



Attendees	<p>David Andrews – VisitWiltshire Paddy Bradley (PB) - SWLEP Phil Clement (PC) – SWLEP Kathryn Crossweller (KC) – Chippenham Chamber Jim Davison (JD), representing Stephen Tulip - Make UK Ruth Lambert (RL) – Federation of Small Business Robin McGowan (RMcG)- Salisbury BID Tim Major (TM) - Thames Valley Chamber Swindon Rob Perks (RP), representing Mandy Paterson (MP) - Inspire by Wessex Chamber Becky Butland (BB) - NFU Chris Stevens (CS) – SWLEP Growth Hub Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M)- Business West Peter Wragg (PW) – SWLEP Deputy Chair Mark Rogers (MR) - InSwindon BID</p>
Apologies	<p>Claire Alexander and Colette Mallon – SWLEP Ian Larrard - Business West Andrew Mercer (AM) – Business West, SWLEP Growth Hub Andy Rhind-Tutt (AR-T) and Robin Trevett (RT) - Salisbury Chamber Guy Tullberg - Institute of Directors Mandy Paterson (MP) - Inspire by Wessex Chamber Leigh Robinson (LR) – Thames Valley Chamber Beverley Waters – ICAEW</p>
Guest(s)	Russell Frith (RF) / Paul Moorby (PJM) / Julia Stuckey (JS) / Philippa Venables (PV)
Chair	Alison North (AN)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	11.30am
Finish Time	1pm

1.0	Welcome and Introductions	Date
	<p>The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all those who she had recently met in 1:1s as she tried to ascertain as wide a view from everyone as possible about the purpose and future role of the Business Representative Organisations' Group (BROG). The notes from those meetings were circulated to members for information and review prior to this session and would be discussed today and at the next meeting.</p>	
2.0	Minutes of meeting on 6 May 2020 and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020 were read and approved.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p>	



	All the actions outstanding from the last meeting had now been completed and DKH would circulate these to members.	June 2020
3.0	BROG Terms of Reference, Purpose and Value (summary feedback from 1 to 1 discussions)	
	<p>The chair outlined the summary findings from the 1:1 telephone calls held with members. This broadly fell into two areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those who wanted action; and • sharing intelligence. <p>She explained that the Group had initially been set up to share information and coordinate communication between the members facilitating intelligence back to the Group's membership. There was no funding attached to this Group, although SWLEP provided the administrative support and paid for lunch when the Group was able to meet. The Insight 6 business survey investigation had been paid for by SWLEP by was very much a one-off.</p> <p>The SWLEP Chair and CEO advised that the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) could not be produced or delivered in isolation. SWLEP needed to take input from groups like this one better aligning the strategy with their aims and pass back up through the chain.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings were very valuable. The Extraordinary meetings were being held monthly because of the pandemic situation, but it was unlikely to be sustainable indefinitely. However, there was no reason why the Group could not maintain contact and share information in between the quarterly meetings via a Cloud storage service, Whatsapp, or links. This would ensure that information was received and circulated in a timely fashion without having to wait until the next quarterly meeting.</p> <p>The Chair raised several questions and asked the members to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who else should be at this table? • Should there be more sector membership groups? And which ones? RMcG advised that Amanda Newbery from the Night-time Economy Group in Salisbury was keen to get involved in the Group if possible and she would represent a demographic of business that was often under-represented. • How many groups were there to help businesses? • Should that list be available to businesses so they can view their options? A one-page overview of groups and their members and objectives was suggested as they operated in different ways. The suggestion was also put forward for a 10-minute slot at meetings for each member of the Group to explain more about what the organisation did, so we all understood each other more. • Should the Chair rotate through the groups? Or should SWLEP maintain this role? Some members preferred to have one continuing 	<p>TBA</p> <p>TBA</p>



	<p>Chair and remaining with the SWLEP was good as it spanned the whole region rather than just members' areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the Group continue to have speakers at quarterly meetings? And what would the members like to hear about? The suggestion was made to have the workshops linked with the speakers to allow Group members to come up with joint actions. • Should the BROG be linked to the Growth Hub Group? Could they work better together? One member expressed support for amalgamating the two groups. One member also wondered how many from BROG were also represented on the Wiltshire Council's Economy Recovery Group in the short term. • Should the name of the meeting be changed to reflect its main aim which was the exchange of business intelligence? BIG – Business Intelligence Group? <p>PB advised the BROG was not an official Board Subgroup. The Group was used for when there was a need for a common communication. The project for a Business Health Report had been really hard work and the prospect of such a report was not good. Presentations were given about particular sectors and issues which needed coordinated communication. The BROG was not an action group / decision-making group as it had not been set up that way. The number of Extraordinary Meetings should be reduced as there was not time to get around everyone. Quarterly meetings were sufficient, but there was nothing to stop the Group from using additional forms of communication and to talk to each other in between times.</p> <p>KC added that organisations which provided support to other businesses often did not receive support themselves. Workshops would give members of the Group some professional development opportunities to learn from each other and take advantage of each other's skills. What could we learn to help us be more effective? RL advised of an example of a commercial company which ran an event at Wiltshire College speaking to businesses on digital requirements. In this way, one provider could hit all Group members at once.</p>	<p>TBA</p> <p>TBA</p>
4.0	Business Situation update – Covid-19 / Recovery. Business as Usual “Working together for Swindon & Wiltshire”.	
	<p>BROG members gave an update on their individual organisations during the current circumstances.</p> <p>Growth Hub</p> <p>CS updated the meeting on the Growth Hub's Triage+ business support service operating with three navigators. The Growth Hub had been contacted by 600 businesses and 350 of those had needed more assistance. Businesses had been redirected from the Local Authorities when they were not eligible for business grants and did not fall into the Discretionary Fund either. The Growth Hub's role was to signpost to alternative funding and produce consistent messaging.</p>	

CS updated on the mobilisation of the SME Competitiveness Programme which was a grant of £2.4m over three years.

1. Start-ups were to be supported by YKTO.
2. Scaleups and growth were to be supported by SetSquared.
3. And there would also be support for business start-ups etc from employees coming out of Honda.

The programme inception meeting was scheduled for 16 June, after which we would know when the Growth Hub could start implementation. However, recruitment would shortly be underway for 2/3 full-time navigators and a full-time project co-ordinator in preparation for programme start.

The High Futures skills programme lapsed as of March this year. SWLEP would still be able to take referrals for skills support and the emerging SWLEP Skills Plan would mould the response in these cases.

Via chat: DT-M asked whether the skills support was alongside SERCO's offer? In response CS wrote: our skills support will be generally assessing needs and signposting to provision. Serco's SSW was very much a provision we would use and was firmly on our radar.

VisitWiltshire

DA updated the meeting. Most of the county's attractions were planning to re-open in early July, but at a much-reduced capacity; at 30-40% for some businesses, but only at 10% for the bigger ones. This would have a significant impact to this part of the economy. It was not possible to host international visitors at the moment, so the situation would not be great for the next few months, although a lot of people were looking forward to their next holiday. A recent Sentiment Survey found that 25% of those asked were expecting to take a holiday after the end of August and this would increase as time went on. Rural destinations were at the top of the list. Many tourism businesses did not think it was viable to open at 2ms but considered 1m more manageable. The Discretionary Fund was not large and not enough for all the remaining businesses. There had been little support for tourism businesses and in the longer term, if there was no revenue over the summer, many would not survive. VisitWiltshire was lobbying for longer term support for the hospitality / tourism sectors.

DA spoke about VisitWiltshire's latest campaign, Don't Follow the Herd, which was for cycling and walking together in rural areas. Visitors to the website were down by 55% on this time last year but had now started to rise. Whereas, the social media was double that of last year. Outdoor advertising boards were being used in London to promote this campaign and a Toolkit for businesses had been produced which could be circulate to Group members.

A question was raised about the access to holiday lets and when they would be available. DA responded that they were not yet available, but would be one of the first to come back as this was exactly the type of product visitors wanted,



together with glamping and caravanning etc. Protocol information was available via VisitWiltshire for the re-opening of accommodation.

Requests were made for the Toolkit.

Action: DA to provide DKH with the Toolkit for circulation.

BusinessWest

DT-M advised that BusinessWest was continuing to support businesses across the South West with five days' free support. Survive, Stabilise and Grow being the mantra. Manufacturing companies had been able to work throughout and a lot of them had done very well as the supply chains had not been affected. They had kept trading and not furloughed workers. BusinessWest was working with councils across the South West on grants. The Discretionary Grant was only at approximately £2.5k as it was a relatively small pot. Some of the funds had opened early and were now closed for applications. Both Swindon and Wiltshire were behind on this. The Finance Hub would be launching soon and BusinessWest was supporting further investment for companies with a Pitch Fest in July. The Swindon & Wiltshire Initiatives were operating webinars of support for self-employed people who were now able to submit claims.

MakeUK

JD reported that 90% of MakeUK members had remained open during the crisis and office workers were WFH. MakeUK was supporting businesses to understand social distancing and apply this to their organisations. Some members of staff were finding it difficult to return to work because of childcare responsibilities and schools were not going to open as much until September. Domestic engineers travelling to Europe and then returning home were being affected by the quarantine regulations. Businesses had initially had an order book drag, but now had 40-60% reductions in orders and were starting to feel the impact leading to the instigation of redundancy programmes, although orders were starting to pick up again. The next phase was to ensure that firms had working capital to fund growth. There would be skills shortages in certain sector as redundancies were made, and the challenge would be not to lose the expertise from the sector. Maybe replicate the Honda Task Force model across other businesses. The MakeUK Manufacturing Output document would be published next week but showed the worst outlook since the crash in 2008.

Salisbury BID

RMcG reported that the BID was trying to gauge which non-essential shops would be re-opening on 15 June. The challenge for many of the high streets was that national retailers were winding up. The Independents were up for it, but the national chains were not as responsive. Locally, communication was in the response phase. Small businesses just wanted a quick answer without trolling through reams of guidance notes. The question was raised on who would be leading the regional recovery, with the coordination of local and regional recovery plans. Rural vs town centre. The BID was currently working with Wiltshire Council on understanding the plans to pedestrianize the city. Salisbury was awaiting the DfT decision regarding funding in the city centre. The Covid-19 impact on the hospitality sector would be significant. If venues

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did not have outside space, it was going to be more difficult for them to re-open. The BID's downloadable resources can be found by using the following link:

<https://twitter.com/salisburybid/status/1268912271994085378>

This includes social distancing pavement stickers and also posters for inside premises.

Inspire by Wessex Chamber

RP reported that the Chamber was feeling very optimistic. The OECD report was pessimistic about Britain's recovery, but Inspire had found businesses were being very entrepreneurial at present, although traditional businesses were going to suffer in the long term. Inspire's membership had few tourism and retail businesses, but manufacturing and creative industries were looking for the opportunities and implementing changes to progress to on-line delivery. Inspire was helping them with their recovery mode. Gaining access to capital would be the next big issue as big banks were cautious about lending to new projects. So, Inspire was helping businesses to obtain the capital they needed to make the changes.

Swindon TV Chamber

TM reported that the Chamber was holding a Health & Safety webinar next week as they were now in recovery mode. Some members were happy to close and work on their business and not in their business. Within the hospitality sector, hotels were concerned as the future was uncertain even though some had been open to key workers throughout with a skeleton staff. Communication in April / May was in reaction to the crisis and now communication was more about planning with practical information and advice and signposting to relevant organisations.

FSB

RL reported that the feedback from its membership was more cautious. These were smaller businesses which did not have the funds to get it wrong and would not be reopening as soon as they could but were going to wait and see. They were concerned about paying out for signage which could change as many could not bear that cost. Nationwide the FSB was still lobbying government for changes. The hair and beauty, and travel sectors would need more help as their return to normal was still further away.

RL would like an update on further high street projects in future meetings.

Note: The Future High Streets Fund and Town Fund to be topics for presentation at a future meeting.

InSwindon

MR updated on the situation within Swindon. Its big focus had been on communicating the right information to businesses which were still trading but also to those that had temporarily shut. 15 June was the date for non-essential shops to re-open and InSwindon was just ensuring that they were aware of what they needed to do for social distancing. Early notice of initiatives to BID members. Really useful. Regular dialogue and cascading information. Weather

TBA



permitting SBC was putting in pavement markings and social distancing signs next week. In Swindon was supporting individual businesses, helping them to promote themselves now that they were back up and running.

Chippenham Chamber of Commerce

KC advised the meeting that the Chamber was getting back to work and there were three online events planned to look at trouble shooting for businesses when they were operational. Health & Safety experts would be taking part. The events by Chippenham Chamber can be accessed via the link below:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/30423421566>

NFU

BB explained a document which highlighted the challenges of the farming community. The focus was on farmers and growers in the landscape, environment and community and working towards a NetZero ambition by 2040. The document would be circulated after the meeting and BB would like to discuss further at the next meeting

Action: DKH to circulate paper to Group members.

BB advised of an online petition for farming standards. Farming imports were not always produced to the same high welfare standards as UK farming which meant that they were usually cheaper. This made an unlevel playing field for the British farmer. NFU was asking for no compromise on this issue and BB would provide the link to share with members which they could circulate to their own membership.

Action: BB to provide link to DKH for circulation.

SWLEP

PB advised that regional recovery plans had to be linked into a national approach. The country had not experienced anything like this before. SWLEP was keen to gain maximum access to government funds for the area's businesses and The LEP Network was represented on groups to feedback into government as we planned for recovery.

SWLEP had reviewed its emerging Skills Plan and the Local Industry Strategy (LIS) considering the current crisis. The priorities of the LIS remain relevant with some projects proceeding at pace as the sectors they are based in are thriving during this crisis. They include projects for cyber security, the circular economy and life sciences. However, other projects, such as those connected to tourism and hospitality would be delayed enabling the sectors to restore themselves. Post-Covid responses are included in the Skills Plan. Unemployment was rising, with some sectors decreasing in size, so there would be a need to reskill and upskill the working population. From this perspective, we expected a growth in lower level apprenticeships as people had to re-start their careers.

Wiltshire Council

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	<p>RF updated the meeting and stated that the Council had issued grants to 7,000 businesses totalling £84m. The contact centre had taken 3,000 individual contacts and the Council was receiving 100 applications per day. The Discretionary Grant opened on Monday, 8 June and there had already been 200 applications. There had been an upturn in enquires for businesses looking to move into Wiltshire, mainly looking for office and manufacturing space.</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council</p> <p>JS stated that the Discretionary Grant link was now on SBC's website. 20 people were being trained to manage those grants which would close on 21 June. A Panel would then review and make decisions about the allocation. This was expected to be on the lower side because it was not a large pot of money and SBC was expecting a lot of applications.</p> <p>SBC was still receiving applications for the first schemes with 2,000 grants paid out and the schemes remained open. Businesses were returning when they had used up the money from the first grant, but there was no second phase payment permitted.</p> <p>Activity with Honda - people could receive skills training and help with job searches. JS also advised that this service would be open to others outside Honda as well who were at risk of redundancy.</p> <p>PV added that the Full Business Case for the Future High Streets Fund had been submitted to Government and SBC was awaiting a decision in late Autumn. SBC would be submitting the bid for The Towns Fund, currently open up to £25m, on 31 July.</p> <p>She also advised the meeting that people were already out in Swindon town centre putting down tapes for social distancing etc to be ready for 15 June.</p> <p>Paul Moorby, SWLEP Chair</p> <p>PJM thanked the members for their fantastic contributions.</p>	
5.0	AOB	
	<p>There was no other business.</p> <p>The Chair re-iterated that ideas for speakers and workshops would be welcomed.</p>	
6.0	Date and time of next meeting	
	<p>Extraordinary meeting Wednesday, 8 July 2020 Via video / telephone conference</p> <p>Future Meetings</p> <p>Regular quarterly meetings: Wednesday, 5 August</p>	



	To be held virtually via video/telephone conference OR at Digital Mansion Corsham, Pickwick Road, Corsham, SN13 9BL	
	Wednesday, 4 November Chemring Countermeasures, High Post, Salisbury SP4 6AS	
	Meeting closed at 12.50pm	

Alison North

16 July 2020

Membership	<p>Alison North – SWLEP Director, Chair of BROG</p> <p>Business Improvement Districts (BIDs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salisbury – Robin McGowan, (RMc) • Swindon – Mark Rogers, (MR) <p>BusinessWest – Ian Larrard (IL) OR Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M)</p> <p>CBI – Deborah Fraser, (DF)</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chippenham – Kathryn Crossweller (KC) • Devizes – Richard • Inspire by Wessex Chamber – Rob Perks (RP) OR Mandy Paterson (MP) • Salisbury – Andy Rhind-Tutt, (AR-T) • Thames Valley – Leigh Robinson, (LR) • Thames Valley Swindon – Tim Major, (TM) <p>CLA – name to be advised</p> <p>Federation of Small Business – Ruth Lambert (RL)</p> <p>Icaew – Beverley Waters</p> <p>Institute of Directors – Guy Tullberg, (GT)</p> <p>MakeUK – Stephen Tulip (ST)</p> <p>NFU – Andrea Witcombe (AW)</p> <p>SWLEP – Paddy Bradley, (PB) / Phil Clement, (PC), / Colette Mallon, (CM) / Chris Stevens (CS), North / Amanda Peach (AP), South</p> <p>VisitWiltshire – David Andrews (DA) OR Peter Wragg (PW)</p>
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