

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL NEWS RELEASE

PR 1886

6 January 2011

For immediate release

Local Enterprise Partnership interim board appointed

Some of the region's leading business people will be helping to drive forward the newly formed West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Colin Skellett, executive chairman of Wessex Water, Katherine Bennett OBE, vice president and head of political affairs at Airbus, David Sproxton, co-founder of Aardman, Professor Joe McGeehan, a managing director at Toshiba Research Europe Ltd and Robert Sinclair, chief executive of Bristol Airport will represent business on an interim board for the LEP, following its formation.

They will be joined on the interim board by the leaders of the four local authorities in the West of England – John Calway (South Gloucestershire), Barbara Janke (Bristol City), Nigel Ashton (North Somerset) and Francine Haerberling (Bath and North East Somerset) – in a joint partnership between the business community and councils.

The creation of the interim board marks the latest milestone for the LEP, which will promote economic growth and prosperity in the West of England.

It will play a key role in delivering 95,000 jobs in the area by 2030 and attracting at least £1 billion of private sector investment over the next five years.

The business representatives will use their skills and experiences to help put the West of England on the map nationally and internationally, raising the profile of the key high-growth sectors of aerospace; creative industries; environmental industries, silicon and microelectronics and tourism that are vital to the region's economy.

The LEP will also encourage high-levels of new business start-ups and the growth of small businesses, help to create a skilled workforce that meets the needs of business, attract inward investment and develop and lobby for an infrastructure to help businesses thrive.

The LEP will also be able to bid for a share of a national £1.4 billion regional growth fund over the next three years.

As well as the five business representatives and four council leaders as interim board members, there will also be representation from the education and skills sector. It is planned for the interim board to meet for the first time later this month (January).

Colin Skellett, who is the new chair of the LEP, said: "This new partnership is a great opportunity to promote and develop the West of England's powerful and vibrant economy and innovative and highly-skilled workforce. The partnership will work hard to ensure our rightful place in the national and global economy is recognised, and to create the right conditions for businesses to grow. The interim board will be meeting later this month and will begin by drawing up a business plan for the LEP."

Councillor John Calway, chairman of the West of England Partnership and leader of South Gloucestershire Council said: "The West of England has all the ingredients for a stronger, competitive economy. Councils and businesses must now work together to create jobs and economic growth for the benefit of our communities. I am pleased by the prospect of working closely with the business community to make the West of England the best place in the UK to start and grow a business, and where people have access to the right skills and employment opportunities."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

-For all media enquiries please contact:

Ryan Skeets

Tel: 01454 863891

Fax: 01454 865046

Email: ryan.skeets@southglos.gov.uk

www.southglos.gov.uk