

Western Gateway partnership board meeting

Monday 26th June 2023 10:00-12:00

In person (Cardiff Castle) and on Teams

Attendees	<p>Katherine Bennett, Business Representative (Chair) (KB) Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Gloucestershire County Council (MH) Jane Mudd, Newport City Council (JM) John Wilkinson, Secretariat (JW) James Cooke, Secretariat (JC) Debby Skellern, Secretariat (DS) Sara Pritchard, Secretariat (SP) William Mansfield, Secretariat (WM) Barbara Jackson, Secretariat (BJA) Tom Burton, Secretariat (TB) Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Monmouthshire County Council (MAB) Cllr Rowena Hay, Cheltenham Borough Council (RH) Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council (MR) Cllr Huw Thomas, Cardiff City Council (HT) Cllr Claire Young, South Gloucestershire Council (CY) Cllr Matthew McCabe, Bath & North East Somerset (MM) Richard Bonner, Business Representative (RB) Ruth Dooley, Business representative (RD) Ian Edwards, Business Representative (IE) Ben Pritchard, Business Representative (BP) Prof. Ian White, University Representative (IW) Will Godfrey, Bath & North East Somerset (WG) Nicola Knowles, Bristol City Council (NK) Paul Matthews, Monmouthshire County Council (PMA)</p>
Apologies	<p>Joe Ball, Secretariat (JB) Fiona Williams, Secretariat (FW) Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority (DN) Lhosa Daly, Business Representative (LD) Sally Edgington, Cities & Local Growth Unit (SE) Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset (KG) Cllr Rob Stewart, Swansea Council (RS) Paul Moorby, Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (PMO)</p>
In attendance	<p>Jen Evans, GW4 (JE) Oliver Rooke, Cities & Local Growth Unit (OR) Brett John, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (BJO)</p>
Chair	Katherine Bennett, CEO of HVM Catapult (KB)
Minutes	Tom Burton, Western Gateway (TB)
Venue	Cardiff Castle
Start time	10:00 am
Finish time	12:00 pm

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 newly elected Council Leaders following the 2023 local elections. She gave her appreciation to CCR for their help with securing Cardiff Castle for the meeting.</p> <p>BP 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, set out below, 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: JW and KB to engage with UKRI on R&D resources as well as other research and innovation funding announced in Budget. 24.06.23</p> <p>Action 2: JW to draft letter to UK Government underlining the Partnership’s desire to explore future opportunities to secure funding for the Western Gateway area. 28.04.23</p> <p>Action 3: Board members to speak to UK Government representatives on future opportunities when appropriate. 24.06.23</p> <p>Action 4: JW to redraft medium term budget table to reflect minimum partner contributions as separate to minimum private sector contributions. 31.03.23</p> <p>Action 5: Partnership’s Board to provide comments on Business Plan 31.03.23</p> <p>Action 6: Western Gateway Secretariat to submit approved business plan to DLUHC to gain approval for the 2023/2024 grant payments. 06.04.23</p> <p>Action 7: JW and BJA to continue engagement with Gloucestershire County Council, Cynam, and the CBI. 24.06.23</p> <p>Action 8: Partnership Board members to contact the Secretariat team if they wish to take part in events being planned for the pavilion or would like to ensure their respective teams to have access to facilities, e.g. booking forms and digital promotional materials. 17.04.23</p> <p>Action 9: Secretariat to organise pre-UKREiiF in-person event. 17.04.23</p> <p>Action 10: Secretariat to emphasise mass-transit case where possible at Rail Launch. 23.03.23</p> <p>Action 11: Bring the Hydrogen Strategy and Delivery Pathway 2050 to the June Board meeting for approval. 26.06.23</p> <p>Action 12: Board support for Hy-RES and the PB IAA to be sought by email. 17.04.23</p> <p>Action 13: Board Members to let KB and JW know if they would like to be on task and finish group. 29.05.23</p> <p>Action 14: Secretariat to expand Task and Finish Group from three to five. 19.06.23</p>	
3.0	Director’s update	
3.a	Activity update – FOR AGREEMENT, Paper 3	
	<p>KB thanked Board members for participating at events organised or attended by the Western Gateway Secretariat, such as UKREiiF and the Hydrogen Gateway Conference. She informed the Board that she recently attended a Levelling Up Advisory Board meeting.</p> <p>KB thanked JW for the information provided in the Board Papers.</p>	

JW highlighted the work carried out by the Partnership since the last Board meeting in March before informing them of his up-coming meetings for the next quarter.

He announced to the Board that the 2023/24 Western Gateway business plan had been published. JW spoke about the progress made on recruitment to the secretariat team and underlined emerging policy issues that the Board had raised with him as potential options for the Partnership's next phase.

JW went through his prior engagements. He referred to a Bank of England meeting, attended by local SMEs who highlighted the lack of grid capacity was hurting inward investment. JW said this was a common theme, having also heard this from attendees at the Hydrogen Conference. He gave his appreciation to the Secretariat for making the Hydrogen Gateway a success.

JW recalled his meeting with Will Garton from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC). They spoke about deprivation within the Western Gateway, the opportunity to connect the Union and deliver prosperity, as well as the various devolution structures within the Western Gateway area.

Providing a recruitment update, he stated that William Mansfield had been appointed the Severn Estuary lead and thanked the Board for their support on hiring two Deputy Directors, which has progressed.

JW spoke on the Partnership's budget, highlighting that despite being just behind on expenditure, significant projects would soon be underway. He referred to potential policy areas for the Partnership to take up in its next phase beyond 18 months' time. JW discussed our role in inward investment and our Net zero strategy in terms of making them more coherent. He asked that the Partnership begin thinking about potential topics for the Western Gateway's next annual conference. There was a discussion regarding sponsorship for the Partnership's events and how to continue to attract high numbers from industry.

JW informed the Board about the Partnership's upcoming reception at Westminster focusing on its Low Carbon work as well as the next Western Gateway All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting being held on July 11th. He thanked those who had helped plan this year's Autumn Party Conferences.

The Board considered the possibility of having its own regional institute to publish important pieces of research and data.

WG suggested the Partnership attend this year's LGA Conference to broaden discourse with UK Government. JW stated the Secretariat will attend to determine whether a larger presence for next year's Conference is justifiable.

The Board explored new and existing event opportunities for the Partnership to raise its profile and for Board members to meet and confer.

They discussed what the Partnership should focus on in the next phase of its work, recognising the need for both big infrastructure projects and pulling levers which would unlock economic potential.

Decisions: The Western Gateway Partnership Board noted the previous 3 month's work programme, recruitment update and the current spend.

Action 1: The Board to provide the Secretariat with potential topics for the Western Gateway’s next annual conference.	31.07.23
Action 2: JW to bring back information about progress towards a regional institute to the next board meeting.	09.10.23
Action 3: Secretariat to attend this year’s LGA Conference.	05.07.23

4.0	Hydrogen Delivery Pathway 2050 – FOR APPROVAL, Paper 4	
<p>DS gave a presentation on the Western Gateway’s Hydrogen Delivery Pathway 2050 produced by City Science. She covered: City Science’s findings, upcoming hydrogen opportunities, the barriers and constraints to harnessing its energy, and the current work belonging to the hydrogen workstream.</p> <p>KB thanked City Science for their work and Board members requested a separate meeting for Board members to get the finer details.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board approved the decision of the Hydrogen Steering Committee that consultation exercise on the Western Gateway Delivery Pathway 2050 by City Science has been completed and work on the report has concluded.</p> <p>They also noted the first draft of next steps proposed by the Steering Committee for the Western Gateway Partnership to progress.</p> <p>Action 4: DS to organise separate hydrogen-focused Teams meeting with Board members.</p>		29.09.23
5.0	Events update – FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION, Paper 5	
<p>JW recapped this year’s presence at UKREiiF, stating the Partnership’s pavilion was well attended and helped raise Western Gateway’s profile.</p> <p>The Board discussed whether to attend the following year and what could be done differently to attract inward investment.</p> <p>They then considered the feasibility of attending MIPIM collectively under the Western Gateway Partnership in the current economic climate. Several benefits of MIPIM were mentioned, such as the importance of having local authority representation to attract investment.</p> <p>KB suggested that JW should speak to local authorities’ chief executives to discuss MIPIM and Government to ask for support. The Board discussed the possibility of raising co-investment from the private sector to ensure attendance.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board approved plans to book a Pavilion space for the Western Gateway and partners for UKREiiF 2024.</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>		10.07.23 10.07.23 10.07.23
6.0	Western Gateway Chair replacement – FOR AGREEMENT, Paper 6	

	<p>JW informed the Board that he had circulated a draft of the role’s profile. He reported that an agency will scout for potential replacements and that a preferred candidate would require Ministerial approval.</p> <p>Regarding the option of offering a stipend to the incoming chair, JM stated that the task and finish panel agreed to take advice from recruitment professionals.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board approved the process and timetable for selecting a new Chair, located within the Board Papers. The Board agreed to keep the option open for offering a stipend to a successful candidate depending on the advice from the selected recruitment agency and benchmark figures for other similar roles.</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>30.06.23</p> <p>31.08.23</p>
7.0	Governance – FOR DISCUSSION, Paper 7	
	<p>JW stated that as Toby Savage had stepped down from his Council Leader role, the Partnership’s Vice Chair role was vacant. It was suggested to the Board that they invite MH as a Vice Chair for a two-year term, citing his experience within the Partnership and need for continuity while in the process of selecting a new Chair. There was a discussion concerning the need to recognise political change in local elections within the Board’s structure.</p> <p>JW reported to the Board that he had been approached by Swansea Bay City Deal partners regarding closer collaboration with the Councils of Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire. The Board considered this alongside its implications on the existing robust evidence base which defines the Partnership’s economic geography and justifies its workstreams.</p> <p>JW stated the main aim should be to establish closer collaboration. He also recognised that it was timely to carry out another governance review.</p> <p>The Board also discussed the possibility of commissioning an update of the existing Independent Economic Review to see if the Western Gateway’s economic geography had changed since the last publication.</p> <p>Decisions: The Board appointed MH as a Vice Chair of the Partnership. The Board agreed to the appointment of an external organisation to conduct a short, revised Governance Review focused on efficient delivery of the Board and Steering Committees and delegate to the Director of the Western Gateway (in consultation with the Chair) the authority to appoint to this commission.</p>	
8.0	Workplan updates	
8a	Innovation and Investment – For DISCUSSION, Paper 8a	
	<p>IW introduced the important work currently ongoing.</p> <p>Speaking about the Cyber Super Cluster work package, BJA stated that the working group were supporting a mapping project as well as identifying and overseeing project measurables. She mentioned an RfQ would be sent out for the mapping project, which will be completed in October.</p>	

	<p>BJA stated that the Secretariat will begin working with MyWorld and Media Cymru to convene stakeholders to explore ways in which the screen technology sectors of Bristol and Cardiff can further benefit the area.</p> <p>She informed the Board that KB will be attending the launch event of the British Business Bank’s (BBB) South West Investment Regional Fund on July 6th. Reporting on the co-hosted roundtable with BBB in March, BJA stated that there were several areas identified where the Western Gateway could add value to the area’s investment potential. This ranged from quantifying demand for investment finance to addressing inequalities regarding private investment in businesses.</p> <p>RD declared an interest in a BBB advisory Board.</p>	
8b	Low carbon energy workstream – FOR DISCUSSION, Paper 8b	
	<p>Hydrogen: DS spoke on work recently undertaken, including raising awareness of the Innovate-KTN call to develop dispersed Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans with partners as well as the progress of the EPSRC GW4 bids which the Partnership has supported. She reported that the Low Carbon Energy Working Group met on 4 May to discuss low carbon refuse collection vehicles, the soon-to-be updated hydrogen mapping tool, and a Teams chat channel for knowledge sharing.</p> <p>DS addressed the vacancy for Vice Chair on the Hydrogen Steering Committee following Cllr Renard stepping down from the Board.</p>	
	<p>Nuclear: JC informed the Board that the Severn Edge Group will publish the Vision for Severn Edge document in early July. He mentioned recent site visits by nuclear technology vendors, most recently from Commonwealth Fusion Systems. JC stated that the Group will undertake a Green Energy Hub feasibility study, aiming to identify the most suitable project types for the site.</p> <p>He reiterated the Secretariat’s gratitude to CCR Energy for hosting them at the Aberthaw site in South Wales to explore possible green energy opportunities.</p>	
	<p>Severn Estuary: KB congratulated WM on his appointment as Severn Estuary lead. WM confirmed that WSP have been appointed as consultants for the Estuary Evidence Base and Framework piece, which will be finalised by the end of August.</p> <p>He stated that potential candidates for the Chair of the Independent Commission are being identified and a list of possible Commissioners and key experts have been drafted.</p> <p>Following the announcement made by Welsh Government concerning a £750,000 Tidal Lagoon Challenge, the Secretariat is exploring opportunities for collaboration and match funding with organisations and academic institutions.</p>	
	<p>Decisions: The Board noted the date of the All-Party Parliamentary Group as 11 July 2023, the progress of the GW-SHIFT bid to interview stage, and the work to develop a Dispersed Industrial Decarbonisation Plan call. The Board agreed to encourage government and regulars to create a UK market for the development and deployment of all SMR, AMR and Fusion technologies, by allowing a range of potential sites to be considered.</p>	

The Board noted the progress made in supporting the Independent Commission on the Severn Estuary.		
	Action 10: Board members to indicate their interest in becoming Vice-Chair for the Hydrogen Committee by emailing the Western Gateway Director.	07.08.23
	Action 11: DS to contact GFirst’s Advanced Manufacturing Business Group about the dispersed Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans.	
	Action 12: JC and Severn Edge team to follow up with CFS regarding their recent site visit.	18.07.23
	Action 13: Board members to provide suggestions for roles of Chair, Commissioners and key experts for the Severn Estuary Independent Commission.	31.07.23

8c	Strategic Rail – For DISCUSSION, Paper 8c	
	<p>JC provided an update on activity carried out since the launch of the Partnership’s Rail Vision in March, including meetings with Network Rail and DfT. He also spoke about promoting the Vision at the Rail Cymru Conference in Cardiff and to the Rail Industry Association in Wales & Western Conference.</p> <p>The Board were informed that Phase 2 of the Vision had been refined by the Working Group and will be presented back to the Rail Steering Committee, including a Prioritisation and Delivery Assessment and a succinct Rail Deal document.</p> <p>JC spoke about further opportunities for the workstream, such as developing an online ‘Investment Map’ identifying opportunities for investment in rail, He also flagged the prominence of rail innovation within the area, highlighting the potential to have an Innovation Series of privately funded rail events across the geography covering a variety of policy areas within rail. JC identified further opportunities to promote the Vision, including the Network Rail Stakeholder Breakfast on July 13th, a Parliamentary Reception on September 6th, and the GWR Stakeholder Conference on September 13th.</p> <p>The Board discussed broadening the workstream to mass transit systems.</p>	

9.0	Partner updates	
	None.	
10.0	AOB	
	None.	
11.0	Date and time of the next meeting/s	
	The next Board meeting will be held on 16 th October 2023.	
	KB notified the Board of key, upcoming dates, e.g. The Autumn Party Conferences as well as the next Parliamentary reception.	
	Close	