

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 Council attendance will be dependent on topics discussed

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



Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Victoria Moloney (VM)	Wiltshire Council	Apologies
Alison North (AN)	SWLEP Director	✓
Paul O'Collins (PO)	EEN	To be invited to next meeting
Chris Parsons (CP)	Swindon Borough Council	Apologies
Mandy Paterson (MP) OR Rob Perks	Inspire by Wessex Chamber	✓
Amanda Peach (AP)	SWLEP	✓
Andy Rhind-Tutt (AR-T)	Salisbury & District Chamber	Apologies
Mark Rogers (MR)	InSwindon	Apologies
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	✓
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Julia Stuckey (JS)	Swindon Borough Council	✓
Karen Taylor (KT)	DWP	Apologies
Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M) OR Ian Larrard	BusinessWest	✓
Mandy Timbrell (MT)	Wiltshire Council	✓ - joined meeting at 1.05pm
Alan Truscott (AT)	Community First	✓
Stephen Tulip (ST)	MakeUK	Apologies
Philippa Venables (PV)	Swindon Borough Council	Apologies
Beverley Waters (BW)	ICAEW	✓ - left meeting at 1.40pm
Andrew Wells (AW)	Swindon Borough Council	Apologies
Adene West-Webbe (AW-W)	Wiltshire Council	Apologies
Peter Wragg (PW)	SWLEP Deputy Chair / VisitWiltshire	Apologies



Guest(s)	Tom Pagett (TP) – Chippenham Chamber, representing Kathryn Crosweller
Chair	Alison North (AN)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	12 noon
Finish Time	2.30pm

1.0	Welcome and Introductions	Date
	The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted. The Chair explained the reasoning behind the merger of the SWLEP's existing Business Representative Organisations' Group with the Wiltshire Council Economy Cell Partnership Group as most of the participants were attendees to both Groups and this would reduce duplication and provide additional focus going forward.	
2.0	Minutes of meeting on 8 July 2020 and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 were read and approved.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West Agri-Tech Group - BB and RF agreed to discuss outside the meeting. RF made introductions and BB attended the meeting on 18 August. COMPLETED • NetZeo - BB would feed comment back to the region. BB updated the meeting. Although this was inferred in the document the key focus was still on Growing a resilient, strong and profitable SW agricultural sector post Covid-19. • NFU presentation to ICAEW members - BB and BW agreed to discuss further outside the meeting. This had been discussed and Mel Squires, NFU Regional Director, would speak at the ICAEW meeting in October. COMPLETED • Members to contact Chair or DKH if they wanted to present. DKH advised that Stephen Tulip of MakeUK and Ruth Lambert of fsb had made contact. • RF to provide list of ceased traders to DKH for circulation. RF to present later in the agenda. COMPLETED. 	
3.0	Economic Cell Partnership / BROG	
	<p>Draft Terms of Reference (ToR)</p> <p>DS spoke to the meeting and advised that the new SWLEP Governance Framework had just been approved by the Board Directors, so it was timely</p>	



	<p>to look at the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Group. The paper was the first draft of the ToR.</p> <p>The Business Representative Organisations' Group (BROG) as it stood did not form a formal part of the SWLEP Governance structure. It was not accountable to the Board, but its aim was for business engagement and a collaborative response. Currently the meetings were held quarterly, although they had been more frequent recently owing to the Covid-19 crisis and may drop back once the situation had settled. An additional paragraph on circumstances and confidentiality to be included in the ToR.</p> <p>Action: DKH to re-circulate to the group via email for approval.</p>	Sept 2020
4.0	Update from members	
	<p>Tom Pagett (TB) – Chippenham Chamber of Commerce TP was a commercial solicitor in Chippenham and was representing Kathryn Crosweller at this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No surveys had been held directly since the last meeting. • was seeing a general reduction of furloughed staff and an increase in redundancies. • The residential property market was booming, and sports and leisure venues were back operating. • The hospitality sector appeared to be a tale of two halves. Those taking advantage of the support on offer, like Eat Out to Help Out, whilst others were not. Chain operators were focusing on their bigger stores, and not re-opening the smaller venues. The knock-on effect was that some landlords therefore were still not being paid their rent. <p>Tim Major – Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same comments as above. • A piece today in local paper was that Wasdell would not get planning permission for its proposed expansion. • The company was threatening to move out of Swindon and Wiltshire. <p><i>NOTE: JS advised the meeting that the application had been refused on policy terms but had still to go to committee.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chamber was running an extensive event programme. • Next quarter, starting in September, it would be focussing on Brexit and the transition, and dealing with the documentation required. <p>Robin McGowan (RMcG) – Salisbury Business Improvement District There was mixed feedback on businesses in the BID area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BID was due to issue a survey in September on the views of the "Eat out to Help out" scheme to ascertain whether takings were better overall or were simply front loaded over Mondays, Tuesday and Wednesdays when the scheme was operating. 	



- July's footfall for the UK was down 47% in town centres. Salisbury's was down 43%.
- The June to July uplift for the UK was up 53%, whereas Salisbury was 64%.
- The bigger cities were struggling with footfall, until people returned to work etc.
- Recent good weather had been helpful allowing lots of businesses to expand out onto the pavement. Temporary pavement licences had been issued.
- There were mixed reviews regarding the People Friendly Street Project. This was being executed under an experimental TRO starting in September. The measures of success of the scheme were still to be ascertained. It would be interesting to see if there would be more £s in tills or not make any difference.

Phil Clement (PC) – SWLEP Head of Inward Investment & Export

- The Growing Places Infrastructure Fund was currently working on two applications.
- One was in Swindon and one in Wiltshire
- One wanted to take the maximum loan amount of £1.25m and the other the minimum of £150k
- The Working Group was scheduled to meet on 7 September to make recommendations to the SWLEP Board for its meeting on 23 September.
- SWLEP could then make public the names of the applicants.
- There was a strong pipeline of other companies coming forward for loans for the Board Meeting in November and into the New Year.
- It was good to see that companies were still looking to expand in the present circumstances.

Mandy Paterson – Inspire by Wessex Chamber

Same general comments as Chambers above.

- Business owners were extremely fatigued having worked through the lockdown period and now into recovery.
- Sales were reported to have dropped by 30-40%.
- There was anxiety over the coming winter months. How to treat an employee with a cold etc? Would quarantine be necessary if it were to spread through whole workforce?
- Business owners aged 60+ were not keen to borrow money over this period, wondering whether it would be better to close completely. Alternatively, a younger person could take over.
- A virtual workshop programme was to roll out in September and October and the take up so far had been high.

Julia Stuckey (JS) – Swindon Borough Council

- Business grants were due to finish

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Discretionary grant would end in ten days • Retail, hospitality and leisure grants were open until the end of month with payment to be made by the end of September. • Swindon was on the Government's watch list for Coronavirus cases. Although around the business community, it was thought that the cases were amongst work mates socialising together. Workplaces were doing a good job implementing the measures and the Public Health team was working with them. • SBC was working with RFi on a Risk Register pulling together a list of businesses at threat of loss of staff / risk of redundancies. • More information would be brought back to the Group and to ask for assistance. • Redundancies were being made in companies operating at a national level. Some had a large presence in Swindon, but as yet SBC did not know how many would be in Swindon itself. SBC would be working with them to offer support. A redundancy package had been put in place for Honda and SBC was looking to extend that as much as possible for other companies. JS to bring back to the meeting when more is known. <p>Action: JS to bring back list of redundancies and support offering to future meeting.</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p>
<p>Russell Frith (RF) – Wiltshire Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage businesses to make applications for any grants before deadline of 28 August • £90m of Business Support grants had been issued to 7,500 business across Wiltshire • Discretionary grants had been issued to 544 businesses • The grants were now winding down. • RF presented a slide on the numbers of businesses and their sectors in Wiltshire that had ceased trading. The slide can be accessed via the website using the following link. <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/business-closures-1-april-to-11-august-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=12b7fdcd_4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further analysis was required to ascertain the reasons for the numbers of closed and opened businesses, whether closed businesses had simply closed down, moved to other premises or even changed their names. A breakdown comparison to the old normal needed. <p>Action: DKH to circulate to group</p>	<p>Aug 2020</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porton Science Park Phase 2 due to be opened in Spring 2022. Expression of interests already taken for 20% of the space. 	



- Press coverage recently about Local Authorities retaining grant money had been unhelpful. Please encourage business to apply for these grants.
- Live Register of businesses at risk was being produced, which would be brought back to the Group. (See comment from JS above.)
- On Friday 21 August, both Local Authorities and the Growth Hub were connecting with businesses to ask them their opinions on more appropriate support to them. Support offerings would be included in a toolbox available to navigators. This would be launched at the beginning of September and would include recovery messaging around support.
- Wiltshire Council was now looking at the broader economic recovery and stressed the importance of collaboration.

Additional comments made in the chat were as follows:

- the Hospitality sector definitely needs more support and also representation in these business groups.
- The self-employed scheme had just re-opened for application to October. This was not via the Local Authorities but was self-application.
- There were businesses looking to merge or buy suitable businesses so there was an opportunity to head off closures.

Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M) - BusinessWest

- BusinessWest carried out a survey between 1 July and 4 August to which 519 businesses responded. The survey can be accessed on the website via the following link:

<https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/combined-businesswest-survey-august-202089cc700431fc4e5d818>

Action: DKH to circulate to group.

- Some companies have pivoted and are developing projects outside their normal product range.

Claire Alexander (CA) – SWLEP, Director of Programmes

CA updated the meeting on recent programmes

- Swindon & Wiltshire had been allocated £9.7m from Getting Building Fund which would be used towards the following projects:
 - Swindon Carriage Works, containing aspects of the Innovation Campus of the Circular Economy (ICCE)
 - Business Cyber Centre (BCC)
 - Porton Science Park Phase 2

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- BEIS had contacted SWLEP about the Spending Review and asked for additional information on projects which we would like to move forward at pace. CA had proposed the BCC and ICCE projects.
- BEIS wanted Growth Hubs to move to a three-year funding cycle.
- The recently allocated ERDF grant money for support would be used by companies in the area via a voucher scheme to provide access to organisations which wished to adopt technology, that is, computers and software, or needed professional guidance such as HR and legal.
- Growth Hubs were looking to adopt a national brand and there would be a marketing campaign.
- CA presented a slide detailing the current structure of the SWLEP and showing the recent recruitment to the Growth Hub to support the programmes. The slide can be accessed by following the link below.

https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/swlep-org-chart-at-august-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=64accae_4

- CA expressed thanks to the Economy cells of both Local Authorities.
- A further explanation of Peer Networks was given. £150k would be spent in cohorts where there would be a learning through mentor programme on a sector by sector basis with workshops
- For example, within the Food & Drink sector, a consortium approach could be taken towards packaging and sharing equipment thus saving money and waste.

Chris Stevens (CS) – SWLEP Growth Hub Manager

- Growth Hub had now offered business support to 1,000 businesses.
- These businesses had come via routes into the Growth Hub itself or via referrals from the Local Authorities.
- Now in the mobilisation phase of four different support programmes.
- The recent recruitment drive had seen Growth Hub staff increase from three to 12.
- The Higher Futures programme finished in March, but Growth Hub had reassigned Amanda Peach as the Skills & Enterprise Advisor to provide a broader support package around skills.
- Growth Hub contributed to the Risk Register on businesses at risk of closure.
- A weekly Business Intelligence Report was sent to BEIS colleagues adding value to the business intelligence for the area to Government.

Bev Waters - ICAEW

The feedback from members was that:

- practices were very busy giving advice, including sales of businesses and helping firms to pivot and redefine their offering.



- The £20m professional services grant pot included accountancy. £1-5k grant for legal, HR, accountancy, and included purchase of new IT equipment and software for which there was a large need.

NOTE: This is the ERDF Recovery Grants for Visitor and Wider Economy being delivered by the Growth Hub.

- the ICAEW's Business Advice Service was still online. Small businesses could register for two to four hours of free advice.
- for accountancy firms themselves, demand was for advice on employment law with seminars for members regarding furlough returns and redundancies.
- Undertaking pandemic burnout seminars for members moving from crisis management to the new normal.
- Providing sessions on how to start your own accountancy practice if staff were being made redundant from practices
- The organisation had been asked about Succession Planning.
- Normally training cohorts started in September and January, but some practices were delaying taking on trainees until January 2021.

A question was raised as to whether the IAECW was promoting the Government incentives to take on a trainee / apprentice and Kickstart scheme to businesses.

Action: BW to ascertain.

NFU

BB advised that:

- its members were out harvesting, although yields had been low;
- the NFU had opened its fodder bank to sell surplus cow feed and bedding;
- it continued to talk to Government about ELMS to ensure it was fit for purpose for sustainable farming in the future and about labour, particularly in horticulture and livestock;
- Ongoing activity was the British Farming Day which was taking place in September to promote British products as much as possible; and
- the carcass value for lamb and beef had levelled out and was just about at five-year average. Supermarkets had promoted better cuts and hospitality venues had increased sales.

Alan Truscott (AT) – Community First

AT stated that:

- the organisation would be closing down at end of this year.
- It was experiencing a number of grants being returned as applicants had used up their reserves during the pandemic and now did not have the money for match-funding
- This equated to £1m of investment in small rural businesses

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of enquires from farmers who were interested in diversification now as their yields were low. • Enquires about technology for automation to reduce the workforce • Farmers were Investigating new production lines and new products to reduce the financial risk • These types of enquires were being directed through to the Growth Hub. • Still waiting for Government to inform what was going to happen to European funding after January. • Businesses were not keen on taking out loans because of the increased liability. <p>Alison North (AN) SWLEP Director, BROG Chair and FSB Wiltshire area lead AN informed the meeting that she been on a FSB webinar yesterday with Danny Kruger, MP for Devizes, about inequality of business rates. The FSB was hoping that work would be done about this issue.</p>	
5.0	Wiltshire Economy Recovery Group – Economic Cell Partnership	
	<p>MT presented to the meeting. The presentation can be accessed on the website via the following link.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/wiltshire-council-economic-partnership-and-brog-aug192020.pdf?sfvrsn=ac858af8_4</p> <p>Comments were made that the three groups joining would be beneficial.</p> <p>Action: JS to send SBC list to DKH to combine groups.</p>	Aug 2020
6.0	AOB	
	<p>Forward meeting schedule The next meeting was requested before the SWLEP Board Meeting in September. A different approach was needed to manage the agenda better for a call which included 30+ people.</p> <p>A suggestion was made that a short update could be provided in advance for future meetings to reduce time going around each participant and could also be used to help remind others of organisational priorities.</p> <p>Marketing of the groups AN commented that there were many groups offering support, but it was unclear how much was generally known about them in the business community.</p> <p>Action: AN to lead discussion on how to increase the profile.</p>	Sept 2020
7.0	Date and time of next meeting	



	Date in September 2020 to be decided.	
	Regular quarterly meetings:	
	Future Meetings Wednesday, 4 November Chemring Countermeasures, High Post, Salisbury SP4 6AS	
	Meeting closed at 13.45.pm	

Atison Norta

06 October 2020