



Membership

Note 1: SWLEP attendance will be dependent on topics discussed

Note 2: Wiltshire Council attendance will be dependent on topics discussed

Note 3: Swindon Borough Council attendance will be dependent on topics discussed

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Claire Alexander (CA)	SWLEP	Note 1 ✓
David Andrews (DA)	VisitWiltshire	✓
Chris Baish (CB)	New College	✓
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	Note 2 ✓
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP	Note 1 ✓
Becky Butland (BB)	NFU	✓
Phil Clement (PC)	SWLEP	Note 1 Apologies
Layla Burrows (LB)	Innovate UK	✓
Kathryn Crosweller (KC)	Chippenham Chamber	Apologies
Rachel Finlay (RFi)	Wiltshire Council	Note 2 ✓
Russell Frith (RF)	Wiltshire Council	Note 2 ✓
Sam Fox (SF)	Wiltshire Council	Note 2 Apologies
Ruth Lambert (RL)	Federation of Small Business, FSB	✓
Karen Leigh (KL)	BEIS Representative	✓
Lee McQuade (LMcQ)	DIT	Apologies
Robin McGowan (RMcG)	Salisbury BID	Apologies
Tim Major (TM)	Thames Valley Chamber	✓
Sue Marchant (SM)	Cool Ventures	Apologies, sending representative
Thomas Mason (TMa)	CLA	Apologies
Phil Mills (PM)	SWMAS	✓



Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Victoria Moloney (VM)	Wiltshire Council	Note 2 Apologies
Alison North (AN)	SWLEP Director	✓
Paul O'Collins (PO)	EEN	✓
Chris Parsons (CP)	Swindon Borough Council	Note 3 ✓
Mandy Paterson (MP) OR Rob Perks	Inspire by Wessex Chamber	✓
Amanda Peach (AP)	SWLEP	Note 1 Apologies
Andy Rhind-Tutt (AR-T)	Salisbury & District Chamber	Apologies
Anita Bellinger (AB)	InSwindon	Apologies
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	Note 1 Apologies
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	Note 1 ✓
Julia Stuckey (JS)	Swindon Borough Council	Note 3 ✓
Karen Taylor (KT)	DWP	Apologies
Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M) OR Ian Larrard	BusinessWest	✓
Mandy Timbrell (MT)	Wiltshire Council	Note 3 Apologies
Alan Truscott (AT)	Community First	Apologies
Stephen Tulip (ST)	MakeUK	✓
Philippa Venables (PV)	Swindon Borough Council	Note 3 Apologies
Beverley Waters (BW)	ICAEW	Apologies
Andrew Wells (AW)	Swindon Borough Council	Note 3 Apologies
Adene West-Webbe (AW-W)	Wiltshire Council	Note 2 ✓ partial attendance
Peter Wragg (PW)	SWLEP Deputy Chair	Apologies



Guest(s)	Layna Harris (LH), Small Business Commissioner Dragana Houston (DH), SWLEP
Chair	Alison North (AN)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	12 noon
Finish Time	1.30pm

1.0	Welcome and Introductions	Date
	The meeting opened at 12.03pm. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and advised of guest speakers Layna Harris from the Small Business Commissioner's office, and Dragana Houston from SWLEP, later in the agenda. Apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes of meeting on 1 October 2020 and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 were read and approved.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AN to lead discussion on how to increase the profile of the support groups. ONGOING • Risk Register - Action: respond to CP and RFi on what group members knew was going on in their business environment being cognisant of GDPR regulations. ON AGENDA • Redundancy Support - Action: those organisations that would like to get involved should contact JS or CP. ON AGENDA WITHIN ITEM 5. • Kickstart Programme – Had SWLEP engaged yet with providers for apprenticeships and training progression of these young people with contacts within the colleges. Action: CB and AP to discuss off-line. COMPLETED • DKH to arrange meetings in 2021 at 6-8-week intervals. COMPLETED 	
3.0	Labour Market Information update	
	<p>DH presented to the meeting on the latest Labour Market Intelligence (LMI). The presentation can be accessed by using the following link.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/archive/swlep-nov-lmi---s-tg-v0-3.pdf?sfvrsn=5c7acfc_4</p> <p>Key findings were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job postings across Swindon and Wiltshire had continued to recover over the six months to October. After a steep month-on-month decline of nearly 50% in April 2020, the number of job postings improved slightly each month with October 2020 broadly in line with the October 2019 levels; • apprenticeship postings had recovered more slowly. After a nearly 90% drop on the previous month in April, slight increases were reported in May, June and July. After the introduction of the new government incentive, nearly 	



	<p>a four-fold month-on-month increase was reported in August, reaching levels in line with August 2019. Since then, however, the apprenticeship postings had declined, with October 2020 nearly 40% below the October 2019;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job postings, when broken down by industry sector, show that only Human Health & Social Work Activities reported year-on-year increases during April to October 2020 in Swindon and Wiltshire. The largest declines were seen in Accommodation & Food Service (-4%, as proportion of all jobs), Wholesale & Retail (-2%) and Information & Communication (-2%); • Swindon, which during April to October 2019 accounted for nearly 50% of all job vacancies across the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP area, saw the largest year-on-year decline during the April to October 2020 period, accounting for just under 45% of all vacancies. Other towns with significant declines in job postings during this period were: Salisbury, Chippenham and Malmesbury. However, five towns reported year-on-year increases during April to October 2020: Corsham, Trowbridge, Westbury, Royal Wootton Bassett, and Warminster; and • the claimant count data, which included people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance as well as those that claimed Universal Credit, is used as a headline indicator of the number of people unemployed. Swindon, and Wiltshire even more so, were continuing to perform better than the national average. In October, nearly 12,000 in Wiltshire (4% of Wiltshire's residents aged 16-64) were claiming these benefits, compared to c. 8,000 in Swindon (5.7% of those aged 16-64) in Swindon and 6.3% for England overall. However, more young people appeared in the claimant count in Wiltshire at 22% compared to Swindon and the national average of 20%. <p>The question was raised on what the projections for the next five months would look like. The true situation was being masked by all the government programmes, and this would then change in the spring once all funding and support were removed. New jobs were projected to be in cyber, hydrogen and green jobs, but the situation was changing rapidly and SWLEP would continue to monitor. There were some vacancies which were difficult to fill with more time spent on repeat adverts. SWLEP would be looking at the "intensity" of these job adverts and ascertaining whether there were any transferable skills. The notional sense was that some sectors were thriving whilst others were at severe risk. SWLEP would be undertaking an in-depth sector specific analysis.</p> <p>KG advised of the situation where businesses in the area had been applying to become trust mark companies to complete work for the green homes grant. However, it was costing £10,000 to be registered.</p> <p>PB advised of the European Regional Development Fund project which allocated funding for low carbon for companies offering advice to businesses about making their business more energy efficient. SWLEP would put details on the website when available.</p>	
4.0	Good News Stories	
	<p>The Chair asked for "Good News Stories" around the area and relayed one example.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A farm outside Pewsey had been selling fruit and vegetables from a garage. As a result of the pandemic, sales had increased, and they had converted a barn and were now turning themselves into a farm shop. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSB call with Chairman. Small businesses had managed to pivot positively • Kez Garner from Trowbridge Chamber of Commerce added that a lot of the businesses were adapting or starting from home because they had more time and using the grants and loans to invest in new ways of working. The platform of choice was Instagram which they were using to launch their products and services. • ST stated that the latest round of MakeUK Regional Advisory Boards had shown that businesses were improving, and orders were up in most cases. Some had quoted that they were having the best month ever. <p>Action: ST to provide report when available for circulation to the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PB commented that although not enough businesses were accessing grants from Innovate UK, a Chippenham-based company had recently secured £500,000 research grant to make a plastic welding tool. It was not yet a commercially viable product. • Additionally, a Swindon-based company (Scaled) was using technology to manufacture a 3D printed electric car constructed from recycled plastic. • DTM advised that she was indeed working with Scaled at the moment. Another company was a satellite-based intelligence company which had grown significantly and had worked from home successfully. Business West was supporting them with management and leadership to manage 35 staff from home, but it operated across the globe. The company expected to increase staff by 20-30 in the next year and had just bought its first satellite which would launch from Exeter. • LB stated that Innovate UK was funding more businesses than ever. Covid fast track and rapid response grants. Get Swindon and Wiltshire businesses to have more sight of the grants available. • RS from Cool Ventures advised of a food & drink business previously based in Bath which had recently relocated to Wiltshire and had diversified by delivering cream teas to homes. • Paul O'Collins from the European Enterprise Network (EEN) stated that it was assisting companies across the patch with IP audit which were highly subsidised. 	Feb 2021
5.0	Risk register and business communications	
	<p>RFi and CP spoke to the meeting. Additional information about businesses was seeping through, but not a great deal about large business redundancies or site closures. Information flow from Swindon Borough Council to the Growth Hub was working well for small businesses.</p> <p>The latest grant schemes as a result of the recent lockdown had just been launched and the next round was up and live across both Local Authorities. Wiltshire Council's Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) went live on Friday 13 November; these were rates-based for enterprises which were required to close under national restrictions between 5 November to 2 December. The payments would be made in series of four-week batches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Council's website displayed information about the LRSG funding available and eligibility criteria:- https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/business-advice-support-covid19-grants 	



- and an online form for applications.
<https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/BusinessGrant/Main/GrantFormLRSG>
- RFi advised that the best way to keep up to date with the latest information was to sign up to the business newsletter.
- Wiltshire Council Business Newsletter (tick the Business & Economy box):
<https://mailchi.mp/fa3d04e4d1a7/update>
- Messages could also be sent to the Wiltshire Council's Covid-19 Business Support in-box at Covid-19BusinessSupport@wiltshire.gov.uk
- Wiltshire Council's Discretionary grants were due to launch from 23 November.
- Both the schemes for Swindon businesses were live and information could be accessed via the following link.

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20017/business_and_investment/1098/covid-19_-_government_support_for_businesses

Those businesses not eligible for these grants, would continue to be signposted to the Growth Hub navigators for additional support. The Government had informed LAs that the discretionary fund of money needed to last until March 2022, so they would have to stretch that out.

There was still strong focus on supporting the high street and retail. Companies were looking for alternative viable routes to market. Campaigns included:

- shop safe,
- shop local, and
- support Wiltshire etc.

Looking at increasing messages around the local theme, to add volume to those businesses on the run up to Christmas.

- FSB was also running a shop small to make a big difference campaign to encourage people to support their local retailers. To get involved, use the [#ilovesmallbusiness](#) hashtag online to celebrate those local, independent businesses that are special to you and customers can share images of their purchases by using the hashtag [#shopherethisChristmas](#).
- There was work with David Andrews of VisitWiltshire on the shop local message for key visitor attractions to support those businesses in the area. Gathering together the best information, not creating something new, but consolidating the offering.
- RF mentioned another collaboration in the Wye Valley with its food & drink producers.

<https://www.wyevalleyproducers.co.uk/>

"We are a collaboration of artisanal food & drink producers from the Wye Valley who have come together to offer a no contact, click & collect farmers' market. We are operating under strict government..."



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A special mention was given to Anita Janes of The Business Exchange, which had been focusing on local areas for the shop local ideal and had produced some good work. • Marketing collaboration example in Northampton https://www.discovernorthampton.co.uk/2020/11/08/introducing-the-christmas-showcase/ https://www.discovernorthampton.co.uk/phone-or-click-collect/ <p>Ruth Lambert of FSB wanted to share details of a new grant pot being established for those who had missed out on the more standard grant schemes.</p> <p>https://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/money/recoverymoney/article-8934181/How-save-small-businesses-beating-heart-Britain.html</p> <p>“How you can save small businesses - the beating heart of Britain</p> <p>As the country grapples with a second lockdown that could see thousands of small firms go to the wall, we are appealing to the British public to help keep them afloat.</p> <p>www.mailonsunday.co.uk “</p> <p>JS advised of the first webinar on How to Manage Your Wellbeing During Redundancy which was being held on 25 November and hosted by the Growth Hub. This was to advise Swindon residents facing redundancy or uncertainty of the support available and the tools to help. Another two would follow.</p>	
6.0	Small Business Commissioner	
	<p>Layla Harris (LH) from the Small Business Commissioner’s Office joined the meeting and explained the role of the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service provided was free • Available to companies with 50 employees or less to assist in obtaining payment from businesses with more than 50 employees • Invoices must have been submitted within the last 12 months. • Did not deal with construction issues as they were handled by a separate set of legislation however, the office would still signpost companies to support • The office would take on the small business’s complaint and investigate the reasons for non-payment when other means had been exhausted • The office did not have the powers to make the larger business pay but it could make legally binding recommendations which were published in a report which was publicly available. Name and shame. • £7.4m had been recovered for small businesses since inception • There was also an educational element to its service. A staff member was allocated to different geographical areas and to discuss business practice, such as legal contracts and terms and conditions, so the businesses did not get into a non-paying position in the first place. • The Office was making contact with Growth Hubs and LEPs to establish working relationships and joining up for events, together to raise awareness. 	



	<p>The suggestion was made for a collaboration workshop webinar.</p> <p>Action: Growth Hub to liaise with LH.</p> <p>Contact details for the Small Business Commissioner's Office provided after the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: www.smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk • Contact emails: enquiries@smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk and complaints@smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk • Telephone number: 0121 695 7770 	Nov 2020
7.0	TechSwindon Summit update (2-6 November)	
	<p>CP presented to the meeting on the success of the TechSummit 2020. The presentation can be accessed by using the following link.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/techswindon-summit-overview.pdf?sfvrsn=afedd44_4</p>	
8.0	Suggested items for the next meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Ruth Lambert of FSB • Presentation by Stephen Tulip of MakeUK • Presentation by YTKO regarding Growth Hub's SME Competitiveness Programme 	
9.0	AOB	
	<p>Thomas Mason from CLA was unable to attend the meeting but sent an update by way of a good news story.</p> <p>The CLA had been involved with ITV on a campaign about hare coursing and bringing more light to this serious issue. The president of the Wiltshire branch would be appearing on ITV West at 6pm (18 November) to discuss this. He also mentioned that he and Becky Butland from NFU had recently met with Wiltshire Police to discuss rural crime matters and how that had been impacted by Covid.</p>	
	Date and time of next meeting	
	<p>Suggested dates for 2021:</p> <p>Wednesday, 13 January 2021 – 1.30pm-3pm (Please note new timing)</p> <p>Wednesday, 10 March – 12.30pm – 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday, 5 May - 12.30pm – 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday, 30 June - 12.30pm – 2pm</p> <p>No meeting scheduled in August</p> <p>Wednesday, 8 September - 12.30pm – 2pm</p> <p>Wednesday, 3 November - 12.30pm – 2pm</p>	
	Meeting closed at 1.17pm	

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14 January 2021