



Attending:	<p>Board Directors: Ramona Derbyshire (RD) Doug Gale MBE (DG) Tom Harrison (TM) Iain Hatt (IH) Basit Mohammed (BM) – joined from 11.15am Paul Moorby, OBE (PJM) Alison North (AN) - Deputy Chair Debby Skellern (DS) Prof Ian White (IW) - online Suzanne Wigmore (SW) - online</p>	
Apologies:	<p>SWLEP Directors Cllr Richard Clewer (RC) Cllr Nick Holder (NH), as representative of Richard Clewer Mark Matthews (MM) Cllr Jim Robbins (JR) José St Clair (JSC)</p>	
In attendance:	<p>SWLEP Ltd Tim Burghes (TB) / Charlotte Skinner (CSk) / Chris Stevens (CS) – online / Rachel Sweet (RS) - online Swindon Borough Council Richard Bell (RBe) Wiltshire Council Rory Bowen (RB) - online Victoria Moloney (VM) Leanne Kendrick (LK), Representation of S151 officer of Wiltshire Council Representatives from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) Chris Parsons (CP)</p>	
Guest(s):	<p>Bruce Bodio (BB), Bioviron – SWLEP member University of Bath Alistair Hunt (AH) / Parsa Mohammadpour (PM) / Andreas Schaefer (AS) – all three online</p>	
Chair:	Paul Moorby (PJM)	
Minutes:	Deborah House (DKH)	
Location:	At the Offices of Thrings Solicitors, 6 Drakes Meadow, Penny Lane, Swindon, SN3 3LL OR Online via Teams	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest	
	The meeting opened at 10.03am. The Chair welcomed attendees to the public meeting of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited and apologies were noted. Particular welcome was extended to SWLEP Limited member, Bruce Bodio of BioViron, who had decided to remain after the AGM for the public meeting.	



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	<p>Conflicts of Interest There were no additional conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
2.0	Review of minutes and matters arising	
2.1	The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 23 November 2023 were reviewed and approved.	
2.2	<p>Matters Arising: Matters arising were completed or on ongoing.</p>	
3.0	Submitted questions	
	No submitted questions had been received for this agenda.	
4.0	Chief Executive's report	
	<p>DS outlined the contents of the paper.</p> <p>Board Structure Col Gary McDade had resigned from the Board in November. His replacement as South West Commander was Col Matt Palmer. PJM and DS had an introductory meeting scheduled to outline the duties of a SWLEP Director, as this was a standing position on the Board for his role.</p> <p>LEP Transition Government had advised that there would be no further LEP core funding from April 2024, and that functions would be undertaken by the Local Authorities. With the guidance received on 4 August 2023, discussions had commenced with both Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and Wiltshire Council on how to proceed. SBC had opted for a Business-as-Usual approach with the Growth Hub offering Swindon's business support as previously, whereas Wiltshire Council had opted for this to be brought under the Local Authority's remit.</p> <p>The guidance issued in December however stated that services such as the Growth Hub and the Careers Hub had to be maintained across the Swindon and Wiltshire area as a whole and LEP functions delivery should not be fragmented. Up to £240,000 had been set aside by Government for core functions. Funding for the Growth Hub and Careers Hub had not been announced. On 11 January 2024, as a result of the new guidance, SWLEP was informed that Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council had come to a shared position, and that Wiltshire Council would become the Accountable Body and Managing Body for the LEP transition process. SWLEP had mobilised its legal representation to review the transition options offered.</p>	



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	<p>All parties were working together to develop a shared communications plan and to keep stakeholders informed of developments at appropriate times.</p> <p>The regular Local Authority LEP Transition Working Group now met weekly, and the Board Working Group last met on 16 January 2024. Further developments would be discussed as the situation evolved.</p> <p>Growth Hub The Growth Hub had delivered a series of business start-up courses for staff at Cooper Tires, as the factory in Melksham was due to close. Glowing testimonials had been received from both the company and its delegates for the courses provided. Those attending the workshops could access ongoing business support afterwards through the Growth Hub.</p> <p>Military Service Leavers' careers Fair An event was being arranged in April for the Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster to promote this sector as a careers option to military leavers. At a recent Rural Economy Sector Group meeting, a similar requirement was mooted to inform those leaving military service about potential careers in land-based industries. It made sense therefore for this event to be held as a joint venture in the first instance and then on a landed estate sometime in the summer.</p> <p>Net Zero Energy Hub LEPs provided an important role in the governance of the South West Net Zero Hub which received funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, in terms of reviewing and approving applications for community energy funding. This was one support element of LEPs which fell outside the remit of core funding. Alternative governance arrangements would be required following LEP transition.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board: NOTED the joint shared position of Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council in relation to LEP transition received on 11 January 2023; and And that SWLEP would CONTINUE to work with its local authority partners to jointly develop a transfer agreement and within an appropriate timeframe. NOTED the contents of the report.</p>	
5.0	Budget management: Q3 2023-24 Report	
	<p>CSk spoke to the paper and outlined the current position with the accounts for Q3 2023-24.</p> <p>SWLEP was still awaiting some funds to come through from Wiltshire Council acting as SWLEP's Accountable Body, in particular Growth Hub Q1</p>	



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	<p>and Q2 and GPIF interest. One GPIF interest payment had been received since the papers had been published. SWLEP’s cashflow was fine but some £500,000 had become overdue. SWLEP was aware of the change of software within Wiltshire Council which was impacting on some financial functions and there was still delay. Leanne Kendrick, in her new role, knew which payments were outstanding and was working to rectify the situation as soon as possible.</p> <p>The BCC budget shortfall would be improving with a global client moving into the building in February 2024, at which point all the office space would then be occupied.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board: NOTED the financial position of the company for Q3 in financial year 2023-24.</p>	
6.0	Delivery Plan Performance Report Q3 2023-24	
	<p>CSk spoke to the paper and outlined the key points of the Delivery Plan Performance Report for Q3 2023-24. The background information to the paper was available should anyone wish to see that in full.</p> <p>All the components within the Local Industrial Strategy priority areas were RAG-rated at GREEN, except for the apprenticeship scheme and Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster membership at AMBER-GREEN; targets for apprenticeships had been ambitious and Cyber Cluster membership had not increased as much as forecast. Brea Woods, Project Manager, had left the company at the end of December and Tom Marshall was currently caretaking the role until a replacement had been recruited.</p> <p>In response to a question about the future of Growth Hub services, it was felt that it was important that there was no drop in continuity or cessation of service during or after LEP transition. SWLEP’s CRM system, HubSpot, monitored the Growth Hub’s own engagements with businesses and this information was shared with Government. What the business support service would look like in the future was dependent on funding awarded by government and what that allowed the Growth Hub to deliver. Government had stated that the voice of business should be protected.</p> <p>The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board: NOTED the contents of the report.</p>	
7.0	Natural Capital – PhD research update	
	<p>PM briefly outlined the background to the study and then updated on its progress to date. The presentation can be accessed by following the link below.</p>	



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	<p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/board-meetings/2024/25-january/natural-capital-swlep-board-presentation-v1-18-jan-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=92557cac_5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first part of the study had focussed on quantification, with the capture of value of the natural capital. • The second part of the study had outlined the theory behind the process. • The third part, the current part of the study, was to test some of the assumptions, putting the work into a practical context by applying the framework into selected case studies. <p>When reviewing a given area for housing development, one could look at the different costs of rewilding or forestry and what the area would lose in natural capital, but overlay with jobs, etc to balance out the end result. In response to a question about consideration of urban areas and how to develop cost against a natural solution, PM explained that complementary information would be needed to give balance, as well as other costs and other benefits.</p> <p>The question was raised as to whether there had been any discussions within government departments about the approach being used, for example, within the Treasury Green Book methodologies or by Defra. In response, PM stated that although he was not aware of this, the Green Book guidance had been updated with the natural environment and natural capital referred to in annexes and Defra also published a national capital guidance framework. The Defra Analysis Team had shown interest in the research methodology. IW gave his personal congratulations to PM on the research.</p> <p>If the Swindon and Wiltshire could area demonstrate significant interest and practical implementation, this might strengthen the approach being adopted. It was suggested that partners, especially local authority partners, might like to consider suggesting historic, current or future case studies to help test the model and approach which could help with refining the final stage of the research.</p> <p>Case studies could provide generic rules by providing a framework of costs associated with what the overall plan would be according to different areas and land values.</p> <p>Real examples would demonstrate practicality and we could workshop some examples.</p>	
8.0	Subgroup updates	
	<p>The Chairs of the Subgroups updated attendees of the recent meetings.</p> <p>Skills & Talent Subgroup</p>	



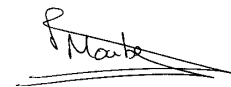
Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<p>IH outlined the items covered in the Skills & Talent Subgroup meeting on 12 January, which was his first meeting of the Subgroup in the role of Chair. Overall, it was a good Subgroup, attendance remained high and there were high levels of engagement. The presentation can be accessed by using the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/board-meetings/2024/25-january/sand-t-jan-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=ffb42bcf_3</p> <p>Careers Hub</p> <p>The Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub remained one of the top performing hubs in the country with a lot of ongoing activity. Projects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start small, dream big which was piloting early careers engagement in primary schools; • the Teacher Encounters project which would take place again this year with increased numbers of teachers going back out to see their subject area being used in the workplace; • transitions projects for the large number of SEND and high needs students across the Swindon and Wiltshire area. These projects would focus on providing additional support for them with specialists to aid with their transition to Further Education; and • Appren-T-Fest events being held throughout the county in the coming weeks for students and parents to learn more about apprenticeships. The first took place in Salisbury this week, which was well-attended. <p>Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)</p> <p>An update was received from Business West on the progress of the LSIP with further business engagements events planned. An update would be available in March 2024 which would give further insights into the deep dives. Business West was due to undertake a funding stream survey across all providers in the region to ascertain the overall funding available and thereby maximise provision. The Skills & Talent Subgroup would oversee the governance of the LSIP, and a Working Group had been established to make recommendations for focus. There was also a statutory duty on how institutions were meeting the local skills needs.</p> <p>The Advanced British Standards (ABS)</p> <p>ABS represented a merging of A-levels and technical qualifications and was currently in consultation. The education sector would have liked some stability with the end of BTECs and the introduction of T-skills, but now it looked like DfE was moving towards ABS. The question was raised as to whether a change of government would affect a change to ABS. In response, the system did have royal assent, was mentioned in the King’s speech and did have cross-party support. DfE had set an outline of 10 years for this programme.</p>	



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	<p>The question was raised as to why there was an increasing number of SEND students in the Swindon and Wiltshire area. In response, the Local Authorities were undertaking some work to try to ascertain why this would be the case. However, if there were high numbers in primary, then these would naturally filter through to secondary and tertiary late, in addition, assessments were not transferable between these different institutions so as students moved on, and they and their parents/carers had the uncertainty and pressure of re-evaluations.</p> <p>Business, Ideas & Place Subgroup</p> <p>AN spoke to the meeting and highlighted the items discussed at the meeting on 9 January. The presentation can be accessed via the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/board-meetings/2024/25-january/bipsubgroupupdate09jan2024-boardmtg25jan2024.pdf?sfvrsn=b5b2e927_3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Subgroup had received a presentation from The Western Gateway on its areas of focus and updates on its projects in the Net Zero agenda, such as hydrogen and the Commission into the Severn Estuary, as well as further progress on its Rail Vision and the Severn Edge; • an update on the BCC and the Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster; • an update on the Growth Hub and its engagement with numbers of business over its past eight years; and • a discussion on how to re-engage members and refresh the format for the Business Intelligence & Network Group (BING) meetings. Suggestions for a series of workshops on topics such as automation, decision-making and planning, would be trialled. <p>It was clear that there was an overlap of Subgroups across certain themes, for example, the business ideas and places and skills and talent regarding apprenticeships. To this end, it was hoped that joint discussions could be held on specific themes.</p> <p>AN highlighted a report which indicated the constraints which the British economy was experiencing and agreed to share the link, which is given below.</p> <p>https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/final-quarter-of-2023-saw-small-business-confidence-lose-ground-new-report-finds.html</p>	
9.0	AOB	
	None	



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	<p>BB shared his experience of working with SWLEP and engaging with local councils and suggested some improvements in terms of communication channels.</p> <p>Action: SWLEP to follow-up with BB.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting</p>	
	<p>Thursday, 21 March 2024</p> <p>Directors to meet at 9am</p> <p>Start of the public meeting at 9.30am</p>	
	<p>Meetings for 2024</p> <p>Thursday, 23 May Thursday, 18 July Thursday, 26 September Thursday, 28 November</p> <p>Meetings will be held via video / teleconference unless otherwise advised.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 11.32am</p>	



21 March 2024