



### Membership

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
David Andrews (DA)	VisitWiltshire	✓
Chris Baish (CB)	New College	✓
Layla Burrows (LB)	Innovate UK	arrival - 12.45pm
Sally Cook (SC), replaces Karen Taylor (KT)	DWP	Apologies
Kathryn Crosweller (KC)	Chippenham Chamber	Apologies – maternity leave
Kez Garner	Trowbridge Chamber	
Anwen Jones (AJ)	BEIS Representative	✓
Ruth Lambert (RL)	Federation of Small Business, FSB	✓
Lee McQuade (LMcQ)	DIT	Apologies, moved on and no representative yet
Robin McGowan (RMcG)	Salisbury BID	✓ - left at 1.35pm
Tim Major (TM)	Thames Valley Chamber	✓
Thomas Mason (TMa)	CLA	Apologies
Phil Mills (PM)	SWMAS	✓
Paul O'Collins (PO)	Innovate UK Edge (previously EEN)	
Mandy Paterson (MP) OR Rob Perks	Inspire by Wessex Chamber	✓
Andy Rhind-Tutt (AR-T)	Salisbury & District Chamber	
Anita Bellinger (AB)	InSwindon	
Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M) OR Ian Larrard	BusinessWest	✓
Jim Davison (JD)	MakeUK	✓ - left at 1.40pm
Beverley Waters (BW)	ICAEW	Apologies
Andrea Witcombe (AWi)	NFU	✓ - left at 1.50pm

 <b>Swindon &amp; Wiltshire</b> LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP	<b>Minutes of Business Intelligence &amp; Networking Group Meeting (BING)</b> <b>30 June 2021</b>
--	--

SWLEP: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Claire Alexander (CA)	SWLEP	✓
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓
Phil Clement (PC)	SWLEP	
Dragana Houston (DH)	SWLEP	✓
Alison North (AN)	SWLEP Director	✓
Amanda Peach (AP)	SWLEP	Apologies
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	✓
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Swindon Borough Council: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Chris Parsons (CP)	Swindon Borough Council	✓
Andrew Wells (AW)		Apologies
Wiltshire Council: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	✓
Rachel Finlay (RFi)		✓
Russell Frith (RF)		✓ - left at 1.30pm
Sam Fox (SF)		
Victoria Moloney (VM)		
David Perrett (DP)		
Mandy Timbrell (MT)		Apologies

<b>Guest(s)</b>	
<b>Chair</b>	Alison North (AN)
<b>Minutes</b>	Deborah House (DKH)
<b>Venue</b>	Via video / teleconference call
<b>Start time</b>	12.30pm
<b>Finish Time</b>	2pm



1.0	Welcome and Introductions	Date
	The meeting opened at 12.34pm. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes of meeting on 10 March 2020 and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2021 were read and approved.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB to give an overview of innovation strategy at future meeting. <b>LB advised that this would be ready within the next fortnight and if available she would discuss at next meeting.</b></li> <li>• Training for travel companies - organisations which thought they could assist with such a course should contact DA. <b>PB updated the meeting. DA, RL and PB had discussed a range of possibilities including linking in to the SWLEP's SME Competitiveness Programme. The eventual option taken was to link tourism and hospitality businesses to the action learning set being organised for these sectors under the Growth Hub's Peer Network.</b></li> <li>• Levelling Up Fund – <b>an update from Wiltshire Council would be given later in the agenda.</b></li> </ul> <p>Other Matters Arising were completed or ongoing.</p>	<b>Sept 2021</b>
3.0	Update on future High Streets Fund by Wiltshire Council	
	<p>RB presented to the meeting on the plans for the use of the funding from the Future High Streets Fund by Wiltshire Council for Salisbury and Trowbridge. The funds were available until March 2024. The presentation can be accessed by following the link below.</p> <p><a href="https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/bing-fhsf-30-june-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=c3b16469_4">https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/bing-fhsf-30-june-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=c3b16469_4</a></p> <p>RB advised that a lot of lessons were picked up from the High Street Task Force and taken into account in Wiltshire Council's own plans.</p> <p>The question of whether there were any plans for other market towns which did not receive funding this time was raised. The meeting was informed that Wiltshire Council was working with Town Councils and encouraging them to develop their own vision and helping them shape the parameters around deliverability. A series of consultations in the form of workshops would be held in the Autumn to introduce the concepts. Wiltshire Council would act as a critical friend, making interventions in the right way. There would be some commonality across the market towns with additional bespoke solutions for particular problems. It may even be possible to group some of the towns together.</p>	



	<p>RL advised that FSB would be happy to promote the consultations in due course.</p> <p>RB advised that submissions for the Levelling Up Fund closed on 18 June. Wiltshire Council had submitted a transport-based project for the Longfield gyratory in Trowbridge to make the route publicly accessible from housing areas to the High Street.</p>	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) report</b>	
	<p>DH presented to the meeting on Labour Market Intelligence for the Swindon and Wiltshire area. The presentation can be access by using the following link.</p> <p><a href="https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/21-june-lmi-bing.pdf?sfvrsn=abac4dd2_4">https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/21-june-lmi-bing.pdf?sfvrsn=abac4dd2_4</a></p> <p>Points raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• once furlough came to an end, not all these people would be able to return to their jobs;</li> <li>• there was concern that a lot of people would then become unemployed;</li> <li>• there was a surge in demand for hospitality businesses since the easing of lockdown;</li> <li>• some had experienced difficulties in recruiting staff and had responded by increasing pay; and</li> <li>• businesses were looking for people with some experience, so skilling and upskilling could be an option to review.</li> </ul> <p>PB advised the group that a meeting had already been held to set out the next stage for the Apprenticeship Strategy. Since the last Strategy had been drafted, there was a sizable drop not only in the levels of apprenticeship starts, but also in the levels of achievements, that is, people that had completed their apprenticeships. However, there had been a noticeable uptake in higher and degree apprenticeships; in fact, a six-fold increase. Some of this was attributed to HE and FE providers embracing higher and degree apprenticeships as a route to employment.</p> <p>DH was thanked for the presentation.</p>	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Growth Hub update</b>	
	<p>CS spoke to the meeting and gave an update on Growth Hub activity since its change from a digital portal to a full direct delivery service, particularly since the pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff numbers had increased from three to currently 12, with 15 staff at some points last year.</li> <li>• Contract value was £3m.</li> <li>• Continued to work with the Local Authorities.</li> <li>• 90% of enquiries had been about finance, grants, digital capability, HR and the furlough scheme.</li> <li>• 4,000 inbound calls received.</li> <li>• Website traffic increased by up to 300%.</li> </ul>	



#### **ERDF SME Competitiveness Programme**

- Scale up and growth and aimed particularly at digital businesses.
- There was a programme targeted particularly at staff from Honda and their supply chain being made redundant in July 2021. There was support for people to start their own businesses. SBC and YKTO were key partners.
- Uptake was not as high as expected, but it was anticipated that there could be more enquires 2-3 months post-closure on skills provision.
- Wiltshire Council was used for the finance and audit of this programme.

#### **ERDF recovery grant funding**

- To support businesses to adapt and build using new technology.
- Final payment was made to applicants last week.
- 142 business had received grant support.

#### **BEIS-funded – This Way Up programme**

- 62 webinars undertaken with themes of leadership, finance and digital.
- attracted 1,800 live attendees with 600+ accessing the webinars on Watch Again.
- 102 businesses with digital specific enquiries and 1:1 appointments subsequently made with Digital Specialist Advisor.

#### **Peer Networks**

- Seven cohorts established with an average of eight business leaders per cohort.
- The programme had been extended by a year.
- This year would deliver ten cohorts.

#### **Kickstart Scheme**

- SWLEP as a Kickstart Gateway provider had 330 placements on its register.
- 173 of which had been approved via DWP.
- 87 were now live.
- 46 had now been filled.

#### **EU transition business readiness**

- The outreach element of the programme had been covered by Inspire by Wessex Chamber.
- 2,600 business had been contacted.
- Those needing specialist support had been passed to The Export Department, managed by Business West.
- Six webinars were held.
- Most enquiries had been regarding rules of origin, the changes to import/export documentation and VAT.
- Most enquiries had been from the Manufacturing and Food & Drink sectors

#### **What the Future holds**



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the This Way Up and Peer Networks Programmes would continue for a further year.</li> <li>With the green economy such a focus for Government, the Growth Hub was currently recruiting additional resource in the service for businesses which wanted to reduce carbon and reach net zero.</li> <li>The Growth Hub had recently recruited a new Skills Advisor to bolster that offer.</li> <li>Production of the Growth Hub Impact Report was currently in train, which included Case Studies and would be published externally.</li> </ul> <p>There was discussion about how the Kickstart experience could lead to a route into a career through an apprenticeship. These issues were discussed with the young people in Kickstart positions, but there was a challenge in that to move to a job offering an apprenticeship, the person would be paid at a lower rate than on a Kickstart placement. However, the Kickstart position was time-limited and employers taking on apprentices can choose to increase their salary beyond the minimum rate.</p> <p>LB advised that Innovate UK would like to extend its Young Innovators programme. The current round was open until 28 July, but it wanted to extend regionally.</p> <p><b>Action: LB and CS to follow-up and work together to promote the Young Innovators Programme.</b></p>	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Business Grants update</b>	
	<p>RF gave an update on the situation regarding support grants from Wiltshire Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>total of £173m of grant funding now delivered;</li> <li>LRSB aimed at impacted rateable businesses closed on 14 May and £40m had been paid out;</li> <li>application for Restart grants closed today with £23m paid out to date;</li> <li>assessments were still on-going, and Wiltshire Council would make payments until the deadline of end of July;</li> <li>ARG scheme was now closed with £14.5m paid out; and</li> <li>Volume reduced on applications for grants as the programmes wind down.</li> </ul> <p>CP gave an update on the situation regarding support grants from Swindon Borough Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there was a similar situation in Swindon as above;</li> <li>15 different schemes had been operating;</li> <li>the one still open was the Restart Grant scheme which would close today;</li> <li>as of 5pm today, no more grant schemes were up and running;</li> <li>SBC was on track to pay out a total of £65m;</li> <li>there were still some ongoing enquiries from businesses. Most had dropped into the grant net, but a few had fallen outside the schemes; and</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the resources allocated to administration of the schemes had diminished from a team of 15 to only two staff.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Feedback and information from other partner organisations</b>	
	<p>RB advised the meeting that the second element of the Wiltshire Council submission for the Levelling Up fund was Melksham House, which was for a flexible co-working space, along the Enterprise Network model.</p> <p>DA advised that although there was lots of press about the country being full, there were patches where tourism businesses were struggling. Hotels in urban areas were only at 50% occupancy. Other businesses were having to reduce capacity because they could not attract the appropriate numbers of staff. Although leisure tourism in rural areas was doing well with camping, glamping and cottages, events and corporate programmes were down, and international inbound traffic had decreased. For example, Stonehenge was only at a third of its capacity.</p> <p>Government had drafted a national Tourism Recovery Plan which was available via the link below.</p> <p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/992974/Tourism_Recovery_Plan_Web_Accessible_.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/992974/Tourism_Recovery_Plan_Web_Accessible_.pdf</a></p>	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Items proposed for future meetings</b>	
	<p>Next meeting on 15 September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS</li> <li>Experience Salisbury</li> </ul> <p>Future Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on Porton Science Park</li> <li>Update from NFU on changes in farming environment since Lockdown and / or Brexit</li> <li>Migration – the effects on businesses since exiting the EU</li> <li>Institute of Technology update</li> <li>Impact on the economy of the removal of levels of COVID-19 restrictions</li> </ul>	
<b>8.0</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	None	
	<b>Date and time of next meeting</b>	
	<p>Next meeting: No meeting scheduled in August Wednesday, 15 September - 12.30pm – 2pm</p> <p>Future Dates for 2021: Wednesday, 10 November - 12.30pm – 2pm</p>	
	<b>Meeting closed at 1.58pm</b>	



**Swindon & Wiltshire**  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

**Minutes of Business Intelligence  
& Networking Group Meeting  
(BING)  
30 June 2021**

*Alison North*

Alison North - Chair      15 September 2021