting with Business West and partners to discuss the establishment of a regional observatory, and hosting our All-Party Parliamentary Group to discuss the Partnership's recent work on Hydrogen, tidal energy and strategic rail.

JW provided an update on creating a more permanent structure for the Western Gateway Secretariat. He welcomed JC and SJ into their roles as Deputy Directors and highlighted that a co-funded Public Affairs Manager with GW4 will be recruited imminently. JW also informed the Board that two 18-month Project Support Officers will be recruited to support the two Deputy Directors.

JW noted that there were several meetings of significance over the next quarter, including the Partnership's mid-year review with DLUHC in November.

He updated the Board that he had recently carried out a full budget review on the Partnership's budget position. Having examined monthly forecasts against where they were expected to be, JW reflected on good progress having been made but were slightly behind on our start of year spend profile. This was largely due to the late recruitment of the two Deputy Director roles and the sudden loss of staff on secondment to the Western Gateway. He stated that the Secretariat will explore how the underspend could be redirected on events and workstreams, highlighting that ARUP had recently been appointed as strategic advisers to help with understanding where the Western Gateway can best contribute to the hydrogen sector. JW mentioned that project spend will pick up substantially in the coming months, especially with the Partnership's Cyber super cluster mapping work about to begin.

JW made the Board aware of new proposed projects to be commissioned to off-set some of the potential underspend, including the development of an international strategy to support inward investment for major pan-region or pan-national opportunities as well as an evaluation of the Partnership's impact.

KB stated the Partnership was in a good position and thanked CY for South Gloucestershire Council's support on financial budget as the Accountable Body.

There was a discussion amongst Board members on new projects the Board could take up, such as whether there was a role for the Partnership to promote investment in strategic flooding interventions. The conversation expanded to the framing of investment propositions and the type of investment that should be focused on by the Partnership.

Board members also considered showcasing the Partnership's current work to highlight Western Gateway unique selling points as well analysis of the state of exports and imports to further demonstrate the economic strengths, challenges and opportunities faced in the functioning economic geography post COVID.

<p>The Board expressed their desire to learn of progress made on the Partnership’s continuation funding by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>JW thanked the Board for their contributions and stated the Secretariat would take them away to think about how best to implement them.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board noted the previous 3 month’s work programme, HR update and the outcome of the recent budget review. The Board agreed to the proposed mitigations for additional spend this FY.</p> <p>Action 1: JB to gather feedback from Board members who attended the Party Conference events.</p> <p>Action 2: WM to discuss tidal workplan with CY.</p> <p>Action 3: JW to ask Oxford Economics about the inclusion of imports and exports in the Economic Evidence base update.</p> <p>Action 4: Secretariat to develop an international strategy.</p>	<p>13/11/23</p> <p>06/11/23</p> <p>13/11/23</p> <p>08/01/24</p>
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4.0	Governance – decision on expanding the Partnership’s boundaries – FOR DECISION, Item 4	
<p>RS introduced the paper, clarifying to the Board that the recommendation to undertake a Governance Review was to consider having one individual Board membership for the Swansea Bay City Deal alongside the existing Swansea Council membership, rather than individual membership each for Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire. Using an example, he referred to this missing link as having caused a challenge to promote the Swansea Bay City Deal at events while in his Swansea Council role. RS proposed this as a means of ‘regularising’ the geography and Board representation for the Swansea Bay area.</p> <p>The Board discussed the implications of this decision on the Partnership’s governance. RS stated that implementing this would ensure consistency, referring to the arrangement of the two-seat approach for Cardiff Council and Cardiff Capital Region (CCR).</p> <p>Members were supportive of the decision, recognising that an additional slot for the Swansea Bay City Deal would provide insight and representation for the area. There was an appreciation that what was being outlined already existed, but not formally, through Swansea Council’s membership on the Western Gateway board. The Board believed there was a strong economic case in favour of the decision and it would produce a more even split in population between Western England and South Wales highlighted by the analysis carried out by Oxford Economics.</p> <p>The Board agreed in principle subject to there being no concerns expressed by B&NES, Bristol, Wiltshire and that an amendment should be moved to clarify the recommendation.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board agreed to giving the Swansea City Bay Deal, made up of Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire a single, combined membership place in the Western Gateway Partnership,</p>		

	<p>subject to there being no concerns expressed by B&NES, Bristol and Wiltshire Council. <i>Please note, this is an amendment to the recommendation which had originally asked the Board to consider adding Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire to the Partnership individually.</i></p> <p>The Board agreed to include these regions in our Independent Economic Update so we can immediately begin to leverage their additionality to the region and ensure our new member is accounted for and supported as they join.</p> <p>The Board agreed to undertake a review of the Governance arrangements of Western Gateway to ensure the continued efficient running of the Partnership.</p> <p>Action 5: Given their absence from the board meeting, JW to check B&NES, Bristol, and Wiltshire Councils have no objection to the decision to give Swansea City Bay Deal a new single seat at the Board.</p> <p>Action 6: Secretariat to redraw boundaries of Western Gateway geography.</p>	<p></p> <p>30/10/23</p> <p>13/11/23</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Business Engagement, business ambassadors programme – FOR APPROVAL, Item 5</p>	
	<p>LD introduced the paper, proposing that the work to establish a community of business and university leaders to act as Ambassadors for the Partnership be taken forward. She outlined that the ambassadors would advocate for the Partnership’s activities and support the delivery of a programme of business breakfasts across the area. This work was timely, LD stated, as capacity to carry this out had been identified within the Secretariat and business board members and the recent UK Government announcement on the future of Local Enterprise Partnerships.</p> <p>The Board discussed the need to avoid duplication of existing business networks and the opportunities of having guest speaker slots at existing events to help promote them. Board members highlighted that more clarity was required around what the Partnership was asking of business board members and the intended outcomes of this initiative.</p> <p>The Board saw value in mapping, the importance of building relations with the existing business networks, and the advocacy role the Partnership could play for each area.</p> <p>Decisions:</p> <p>The Board agreed to an initial meeting for the chairs of key business networks across the Western Gateway to discuss the aims and purpose of the programme.</p> <p>The Board agreed to provide suggestions for additional individuals that might be approached as additional Western Gateway Ambassadors.</p> <p>Action 7: Secretariat to engage with the Marches Forward Partnership to discuss approaches to business events.</p> <p>Action 8: Secretariat to initiate a mapping exercise of existing business networks.</p> <p>Action 9: Secretariat and business board members to outline intended outcomes of initiative.</p>	<p></p> <p>29/01/24</p> <p>29/01/24</p> <p>29/01/24</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>2024 Events update – FOR INFORMATION, Item 6</p>	
	<p>JC introduced paper, providing an update on the various events that the Western Gateway is planning to promote the area. These will be designed to</p>	

attract investment in the area, promote strengths and develop the area's offer for the rest of the UK.

A Conference for the West:

JC outlined a plan to host a high-profile event, with a working title of A Conference for the West, 6 months before the end of the 2025 financial year, with a rough date in September 2024 suggested. He stated the Conference would spotlight the work the Partnership have done to date as well as what will be undertaken over the next couple of years. JC outlined the Conference would aim to help convene businesses across the geography leading to future collaboration opportunities, demonstrate a successful private/public sponsorship scheme which can help the Partnership diversify its funding model, and highlight transformational opportunities to central government to secure support for priority areas.

He highlighted there was a more robust governance opportunity on offer compared to the 2023 Hydrogen Conference, as it would be Western Gateway-owned. JC stated the Secretariat was looking for volunteers amongst the Board to join a steering sub-group to lead on it, meeting once every two months starting in November 2023.

There was significant support for the principle of the event, with members recognising it would help put the geography on the map for the UK Government.

The Board discussed the branding of the event and the need to ensure they reflect the carefully crafted identity of the Western Gateway Partnership. There was concern that 'the West' was not an appropriate representation of the partnership. The Board also considered the need to gain ministerial input into the event. It was suggested that 'Gateway' could reflect well within the title.

The timing of when to host the event was considered. Several Board members suggested hosting the event in July to maximise Board participation.

Pitching a framework of five ideas to ensure a better future in the Western Gateway was also put forward.

UKREiiF 2024 participation:

JC informed Board members that the Partnership had secured the same space as 2023 for the 2024 event. With enquires ongoing as to whether the Partnership can increase the size of the area and how better the space available can be optimised, he reassured the board that they will be briefed once this is clearer. He stated that if each partner local authority, city deals, and the combined authority agree to become a co-sponsor, costs could be as low as £2,600 each.

There was support for the costs required to return to UKREiiF in 2024. The Board discussed other bodies within the Western Gateway geography who may also be attending that could impact local authorities attending under the Partnership's banner. Board members requested that private sector sponsorship be considered to help fund the event, but noted that this would need to include some sort of 'offer' to them in return and that demand for speaker slots on panels was likely to be high from the Board partners.

MIPIM 2025 participation:

<p>JC stated that following discussions with partners and MIPIIM organisers, booking a space for the 2024 event wouldn't be possible. He discussed whether the Partnership had the appetite to develop a presence for 2025 and beyond, which could help consolidate sponsors funds, provide an opportunity for partners to take part in an international investment event which may not otherwise be accessible, and provide an opportunity to showcase investment opportunities.</p> <p>JC said that he understood the potential lack of support for MIPIIM given the financial situation faced by Partners and the lesser degree of added value perceived by members.</p> <p>Board members understood the urgency to go ahead with this but that they were not in a position to act imminently and stated more time, more clarity on the aims of attending, and a timeframe would be needed before a decision could be made at the end. They also requested that the Secretariat check with the private sector to better understand their enthusiasm to attend future MIPIIM events.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the Secretariat would pull together a working group for MIPIIM to bring set of proposals to the Board to make a decision at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board agreed in principle to holding a large-scale conference as part of an exercise to bring together businesses from both sides of the Severn, sell the area on a national scale and present an updated vision for partnership work in the area over the years to come. The Board asked the Secretariat to explore a date in July 2024. The Board agreed to alert their economic development leads of the UKREiiF 2024 opportunity and to expect a meeting invite for mid-November. The Board stated they would like a pre-UKREiiF event and would contact the Secretariat regarding possible hosting of the event. Decision postponed regarding the decision on whether the Board wishes to attend MIPIIM 2025 as a partnership.</p> <p>Action 10: Secretariat to further consider how to brand the Western Gateway's 2024 Conference.</p> <p>Action 11: Secretariat to set up a task group to put together a programme for the Conference.</p> <p>Action 12: Secretariat to set up an oversight group made up of Board members to support the planning of the Conference.</p> <p>Action 13: Secretariat to design Sponsorship packages for events.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>08/01/24</p> <p>04/12/23</p> <p>22/01/24</p> <p>22/01/24</p>
<p>7.0 Chair recruitment update – FOR INFORMATION, Item 7</p> <p>KB stated that the process of advertising for the role of Chair of the Western Gateway was live. Gatenby Sanderson, recruited through an open process to support the selection, have currently received 16 applications. She informed the Board that JM had been delegated authority to lead a task and finish group to oversee the selection process.</p> <p>KB further noted that she had written to DLUHC today to notify them of the Chair recruitment update.</p>	<p></p>

<p>Decisions: The Board noted the summary of the applications. The Board noted the timescale for the recruitment and selection process.</p>		
8.0	Workplan updates	
8a	Innovation and Investment – For DISCUSSION, Item 8a	
	<p>BJ introduced the paper, updating the Board on work undertaken to progress the Innovation and Investment workstream since it last met. The specific work packages focused on concerned Cyber, Creative Industries, and Investment.</p> <p>She informed the Board that Plexal had been appointed to commence the cyber super cluster mapping project. BJ highlighted that they had settled on a model looking at clusters specific to localities across the WG area, such as AI in Bristol and Automated Tech in Swindon. She mentioned the project was expected to be completed before the Christmas break, with a launch of the map in the new year.</p> <p>BJ shared with the Board that the preliminary findings of a report commissioned by MyWorld and Media Cymru of the growth of the screen technology, television and film industries across Bristol and Cardiff had been provided to the Secretariat and the GW4 Alliance, presenting great reading of their potential. The Partnership has been invited to join a Partnership between Bristol and Cardiff Universities to build on the growth of the sector and expand its benefits on a Western Gateway level. Rapid growth in sector demonstrated in recent report. She stated a future report covering the whole WG area was needed as a next step.</p> <p>She asked for Board members to provide recommendations of finance specialists who could help the Partnership deliver a supply-and-demand mapping report on the investment gap in the Western Gateway.</p> <p>There was a discussion concerning how to ensure all areas in the Western Gateway geography could be appropriately engaged with the Investment piece.</p> <p>There was an appreciation that the scale of the Cyber mapping work must be kept to 1 or 2 asset types for each area to avoid overcomplicating the work piece and making it hard to extract information from.</p>	
8b	Rail Strategy 2050 – For DISCUSSION, Item 8b	
	<p>KB praised the success of the Partnership’s Rail event at Parliament.</p> <p>Board members who attended felt that it demonstrated widespread support and the value Parliamentarians saw in the Western Gateway and that it had helped put the Partnership on the map.</p> <p>JC stated that the first event of the Rail Innovation Series was set for 26th October at the Workshed in Swindon. He mentioned that Network rail would present their Hubstation Project, exhibition space, and a networking session.</p> <p>The Board discussed the implications and opportunities for rail investment in the Western Gateway geography posed by the recent announcement made by the Prime Minister concerning HS2. HT noted that the Wales and West routes suffer significant disruption through the period of HS2 works to Old Oak Common and London Paddington but that the benefits of this were further undermined by the termination of the Birmingham – Manchester line.</p>	

RE explained the WECA understanding of the £100m announced to support rail projects in Western England and the Board noted that this was an opportunity to continue the advocacy of the Rail Vision.		
Action 14: Secretariat to liaise with rail operators re. concerns about the negative implications of reworking Swansea-London trains to go through Old Oak Common.		03/11/23
Action 15: Secretariat to further explore ways to raise the profile of the Vision and readily investible schemes with partners and Government.		03/11/23
8c	Severn Estuary – FOR DISCUSSION, Item 8c	
Please see the Board papers for more information. Item not discussed due to time constraints.		
8d	Nuclear – FOR DISCUSSION, Item 8d	
MH noted the position of SGS College selling land at the Science & Technology Park but that Western Gateway continue to be engaged with the latest.		
Please see the Board papers for more information. Item not discussed due to time constraints.		
8d	Hydrogen – FOR DISCUSSION, Item 8e	
Please see the Board papers for more information. Item not discussed due to time constraints.		

9.0	Partner updates	
None.		
10.0	AOB	
None.		
11.0	Date and time of the next meeting/s	
Monday 29 th January 2024, 10am-12pm.		
Close		