



Swindon & Wiltshire

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

SWLEP Subgroups- update on meetings

24 March 2022



Ideas, Infrastructure and Places (7 March)

Pam Webb

Membership

- Professor Maik Schneider has joined the subgroup. Maik is a professor of economics at the University of Bath and is the supervisor for Parsa Mohammadpour's Ph.D study into natural capital, which the SWLEP is co-sponsoring.

Places

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- Local authorities will receive an allocation for them to manage. LAs not yet informed of how much money they will have and the detailed criteria for use.
- Money to be released over three years – focus in years one and two on businesses and places and in year three on skills.
- SWLEP will co-ordinate a workshop for potential bidders working with both LAs and community and voluntary groups to improve the quality of bids.
- Need to consider the UKSPF alongside the British Business Bank £200m South West Investment Fund, for which LEs are key partners.



Places (continued)

- Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund
 - Consultation and engagement process underway for Trowbridge and Salisbury High Street Fund programmes
 - Place Partnerships established for Trowbridge and Chippenham, following the good model of Salisbury.
 - Swindon's Town Fund Board aiming to agree the last two business cases (out of 6) to be submitted to Government for agreement. So far 100% success.
 - Swindon High Street Fund project in an earlier tranche and progressing well.

Ideas

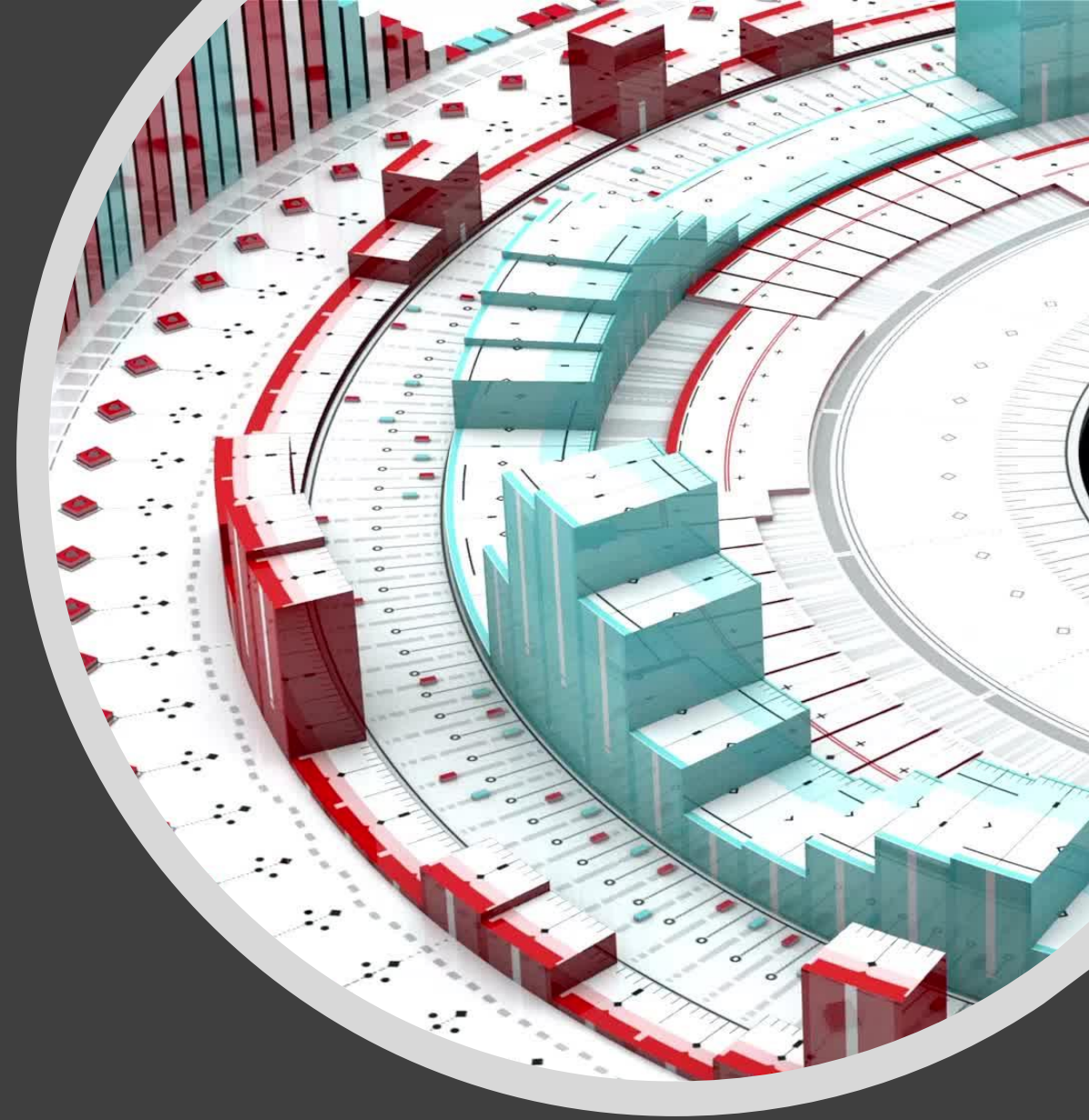
- Innovate UK Action plan
 - Funding agreed for 3 years - £600m available in 2022-23
 - Not yet agreed how programmes will be delivered
 - Confirmation that any legal UK registered entity, including CICs and charities which were working on commercial-led innovation, were entitled to apply for innovation grants.



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- Further discussion items:
 - Innovation Centre for Applied Sustainable Technologies and Innovation Centre for the Circular Economy
 - Feasibility study into the prospects of hydrogen generation at Wroughton and potential use of hydrogen-powered vehicles on the A303 improvements.
 - Inward Investment Programme and Growing Places Infrastructure Fund
 - Impact of large rises in fuel costs.



Skills and Talent (8 March 2022)

Carole Kitching

Green Skills and Jobs

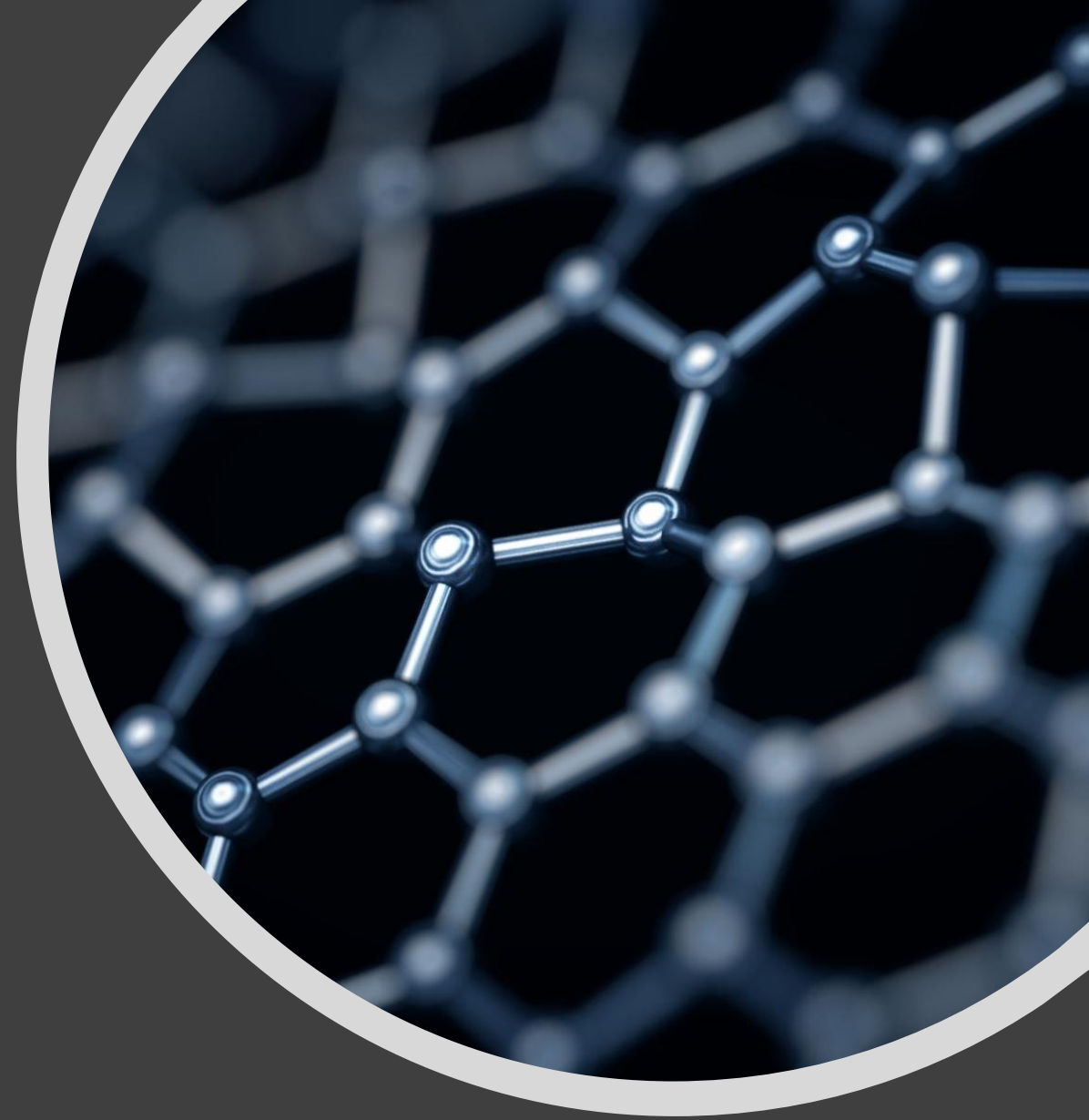
- Follow up discussion to the last themed meeting
- Task and Finish group established to develop a plan to support the development of green skills and jobs, with completion scheduled for July 2022.

Apprenticeships

- Discussion about partnership to develop apprenticeship opportunities in the A303 improvement project
- Next Skills and Talent meeting to be a themed session on apprenticeships.

Association of Colleges Climate Action roadmap

- Wiltshire College & University Centre's previous NUS President had participated on the student working group for the development of this roadmap and the college had now signed up to the commitment and was adopting the roadmap. It will help to shape education and training provision.



Labour Market Intelligence

- Report for February presented:
 - total job postings in the SWLEP area and UK continued to build on the gains made in January 2022, highlighting labour demand remains strong in both areas;
 - apprenticeship job postings rebounded in the SWLEP area, mirroring the UK trend that began one month beforehand;
 - job postings volume continues to grow across most sectors in the SWLEP area, albeit – finance and insurance postings volume remains below the level in July 2019;
 - claimant rates continue to decrease in Swindon, Wiltshire and England.

Further discussion items

Institute of Technology nearing build completion

Progress of Skills Bill

Digital bootcamps

Careers Hub – currently rated 5th best performer in the country

UKSPF – local opportunities for skills support in year 3 of the fund's operation



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Business Environment (9 March)

Ian White

Business Cyber Centre

- Bulk of the refurbishment of Unit 7, Greenways Park will be complete by the end of March.
- Furniture and AV equipment will be the last elements in place towards the second half of April
- Official opening on 10 May, with a Government Minister currently scheduled to carry out the formal duties.
- SWLEP is arranging with the Accountable Body to forward fund capital expenditure to preserve SWLEP's cash flow capability.
- The Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster will be run from the BCC using funding from UKC3, the organisation established by DCMS to oversee cyber clusters.
- 15% of desk space let to a tenant and first conference facility booking for June agreed.

Growth Hub

- Brokered 103 Kickstart placements which has generated income used to employ a digital marketing apprentice.
- Independent evaluation of the Growth Hub by Wavehill currently underway.



Growth Hub (continued)

- Separately, Growth Hub producing its annual impact report, focussing on the number, reach and sustainability of new business contacts.
- Annual budget of £462,000 defrayed fully, with changes made to spending priorities as salary costs dropped.
- Good process in place to assemble content for the SWLEP's Business Intelligence Report, sent to government and shared with Board Directors, MPs and partners.
- Following discussion, Growth Hub to survey businesses about impact of support on survival, resilience and growth.

Further discussion items

- Follow up on green skills and jobs meeting of the Skills and Talent Subgroup. There is a shared interest between the subgroups on this issue. Suggestion that the concept of an "Institute for Green Skills" would be worth exploring, learning from the success of the Institute of Coding.
- Plan for Growth increasingly aligning to the SWLEP's Business Action Plan so the SWLEP looking to have one plan rather than two.

