



Attending:	<p>Board Directors: Paddy Bradley, MBE (PB) Doug Gale MBE (DG) Andrew Gudgeon, OBE (AG) Tom Harrison (TM) Carole Kitching (CK) Basit Mohammed (BM) Paul Moorby, OBE (PJM) Alison North (AN) - Deputy Chair José St Clair (JSC) Prof Ian White (IW) Suzanne Wigmore (SW)</p>	<p>Board Advisers: None</p> <p>Observers: None</p>
Apologies:	<p>SWLEP Directors Richard Clewer (RC) / Ramona Derbyshire (RD) Col Gary McDade (GMc) Mark Matthews (MM) David Renard (DR)</p> <p>SWLEP Limited Phil Clement (PC)</p> <p>Wiltshire Council Leanne Sykes</p>	
In attendance:	<p>SWLEP Ltd Tim Burghes (TB) / Laura Hutchings (LH) / Ian Lloyd (IL) / Tom Marshall (TM) / Debby Skellern (DS) / Charlotte Skinner (CSk) / Chris Stevens (CS)</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council Richard Bell (RBe)</p> <p>Wiltshire Council Rory Bowen (RB) / Victoria Maloney / Alison Robinson, Section 151 representative</p> <p>Representatives from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) Emily Manser (EM) and Jenna Hunt (JH)</p>	
Guest(s):		
Chair:	Paul Moorby (PJM)	
Minutes:	Deborah House (DKH)	
Location:	Business Cyber Centre, Unit 7, Greenways Business Park, Chippenham, SN15 1BN and online	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest	



Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<p>The meeting opened at 9.33 am and the Chair welcomed attendees to the public meeting of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd. Attendees were both in the room and online.</p> <p>Introductions were made and apologies were noted.</p> <p>No further conflicts of interest were noted in addition to those already registered by directors.</p>	
2.0	Review of minutes and matters arising	
2.1	<p>The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 26 January 2023 were reviewed and approved. The Chair requested an amendment to reflect more closely the key items of the discussion. Additional wording would be provided.</p> <p>Action: the minutes to be updated and re-circulated.</p>	April 2023
2.2	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMc and AN to coordinate a proposed visit of The Western Gateway’s Director to South Wiltshire. <i>Update: discussions ongoing. AN informed the meeting that the Western Gateway had postponed this proposed visit at present and was expected to come back to AN in due course.</i> <p>The other Matter Arising had been completed.</p>	
3.0	Submitted questions	
	No submitted questions had been received for this agenda.	
4.0	Budget Management	
4.1	<p>Estimated end of year 2022-23 CSk spoke to the paper and outlined some key points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SME Competitiveness programme and Growth Hub Q4 grant funds were expected. • SWLEP would not be receiving DfE grant money for this year. • The Business Cyber Centre’s performance was in line with that originally outlined. The original Business Case had a cyber focus, but we could not operate profitably with just that, so we had extended the offer to businesses in other sectors and the take up for events had increased. <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board:</p>	



Item	Narrative	Deadline
4.2	<p>NOTED the financial position of the company up to 20 March 2023 in the financial year 2022-23.</p> <p>Budget Plan Q1 2023-24 CSk spoke to the paper and outlined some key points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full proposed budget would be circulated ahead of the May Board and would be available at the Board Meeting. • This budget had been drafted whilst SWLEP was still awaiting the core budget for the Growth Hub. • SWLEP had just received confirmation of the Growth Hub core funding, which this year had increased to £261,000; £30,000 up on last year. • The SME Competitiveness programme was due to end in June. It currently supports four members of staff. • Business within the BCC was increasing and using the space outside the cyber sector had always been the mitigation strategy for the building. • The company was going through considerable financial changes at the moment, but it was financially stable. <p>The question was raised about a line in the paper marked as service delivery. This was explained; when SWLEP re-distributed funds to its deliver partners, for example to YKTO and SetSquared, within the SME Competitiveness programme this was how the transaction was recorded.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board: NOTED the financial budget for Q1 2023-24.</p>	
5.0	<p>Government proposal to transfer LEP function to Local Authorities</p>	
	<p>This item had been included in the public session of the Board Meeting to bring it within the public domain. The Government had indicated it was mindful to cease funding organisations providing LEP functions and to transfer those functions to local government where appropriate. However, it was a complex issue and would take much longer to be resolved than one discussion.</p> <p>Government had issued an information gathering questionnaire to LEPs, Local Authorities and Combined Mayoral Authorities about LEP activities with a consultation period of 17 March to 14 April. Each organisation had its own section to complete and questionnaires were to be submitted by 11.59pm on Friday, 14 April.</p> <p>Update: the deadline for submitting the information gathering questionnaire has now been extended to 19 May.</p>	



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	<p>SWLEP had held an initial meeting with Local Authority colleagues followed by a meeting with our area’s DLUHC representatives. The partnership with colleagues was important, and each was to let each other know what responses were submitted, although submissions would be made separately.</p> <p>At present, the situation was very uncertain, but it was hoped that there would be a clearer picture by the July Board Meeting as government was aiming to have an updated policy position before the summer recess. The outcome would be complicated, as one solution would not be appropriate for all.</p> <p>Emily Manser thanked all at SWLEP for the professional and constructive manner with which this uncertainty had been met. Area teams had already been raising issues with the policy teams, for example, with regard to the ownership of the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF).</p> <p>Within SWLEP the major decision would be which of the functions would be transferred to which Local Authority. Our LEP was relatively straight forward with only two Local Authorities, but other LEPs covered several Local Authorities. The challenge would be complicated by those LEPs where there was no devolution deal in place, which was approximately half. For those that had a deal, there was a clear timetable. In addition, Local Authorities would not be able to take on the economic development activity without supplementary funding. This would probably mean take up of the “new burdens” funding.</p> <p>This situation would also impact on the legal position of SWLEP as Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council were co-opted onto the Board, with Wiltshire Council as the Accountable Body.</p> <p>Swindon’s and Wiltshire Council’s partnership with SWLEP had worked well over the years and for some activity it was difficult to see where SWLEP ended and the councils started. At this stage it was about clarifying what, potentially, would be transferred to a local government structure. The outcome had to be about maintaining or improving the benefit, not moving backwards. The model needed to have a partnership with the councils for the benefit of all.</p> <p>SWLEP Ltd was an independent company, and it had the resources to continue trading. It intended to carry on as a not-for-profit company committed to the economic development of Swindon and Wiltshire.</p> <p>The draft responses to the questionnaire would be circulated amongst the group before submission, so even though there would be three separate submissions, it would take the form of one voice back to the Government.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board:</p>	



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	<p>NOTED for information the Government’s proposal to cease funding organisations providing LEP functions and transfer those functions to local government where appropriate; RAISED commercially sensitive issues about the impact of the Government’s proposals in Part Two of the Board meeting; and AUTHORISED the Chair and Deputy Chair to sign off on behalf of the Board the response from SWLEP to questions asked of LEPs in the Government’s questionnaire.</p>	
6.0	<p>Chief Executive’s report</p>	
	<p>PB spoke to the paper and highlighted the key points.</p> <p>Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) GPIF would be dealt with under Item 8.0 Programme Status Report.</p> <p>Annual Performance Review The conditions set by Government for effective LEP operation had been met.</p> <p>Local Economic Assessment (LEA) Production of the LEA had been paused during the pandemic because of the skewed effect on the economy. An assessment had been commissioned last year and again this with a company called Hatch. The LEA provided an overview of the economy of the area of Swindon and Wiltshire. Workshops had already been held with Local Authority representatives on the initial findings.</p> <p>This final version would be brought to the May Board Meeting.</p> <p>Staff secondments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debby Skellern (DS) was currently seconded to The Western Gateway for 50% of her time. From 1 April, DS would be seconded to the pan-regional partnership full time until the end of June. The Chair commended DS on her good work on the Hydrogen project for The Western Gateway. • Phil Clement had been seconded to Gfirst LEP for 3.5 days per week. This secondment had now ended, and we were reviewing how we continued management of the GPIF loan fund. There would be no immediate impact, but there would be changes to staffing shortly. <p>Membership of Organisations</p> <p>The Chair requested discussion of membership of the following organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Western Gateway, • England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) and • The LEP Network. <p>The Western Gateway pan regional partnership (not the Western Gateway Subnational transport Body) had funding for at least another 18 months. PJM</p>	



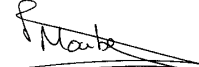
Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<p>sat on its Board. SWLEP paid a subscription of £10,000 pa to be a member and would continue to support its work.</p> <p>SWLEP continued to be involved with England’s Economic Heartland as an observer and contributed to discussions, although paid membership had ceased.</p> <p>Membership of the LEP Network was £7,500 pa. The aim was to provide one collective voice to government, but with LEP funding decreasing, this situation was thought also to apply to the Network. We were not mandated to join this organisation, and it was felt that the onus was on them to justify to SWLEP what we would receive for this fee. The Network had recently aided the introduction of the Ipsos EPIRE project (report on the economic impact of road improvements with DfT) to all LEPs in the country, but it was felt that this could also be done individually. If the Government had already taken the decision about the future of LEPs, there were questions to be answered about what the Network will provide for LEPs with different levels of engagement with local devolution deals.</p> <p>Action: Obtain clarity from the LEP Network about the benefits of membership. Issue to Directors via email and await decision response on whether SWLEP should remain a member.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board: NOTED the contents of the report and agreed to continue to pay a membership fee to the Western Gateway</p>	<p>April 2023</p>
7.0	<p>Subgroup updates</p>	
	<p>The discussion points of the latest Subgroup meetings were presented. The presentation can be accessed using the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/board-meetings/2023/30-march/subgroup-updates-30-march-boardmtg.pdf?sfvrsn=9e031080_3</p> <p>Business Environment Subgroup (Slide 2) AN advised the meeting of the discussions at the Subgroup. As well as the usual performance reports for the Business Cyber Centre and the Growth Hub, the Subgroup also looked at the impact of technological advancements on the world of work and how SWLEP maintained oversight of government initiatives.</p> <p>Skills & Talent Subgroup (Slide 3) PB spoke to the meeting as he had chaired the last meeting of the Skills & Talent Subgroup and outlined some key discussion points.</p> <p>Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills were important for the productivity of the area. • DfE funding priorities would match those deemed from LSIPs. 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft of the report was expected on 31 March. • There was concern that the report would not contain enough information following the level of engagement with employers to make an accurate assessment on the priorities it had identified so far. • The Skills & Talent Subgroup considered it helpful to continue to work with Business West proactively and to meet outside the normal Skills & Talent Subgroup schedule to reach a collaborative outcome. • The report would be submitted by the end of May with an update and proposed plans in the following year. • Main sources of skills provision had changed overnight changed from private to public status. • Accountability statement for FE / HE colleges covered everything they die, not just the priorities of the LSIP. <p>Other items mentioned were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a quarterly update on Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) for the area; • the Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub was one of the top performing in the country, although it was expected that its funding would change; • the Apprenticeship Campaign was going well; and • SWLEP’s Computer Coding Challenge had attracted six schools and we had just made our first purchase of Raspberry Pis. The schools taking up the challenge were invited to the Cyber ICE Conference on 10 May as VIPs and would get a chance to see a WW2 Enigma machine. <p>Ideas, Infrastructure & Place (IIP) Subgroup (Slides 4-5) SW updated the meeting on items discussed at the Subgroup, including a presentation on Porton Science Park and the importance of an Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) policy.</p> <p>IW mentioned that he had been concerned about whether some of the digital skills courses were really valid or not. But the evidence was compelling. There had been 500 people signed up for the digital bootcamps. A recent survey showed an average increase in salary of over £7,000 for those having completed the course! So, this format should be rolled out.</p>	
8.0	Programme Status report	



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	<p>PB spoke to the paper. The report now mainly consisted of the loans within the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund.</p> <p>PB highlighted three key loans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling Technologies had gone into administration and was RAG-rated at RED. SWLEP had been advised that it would probably only receive pence in the pound back for the money loaned, so in effect, the monies had been written off; • the capital outstanding on the loan to Our Wilton had been returned to the GPIF pot, but the company was still to pay interest accrued. The loan was currently RAG-rated at RED as the interest was overdue. The company wanted clarity regarding planning and was not paying the interest accrued until this had been received; and • Advanced Bio Fuels was RAG-rated at AMBERRED as it was still negotiating with investors to support its cashflow. <p>Some companies had multiple loans from the GPIF loan programme and were under closer scrutiny by the Working Group owing to the increased risk. SWLEP used Red Flag Alert data to monitor companies' financial health.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board: NOTED the contents of the report.</p>	
9.0	AOB	
	There were no additional items.	
	Date of next meeting	
	<p>Thursday, 25 May</p> <p>Directors to meet at 9am start of the public meeting at 9.30am.</p>	
	<p>Future Meetings for 2023</p> <p>Thursday, 20 July Thursday, 28 September Thursday, 23 November</p> <p>Meetings will be held via video / teleconference unless otherwise advised.</p>	
	The meeting closed at 11am	


30 May 2023