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Paul Moorby OBE reflects on his first year as Chair of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.



Foreword from the Chair

I started my role as Chair at the beginning of April 2020, just as the pandemic hit. I reflected internally that I became Chair, and everyone locked the doors, and they haven't been out since, but this really summarises the environment of the last year.

It's been incredibly tough, and I praise the Swindon and Wiltshire business community for its tenacity, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit, rising to the challenges we have faced however complex and impossible they may have seemed at first. I'm proud of our business community, business representation group partners and the SWLEP team for working together more than ever to help us through this crisis, strengthening our assets so that we are ready to embrace whatever the future has in store for us.

2020/21 was always going to be a

challenge for the SWLEP regardless of COVID-19, as we knew that we were soon coming to the end of a cycle of Government investment for LEs. This was signposted not long after I became Chair, and the exact spending review and changes are set to be in place by April 2022. Therefore, this year has been all about concentrating on the work that our previous Chair, John Mortimer, started by setting us up as a Limited Company and making us fit for purpose for whatever is coming next.

The whole of this year has been about making the SWLEP self-sustaining, ensuring we're here for the long term as a local asset. We've been working on two main projects to achieve this. The first is our Growing Places Infrastructure Fund, loaning out millions to local businesses. The interest that those invested in the scheme pay gets recycled

straight back into our business community in Swindon and Wiltshire. (Find out more on page 17).

The second project has been pitching for funding for our new Business Cyber Centre. We were successfully awarded capital through the Government's Getting Building Fund to support our idea, and this new facility we are creating will be a UK-first, putting our area at the cutting edge of cyber technology with world leading skills here in Swindon and Wiltshire. We will become a landlord for the building we are signing a lease on, with profits being fed back into the SWLEP to keep our organisation in business and able to support our community with future projects to better our economy. If we can make sure that the core costs of the SWLEP are paid for through these two initiatives, any extra funding we secure allows us to do more and get greater

return for every Government pound that's spent in our region.

My personal contribution has been as aggregator and convenor. Managers are not needed in good times, they're needed in bad, so I'm pleased to have been involved when a business voice is needed most. I will continue in my mission to ensure Swindon and Wiltshire's 720,000+ residents are heard on a national level, to create new opportunities which will create jobs and generate security for our region in the years to come. I invite you to contact me with any challenges you face.

Paul Moorby, Chair

Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, July 2021



Vision to 2036

To ensure all our communities benefit from inclusive and sustainable growth, making the Swindon and Wiltshire area world-renowned for its convergence of innovation, entrepreneurialism, and great quality of life



Our vision and investment

In March 2020, SWLEP published the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy, the long-term plan for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth for our area. It was developed following extensive engagement with our business community and stakeholders and we are committed to delivering its strategic priorities focussing on:

- ▶ attracting innovation activity
- ▶ nurturing the skills and talent of our residents and workers
- ▶ enabling infrastructure improvements
- ▶ delivering flexible business support services
- ▶ achieving the inclusive, sustainable growth of our places.

A great deal of work has been undertaken during the year to mobilise these priorities with good foundations laid to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth and support the UK's transition to Net Zero.

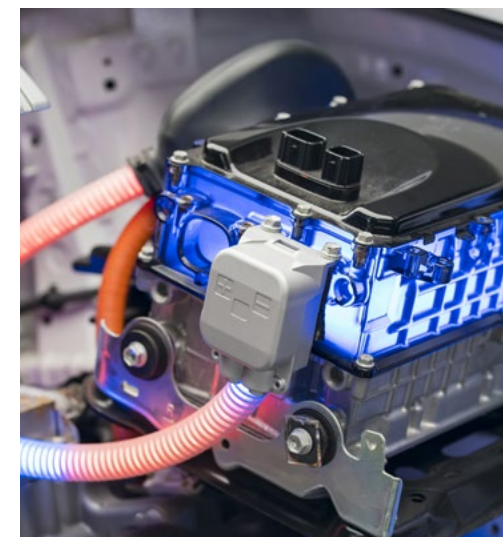
One of our strengths as an area is its central location and we have extended our reach to work with neighbouring LEPs in relation to delivering infrastructure improvements focussing on new energy vehicles, especially hydrogen. We are working with Thames Valley Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and the West of England LEPs on these projects.

We have also developed a closer working relationship with the Western Gateway and England's Economic Heartland Sub-national Transport Bodies focussing on the delivery of our Rail and Hydrogen Strategies.

The Western Gateway Powerhouse (which includes Swindon and Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Bath, Bristol, North Somerset and cities in South Wales) has gained more traction with Government and we have supported its focus on international trade, connectivity, advanced manufacturing, and digital and cyber technologies.

In the last year we have maintained a strong emphasis on delivering our Local Growth Fund programme, the funding window for which came to an end in March 2021. The benefits and outputs from our investment will continue to be realised and monitored over the coming years. In the summer, we were also successful in securing additional capital investment for three priority schemes through the Getting

Building Fund, which will underpin our innovation-led activity for our area over the forthcoming year.





“

We are quiet but confident as an area and are punching above our weight with fantastic technologies and life sciences at a world-leading level

Note from the CEO

2020-2021 was a year in which there was massive change in our country due to the pandemic and this was reflected in our business. Due to the crisis we had to change our way of operating dramatically and very quickly. We had to move from a team of eleven to 24 direct or contracted staff within weeks to implement Government programmes.

It has been an interesting experience doing everything online, from recruiting people, to inducting them, and holding performance reviews virtually. Most of the people working within the SWLEP now I've not met in person which is an unusual experience. Although we've been physically apart, we've used technology to our advantage and met twice weekly via Teams. It's been a real challenge having to pick up

pace, change, respond and keep moving in these conditions whilst delivering on our original objectives but we have worked hard to achieve our goals.

Our Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub has grown and delivered strongly, beating performance targets and receiving very good feedback from businesses. The programmes we have created in response to the pandemic have been well received and exceeded our objectives. Our 'This Way Up' webinar series reached thousands of businesses both live and on-demand. The sessions covered a broad range of subjects and received great reviews. I believe we are in touch with the moment and that's what pleases me most about this last year. We've not been behind the curve, and the types of activity we've carried out have been both

perceived to be necessary and received as necessary.

We've constantly reached out to more businesses, so they know we are here to offer support, advice, and guidance. We are Government funded, so everything we do is free and impartial, and we want to ensure more businesses are aware of this. We have seen a large uptake in the numbers of people visiting our website searching for Growth Hub support and across the whole breadth and range of business in Swindon and Wiltshire.

A core focus has been supporting SMEs who needed a small grant to keep them going through the pandemic's lockdowns. It's never an easy task giving out public money as there are so many checks and balances to go through, but we worked

hard with our partners to get the funding out as quickly as possible. There was a particular fund to support hospitality and tourism businesses, and this helped keep the momentum going for those badly affected by COVID-19. Right from the beginning of the pandemic, we worked with the UK Hospitality Trade Association, British Beer and Pub Association and Wadsworth Brewery, writing to our MPs asking for support. We've had businesses in this industry who've not been able to keep going and it's been particularly tough on the young who rely on it for jobs. It is important that we support these businesses as they start trading again, securing them for the future.

In addition to providing our government funded business support programmes,



Note from the CEO (continued)

we've also been able to continue the development of the sectors in our economy that are growing, some as a result of the pandemic. We are quiet but confident as an area and are punching above our weight with sustainable technologies and life sciences at a world-leading level. In the last year we have worked with partners to get recognition for Porton Down as a Life Sciences Opportunity Zone through the Department of Trade (DIT). This means its status has raised and is now pushed more by DIT officials around the world as an opportunity for investment. Through the Government's Getting Building Fund we secured funding to expand the facilities at Porton and this project is now proceeding at pace. Once complete there will be the opportunity for organisations outside the

wire to liaise and work with the research scientists inside the wire and use their high-end facilities.

We're also developing the UK's first business-led cyber centre. There is nothing like this partnership elsewhere in the country, bringing together MoD Strategic Command, a university partner in the form of the University of Bath and cyber entrepreneurs. The centre is set to go live in early 2022 and will support SMEs throughout the country to achieve cyber confidence.

As a region we are at the leading edge for a number of technologies including plastics recycling and the circular economy, which enabled us to secure Government funding to support developments at the Carriage Works in Swindon and to bring to the area

university-led research in sustainable technologies leading to commercial industrial application. Swindon and Wiltshire is a beautiful area, but it also has a great innovative movement and people are driven to succeed even in the toughest of economic climates. We look forward to working with the businesses of Swindon and Wiltshire and all our strategic partners in maintaining momentum in the next year as we forge a path out of the pandemic.

Paddy Bradley

Paddy Bradley, Chief Executive Officer
Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, July 2021





2014-2021 LOCAL GROWTH FUND HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ **£169m Local Growth Deal funding secured by SWLEP**
- ▶ **£349m private and other public sector match attracted**
- ▶ **22 local schemes supported plus three major transport schemes retained by the Department for Transport**
- ▶ **8,427 jobs created to date**
- ▶ **£34.5m spent in 2020-21**



The Local Growth Fund Programme 2014-2021

Between 2014 and 2016, SWLEP struck three Growth Deals with Government securing £169m of public funding into capital build projects. As a result of this investment SWLEP has invested £101.5m in the delivery of 22 investment projects, the remaining £67.5m was retained by the Department for Transport (DfT) for major schemes in Swindon. The DfT retained funding supported three local transport schemes which are due to be completed by mid-2022.

The beneficial impact of the Local Growth Fund programme will be felt for years to come. It has:

- ▶ enabled the better flow of traffic along the M4 with improvements at Junctions 15, 16 and 17

- ▶ eased the flow of goods and people along the A350 with the dualling of sections of the road at Chippenham and funded improvements at the town's railway station
- ▶ invested in a range of place-shaping schemes in Swindon, including improved sustainable travel and public transport, as well as enabling the development of new homes at Wichelstowe and Eastern Villages
- ▶ supported Salisbury's recovery from the Novichok incidents in 2018 and invested in groundwork improvements to the Riverpark development
- ▶ supported digital improvements through investment in the Wiltshire Ultrafast Broadband Programme and the

redevelopment of the Digital Mansion House in Corsham

- ▶ enabled skills development of residents and young people through investment into technical and Higher Education at Wiltshire College & University Centre's campuses based in Lackham and Salisbury
- ▶ funded development work for transformative town centre regeneration plans. These included the Swindon Cultural Quarter, Salisbury's People Friendly Streets and a business case for a state-of-the-art Innovation Centre for the Circular Economy at Wroughton Airfield.





A350

A350 Bumpers Farm

£1.67m

COMPLETE



Swindon M4

New Eastern Villages Infrastructure

£9.33m

ENABLED



Salisbury A303

Porton Science Park

£4m

COMPLETE




A350

A350 West Ashton/Yarnbrook

£870k

ENABLED



Swindon M4

Innovation Campus for the Circular Economy

£200k

COMPLETE



Salisbury A303

Salisbury People Friendly Streets Feasibility

£393k

ENABLED



Swindon M4

A429 Malmesbury

£1.4m

COMPLETE



Swindon M4

Sustainable Transport (LSTF)

£3.75m

COMPLETE



Chippenham/Swindon M4

M4 Junction 15, 16 & 17

£9.42m

ENABLED



Swindon M4

Swindon Bus Boulevard

£3m

COMPLETE



All Growth Zones

Ultrafast Broadband

£1m

COMPLETE



Salisbury A303

Wiltshire College - Salisbury

£13.83m

COMPLETE



A350

Digital Mansion Corsham

£2.45m

COMPLETE



Swindon M4

Swindon Rapid Transport

£8.72m

ENABLED




A350

Chippenham Bypass Dualling

£7.1m

COMPLETE



A350

Wiltshire College - Lackham

£8.20m

COMPLETE




Salisbury A303

Salisbury River Park

£6.05m

ENABLED



Swindon M4

Swindon Cultural Quarter Feasibility

£250k

COMPLETE



Total spend in 2020-21: **£34.5m**
Total jobs delivered to date: **8,247**
SWLEP's Local Growth Fund programme investment: **£101.5m**

Our projects & investments

A350

Chippenham Station Hub

£13m

ENABLED



Salisbury A303

Salisbury 'Recovery' Projects

£950k

COMPLETE



Swindon M4

Development of Local Industrial Strategy Projects

£200k

COMPLETE





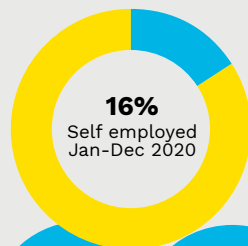
Population **727,000**

Population aged 16-64 **439,000**

Economically active **367,400**

Economically inactive **83,500**

Inactive and want a job **17,600**



Swindon & Wiltshire residents*

Source: ONS published 26 May 2021



Production
£4.4bn



Construction
£1.2bn

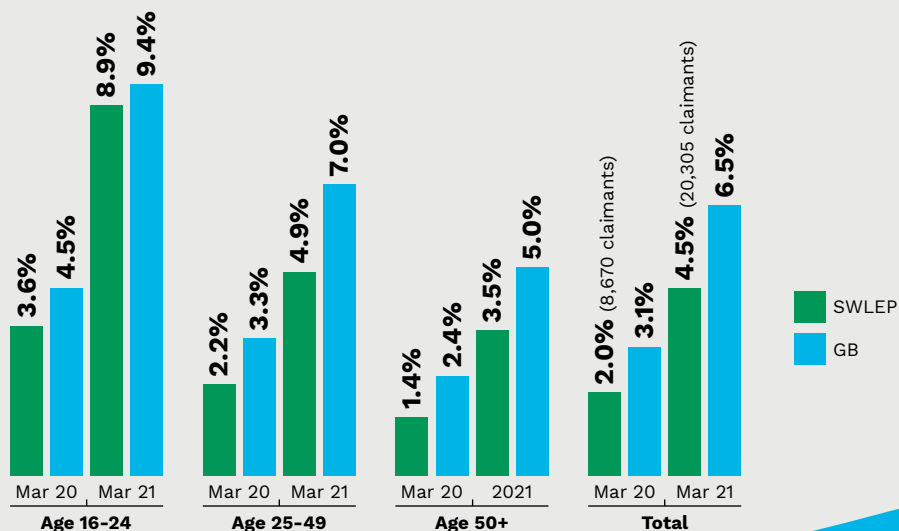


Services
£15.5bn

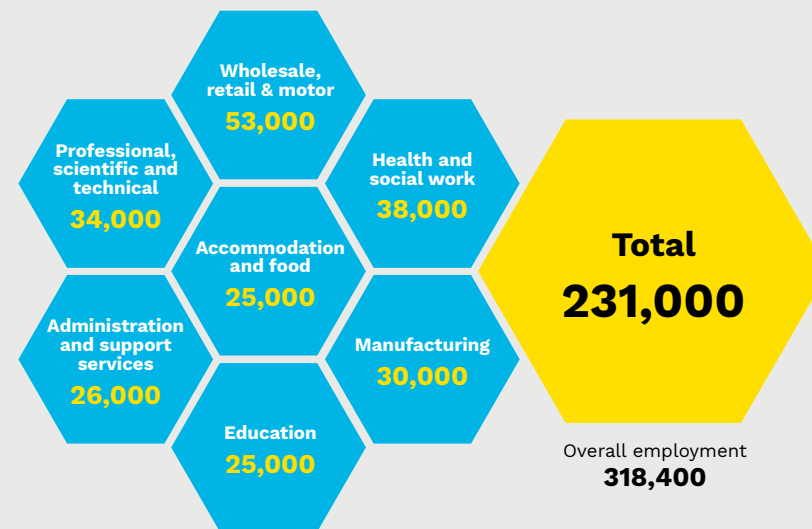
Our economy

Our area's economy in 2020

For further information, visit our [data dashboard](#)



Out of work benefit claimants %*



Largest sectors by employment 2019*

* Source: NOMIS LEP profile



These images were taken pre COVID-19

Since 2015, Board meetings have been open to the public to observe. Questions can be submitted in advance, and where possible, answered at the following Board meeting.

The SWLEP Board

The SWLEP Board is business-led and chaired by Paul Moorby OBE. It's supported by a small core team headed by Chief Executive Officer, Paddy Bradley, who is also a Director on the Board. Local Enterprise Partnership Boards are allowed to range in size with between 14 and 20 directors as long as 70% of them come from the private sector. Board Directors do not receive any payment for their role but they can claim expenses.

By March 2021, the SWLEP Board comprised 15 Directors, 80% of whom were from the private sector. SWLEP is committed to achieving a 50:50 male to female balance on the Board by March 2023.

A round of Board recruitment and a review of our governance arrangements is part of SWLEP's annual operational rhythm.

During the year, the Board said goodbye to Alex Reed, Mark Smith and Peter Wragg following their valuable contributions to our work. In July 2020 we welcomed Colonel Neville Holmes followed by Pam Webb, Suzanne Wigmore and Professor Ian White as new directors of the company in January 2021. As a result of these appointments, we are pleased to have representatives from the Third Sector and a University on the Board for the first time.

The Board approved a revised governance structure in July 2020 which was designed to prepare the company for managing a substantial new capital funding programme with the establishment of a Performance Committee and a Strategy Committee operating alongside three subgroups:

- ▶ Skills and Talent
- ▶ Ideas, Infrastructure and Places
- ▶ Business Environment

The reshaped Joint Scrutiny Panel became operational during the year comprising three elected representatives from Swindon Borough Council and from Wiltshire Council alongside three business seats. The addition of business representatives was a new element. Its main focus this year has been a deep-dive into the work of the Growth Hub. This commenced in January 2021 to better understand the Growth Hub's role within the local business support landscape, review its activities and performance as well as set it within the context of other Growth Hubs nationally. Its work continued throughout the spring and will conclude early in the

summer of 2021. In addition, the Joint Scrutiny Panel will produce an annual report of its work for the SWLEP Board.

If you're interested in joining our Board we would be keen to hear from you. We're particularly interested in hearing from businesses in the legal, finance, housing and construction sectors.





Paul Moorby, OBE, Chair, SWLEP
Managing Director, Chipside Ltd



Peter Wragg, Deputy Chair
(Resigned March 2021)
Chairman, Visit Wiltshire Ltd



Mandy Clarke
Deputy Chair
Founder, Accomplish HR Ltd



Alison North, Deputy Chair.
SME Champion. Founder, AN
Information Ltd



Alex Reed, (Resigned November
2020). Finance Director, Catalent
Pharma



Andrew Gudgeon, OBE
Zurich, Head of Enterprise Risk
Management & Operations



Amanda Burnside, Equality
Champion. Principal, Wiltshire
College & University Centre



Carole Kitching,
Principal & CEO, New College
Swindon and Institute of
Technology



David Renard
Leader Swindon Borough Council



Doug Gale, MBE
Director, QinetiQ plc



Prof. Ian White
(From January 2021)
Vice Chancellor, University of Bath



Keeren Vetriko
Managing Director, JERES



Mark Smith, (Resigned December
2020). CEO, WRc



Paddy Bradley
SWLEP CEO



Col. Nev Holmes, MBE, (From July
2020), Commander South West



Pam Webb, (From January 2021)
CEO, Voluntary Action Swindon



Philip Whitehead
Leader, Wiltshire Council



Suzanne Wigmore, (From January
2021), Chief Executive, Wiltshire
Citizens Advice

The SWLEP Board

THE SWLEP BOARD INCLUDES:

- ▶ 15 Directors
- ▶ 80% from the private sector
- ▶ 60:40 male:female
- ▶ 7% ethnic minority



Management accounts 2020-21

	Total
Income	£2,592,058
Carry forward from 2019/20	£1,089,125
Growing Places Infrastructure Fund	£199,113
Growth Hub	£543,699
Inward Investment Programme	£98,377
Core Operations	£528,804
Local Industrial Strategy Implementation	£ 91,500
Local Growth Fund (Ends 2021)	£0
Getting Building Fund	£41,440

	Total
Expenditure	£2,145,824
Growing Places Infrastructure Fund	£108,958
Growth Hub	£1,029,283
Inward Investment Programme	£98,437
Core Operations	£575,317
Local Industrial Strategy Implementation	£132,712
Local Growth Fund (Ends 2021)	£1,922
Getting Building Fund	£62,085
Advance payments for 2021/2022	£133,526
Depreciation on computer equipment	£3,583
Difference between income and expenditure	£446,234

These are the unaudited management accounts for SWLEP Limited for the financial year 2020-21 and are included here to provide an overview of our income and expenditure over the year. Audited accounts filed at Companies House can be accessed [here](#).

The excess of Growth Hub expenditure over income is a cash flow issue due to the forward-funding of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Grants which contributed to the reduction in our carry forward figure to 2021/22 to circa £446,234. SWLEP is financially robust will operate as a going concern during 2021-22.



Ricardo McCalla is an apprentice at National Trust studying Level 4 Software Development



Naimat Kaur, a former student at Commonweal School, Swindon, is undertaking a level 6 apprentice in cyber security



Lewis Durling, SWLEP Kickstarter. "I would 100% recommend the Kickstart scheme. I'm gaining great experience"

Skills and talent

Skills continues to be a priority for our work and with funding from the Department for Education's Skills Advisory Panel, we have been able to closely monitor the local labour market in greater detail than ever before. Using this resource, we have published labour market reports on a monthly basis to help with the local response and to complement the information that is available on our data dashboard. This analysis has been presented regularly and shared widely to help with economic response and recovery.

Local Skills Plan

July saw the publication of the Local Skills Plan which sets out the route map to balance skills supply and demand and enable inclusive growth by:

- ▶ improving the use of skills and labour market intelligence
- ▶ achieving a step change in the take-up and achievement of apprentices
- ▶ meeting the demand for high skill jobs, especially those requiring Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills
- ▶ raising aspirations and employability
- ▶ promoting programmes to improve the physical and mental health of employees.

Local Skills Report

The Local Skills Report was published in March 2021 pulling together the trends in the Swindon and Wiltshire skills and labour market and setting them alongside what our businesses and local skills providers were telling us. Find out more **here**.

The Careers Hub

SWLEP continues to work in partnership with both Unitary Authorities to deliver the Careers Hub. Due to the pandemic, the service had to adapt its business model to provide a virtual service across the network of 63 schools and colleges it supports to help raise the aspirations of our students.

The Careers Hub is highly respected and has performed well in achieving the Gatsby benchmarks (a recognised national and international framework) and ensures that there is high quality delivery of careers advice and guidance in all schools and colleges, working closely with local businesses and Enterprise Adviser volunteers.

The Kickstart Programme

In September 2020, SWLEP was accepted as a Gateway Organisation to roll out the Department for Work and Pension's Kickstart Programme, an initiative devised to help tackle youth unemployment.

The Kickstart Scheme, which is open until the end of December 2021, provides funding to employers to create six-month job placements for young people age 16 to 24 who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

By the end of the financial year, SWLEP had handled 227 placement applications from local SMEs offering professional work experience and employability skills to young people. The SWLEP itself also created five placements with three Kickstarters recruited in March 2021.



Ideas, infrastructure and places

Ideas

During the summer of 2020, the SWLEP secured £9.7m capital from the Government's Getting Building Fund, of which £6m was awarded to two priority projects, the Porton Collaborative Innovation Centre and phase 2b of the Carriage Works, Swindon. Both schemes are innovation-led facilities with a focus on life sciences and leading-edge sustainable technologies. This funding will create a new conference facility at Porton, as well as further incubation space to be developed, alongside business support services. The refurbishment of two further units at the Carriage Works will enable the Innovation Centre for Applied Sustainable Technologies to open its doors next year.

Infrastructure

One of the clean growth priorities in the Local Industrial Strategy is looking at the generation and use of hydrogen as a low carbon fuel. We were asked to join the European Hydrogen Observer Network which has enabled us to learn about trials and demonstrator projects across Europe and in November 2020, we were invited to present our plans for hydrogen.

Work has commenced to deliver Swindon and Wiltshire's Rail Strategy and we have established a Rail Working Group with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council so we are best placed to have our priorities recognised in the Western Gateway and England Economic Heartland Sub-national Transport Bodies' delivery plans. We have engaged with rail

groups looking to progress aspirations for stations at Devizes and Wilton.

Places

The Local Growth Fund investments SWLEP made also supported the successful Future High Streets Fund applications submitted by both of our Unitary Authorities. The fund was launched by the Government to help renew and improve high streets and town centres. Swindon was awarded the full £25m value of its bid whilst the bids for Salisbury and Trowbridge were provisionally awarded £9.35m and £16.3m respectively. SWLEP's Local Growth Fund investment, and involvement in the Swindon Town Deal Board, also supported the development of its successful bid to the Towns Fund which was confirmed as £19.5m in March 2021.





2,400
inbound calls



54,000

new visits to business
support portal



6,000+
businesses supported

“

***‘This Way Up’ smashed
its targets with over 4,150
webinar registrants***



Business environment

The Growth Hub underwent a planned transformation during the year from an online portal to a fully operational information, advice and guidance service for our business community. Alongside this service, the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund Programme has continued to support businesses with realising their expansion plans whilst the Swindon and Wiltshire Inward Investment programme has focussed on attracting new overseas investment to our area.

Business Cyber Centre

Work was also concluded on the business plan for the Business Cyber Centre, which was awarded £3.7m Getting Building Fund investment enabling it to open its doors in Chippenham in early 2022. The Business

Cyber Centre will be the first business-led cyber centre in the UK and as such, it will be unique in its offering within the local and regional area, and seeks to be recognised as a national asset and leading SME partner, enabling a greater level of resilience to businesses and UK Plc.

Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub

The business support services delivered by the Growth Hub ramped up at speed over the first half of the year in response to the pandemic. The original plans for the roll-out of our ERDF SME Competitiveness Programme to support start-up and scale-up companies were soon bolstered as the service took on the additional role of supporting businesses which were ineligible

for the Government's COVID-19 support grant schemes. The Growth Hub worked hand-in-hand with both of our Unitary Authorities to refer and cross-refer enquiries endeavouring to ensure that every business that needed help had access to information, advice and guidance.

A programme of Peer Networks was established drawing in additional business support funding from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Sector based groups of eight to 11 businesses, referred to as 'cohorts' were brought together to discuss common business issues as well as to access one-to-one support. Seven networks were established locally for companies looking to grow and develop their business and increase their leadership skills.

In August, the Growth Hub took on the administration of a European funded Economic Recovery Grant Scheme to support businesses. Within the scheme there was a ringfenced allocation for the businesses operating in the visitor economy which had been disproportionately affected by the lockdowns and travel restrictions. This was the first time that the Growth Hub had managed a grant scheme; by the end of March, £343,000 of grant funding had been committed to 142 businesses.

The This Way Up webinar programme has been hugely popular. It was launched in September 2020 covering a range of topics related to leadership, sales, finance, marketing, digital commerce and mental health in the workplace. The series reached over 2,000 live attendees and the recorded



Business environment (continued)

webinars have remained open to for businesses to view when convenient, with over a thousand views to date.

As the UK completed its transition out of the European Union (EU), the Growth Hub delivered an additional short-term support scheme funded by BEIS to assist businesses as they adapted their operations as new regulations were introduced including importing from the EU, travelling, living and working in the EU and moving goods to or from Northern Ireland. This programme reached 3,000 businesses between January 2021 and the end of March when it came to a close.

Our Business Intelligence and Networking Group (BING) has been an important reference group for our business support delivery. Its membership was extended

and by the end of the year it comprised 25 different organisations including 16 business representation organisations and representation from three government departments. At the meetings we were able to learn about how our business community was coping on the ground, feeding that into our service design and in return BING members learnt about the enhanced services that local businesses could access.



Case studies



Gera Solutions

“I was searching online for local business support and the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub was one of the first websites I visited, and then kept returning to. I registered as a Growth Hub member and connected with the team, who have provided introductions to other businesses and to organisations, such as the Department for International Trade, that can offer advice and support. I was also invited to join the first round of the Peer Networks programme (the Women in Business cohort), which enabled me to forge valuable links with other local business leaders. The Gera.Solutions website has benefited from a Digital Review which helped us immensely in fine-tuning our digital presence; in addition, we have been invited to many informative, useful webinars.”

Anita Gera, Founder

Gera Solutions Limited
www.gera.solutions



Total Foot Health

“We discovered the Growth Hub through a webinar session we found online. The feedback form at the end of the webinar captured our areas of need and the Growth Hub contacted us directly to discuss ways they could help. Since then, it has supported us in a number of ways. We have dipped into training webinars most relevant for the development of Total Foot Health. The sales and marketing sessions were especially helpful in shaping our marketing approach. We’ve also benefitted from the Peer Networks programme. Through the action learning approach, we’ve further developed our thinking around an online booking system. Plus, we continue to benefit from ongoing connection with the businesses within this group.

The Digital Leadership Course had a significant impact in helping us digitalise many processes and join systems together, creating greater efficiencies, saving costs and an improved patient service. On top of that we’ve successfully received COVID-19 grants administered by the Growth Hub.”

Graham Simpson, Practice Director

Total Foot Health
www.totalfoothealth.co.uk



“

Since 2017, ten loans with a value of nearly £7m have been awarded securing a further £9.7m of additional investment.

Growing Places Infrastructure Fund

SWLEP's Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) capital revolving loan fund has had another successful year with three applications resulting in an additional £676,500 of loans to businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire which otherwise would not have had the investment they required to expand their operation.

Since 2017, ten loans with a value of nearly £7m have been awarded securing a further £9.7m of additional investment.

Case studies



Connected ID £150,000 loan

SWLEP awarded a loan to Corsham-based, Connected ID, to help develop a takeaway app enabling restaurant owners to deliver more cost effectively to the doorstep. They are rolling it out initially across the South West and outlets in other locations nationwide are very interested. The app capitalises on the growing number of people still wanting home deliveries alongside restaurants, hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, to drive up their revenue.

Jamie Dickinson, Director, said “The GPIF loan fund was invaluable in allowing us to invest in a complete solution encompassing all facets of the delivery system. Without the support of the team at SWLEP, our project to provide a more cost effective solution than multinational food delivery companies to all the independent restaurants and bars in Bristol and beyond would have not been possible. Our customers can now retain more of the margin on food delivery which will go some way safeguarding jobs in the hospitality sector.”

www.connectedid.co.uk



Potts Partnership £276,500 loan

Michelle Potts, Director, said, “The GPIF growth loan enabled us to build production rooms and invest in new machinery so that we can now run three to four lines instead of one or two. We now have a pouch filling line, two sachet filling lines and an automated glass filling line that can be run simultaneously. This, and increasing our staffing numbers from ten to 26 full-time and five to eight part-time, has allowed us to take on a new recipe box ambient sachet business, worth £1 million per year as well as cope with the uplift in demand we experienced for our products.

We've seen an uplift in demand through online, independent and our own label manufacturing customers. Plus, we have recently gained listings with two more supermarkets and an additional fixture in Tesco; Morrisons and Sainsbury's taking our aluminium canned ready-to-use stocks and Tesco launching our pioneering two Mexican cooking sauces in fully recyclable aluminum cans, a global first. This has grown our turnover from £950k in 2019 to £1.6million in 2020 and puts us in a good position to achieve the £3 million turnover we modestly forecast for 2021.”

www.pottspartnerhsip.co.uk



Clinical Partners Ltd £250,000 loan

Clinical Partners, based in Semley, was introduced to the SWLEP via Innovate UK in January 2020. The firm specialises in mental health provision and when COVID-19 hit they recognised the need to transfer face-to-face services to online provision. The GPIF loan was used to upgrade and develop the CRM system and digitise the operational front and backend processes, for example with more consultations via video link.

Growth has been rapid, with a large increase in demand for mental health provision as a result of the pandemic. The company has been awarded ten NHS Trust/ Clinical Commissioning Group contracts, helping reduce well-publicised NHS waiting lists, as well as servicing growing private mental healthcare demand. Clinical Partners Ltd now delivers 35,000 outpatient appointments per year.

As a result, the company's headcount has grown rapidly from 20 employees in 2019 to 60, with further recruitment underway.

www.clinical-partners.co.uk



Europe's biggest battery storage facility in Minety

Inward Investment Programme

Attracting new business investment to the Swindon and Wiltshire area is one of the many ways we support businesses working in collaboration with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council under a joint inward investment programme of work.

Projects in the life sciences, cyber and advanced engineering sectors are our primary focus for promotional activity but we will support a wider range of businesses which are looking to take advantage of establishing an operation in our area and will offer good quality employment particularly utilising technology or high value activities.

Throughout the pandemic we had to adapt our activities and establish new ways of reaching potential investors, for example: in July 2020, SWLEP and the Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl)

presented online to the Bio-defence Committee of the US life sciences trade body, the Biotechnology Innovation Organisation (BIO), highlighting the expertise at Porton. This was the first time a non-US Governmental body has had the opportunity to present to this Committee. Calls with the BIO team in the US continued over the year and another webinar with US-based life science companies is scheduled for June 2021.

SWLEP was also one of main sponsors of Tech Swindon which led a successful online digital focussed event in February 2021 with firms from various overseas locations dialling in to hear about the tech cluster in the area. The number of inward investors looking to locate in Swindon and Wiltshire increased during the year, both from overseas and UK based companies. Some of the largest

announcements during the year included:

- ▶ Beckton Dickinson who announced plans to expand and upgrade its manufacturing capacity for pre-fillable syringes and advanced drug delivery systems across six sites globally, including Swindon
- ▶ Catalent which began work at its new site in Blagrove which will lead to 100 new jobs
- ▶ Thermo Fisher Scientific's Pharma Services announced its expansion plans for an additional 200 jobs in Swindon
- ▶ Amazon bought a £200m warehouse at Symmetry Park, Swindon which is expected to create up to 1,500 new jobs
- ▶ Penso Power opened Europe's biggest battery storage facility in Minety
- ▶ Tallis Group which confirmed its intention to construct a custom built agricultural and turf depot at Kemble.

Case study



Goodtalent

One of the companies that took advantage of our European funded inward investment service was Goodtalent which was founded in Nigeria. After its owner Jimmy Braimah secured an Innovation Visa with support from the Department of International Trade and the Global Entrepreneur Programme, the company began looking for a UK base to expand its HR and recruitment technology solutions company.

Goodtalent has developed an innovative approach to supporting IT recruitment internationally which enables consultants to be paid in their local currency. The company has already developed local clients and is working with the Wiltshire-based utilities firm Good Energy and with the University of Bath. It decided that Swindon's tech business community and proximity to both London and the South West was the right location for GoodTalent to succeed.

Two members of staff are already employed in Swindon, one of whom is an apprentice with New College Swindon. The firm is looking to recruit a further four members of staff over the next financial year.

www.gtco.net



Looking ahead

Supporting economic recovery and delivering our strategic priorities will guide our work for the forthcoming year.

Delivery

- ▶ Growth Hub services will continue to deliver information, advice and guidance services to the local business community and a second tranche of Peer Networks will be delivered.
- ▶ The three Getting Building Fund schemes will be completed by March 2022 with the opening of the Business Cyber Centre, the Porton Collaborative Innovation Centre and the completion of the Carriage Works phase 2b.
- ▶ The opening of the Business Cyber Centre will be a flagship scheme for SWLEP as we are wholly responsible

for its delivery. Profits generated from its operation will be reinvested in the sustainable, economic growth of Swindon and Wiltshire.

Strategy

- ▶ Swindon and Wiltshire's Plan for Growth will be published building on the work we did for the Local Industrial Strategy and strengthening our approach to achieving Net Zero.
- ▶ We will start work on the next phase of mobilising our Local Industrial Strategy priorities by progressing feasibility work for hydrogen energy projects, identifying funding sources to deliver the Innovation Campus for the Circular Economy and agreeing options for low carbon tourism along the Great West Way.

- ▶ We will review our skills plan and develop our apprenticeship strategy.
- ▶ In the autumn we expect the Comprehensive Spending Review to be published which will inform how we might access public funding to deliver our strategic priorities.



Governance

- ▶ The Government is expected to conclude its Local Enterprise Partnership Review during the year and set out our role and responsibilities in the future and we will make any changes to our governance and operational structure which are required.
- ▶ Similarly the Growth Hub national evaluation may require modifications to the operation of our services long term.
- ▶ We will hold another round of Board Director recruitment and aim to increase our male:female representation on the Board.



Get involved

The SWLEP is a business-led partnership and we are keen to hear the voice of local business in taking forward the work we do. There are several ways this can be done:

Joining the SWLEP:

At least 70% of the SWLEP Limited Board Directors come from the private sector and from time-to-time we advertise vacancies on the Board via our website.

Alternatively, you might want to consider becoming a member of SWLEP Limited and attend our Annual General Meeting.

To find out more or to apply, please email:
administration@swlep.co.uk

Provide feedback:

We are interested in your views about the work we do as well as how your business may be affected by national policies. You can get involved by attending our events, participating in our consultations and surveys on our website, or through responding to a direct request for feedback from us. You can also provide us with feedback via our website and complete the Get in Touch form and insert 'Feedback' in the Your Enquiry field.

www.swlep.co.uk/contacts

Business support services:

Start-ups and small and medium-sized businesses can access information, advice and guidance through SWLEP's Growth Hub.

To find out more visit:
swgrowthhub.co.uk or email:
hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk

SWLEP newsletter:

Subscribing to our newsletter is a great way to hear about the latest news on the SWLEP's programmes and events which could support your business and extend your network within the wider business community.

To subscribe and get started, please email:
hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk



Join us in growing our local economy

To receive regular updates on SWLEP programmes, email:

administration@swlep.co.uk

www.swlep.co.uk

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SWLEP would like to thank the following organisations for permission to use their photographs: Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, New College Swindon and Gemserv. We would also like to thank all the firms that took part in our case studies which form part of this report.