



Membership

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
David Andrews (DA)	VisitWiltshire	
Daniel Rhind-Tutt (DR-T)	Salisbury & District Chamber	
Layla Burrows (LB)	Innovate UK	Apologies
Sally Cook (SC)	DWP	✓
Kathryn Croweller (KC)	Chippenham Chamber	
Jim Davison (JD)	MakeUK	Apologies
Mark Edwards (ME)	Calne Town Council	
Lorna Howarth (LH)	KTN Innovate UK	
Emily Manser (EM)	Cities & Local Growth Unit Representatives	✓ - left at 1.30pm
Ruth Lambert (RL)	Federation of Small Business, FSB	Apologies
Awaiting replacement	DIT	
Robin McGowan (RMcG)	Salisbury BID	✓
Tim Major (TM)	Thames Valley Chamber	✓
Chris Farr (CF)	CLA	Apologies
Phil Mills (PM)	SWMAS	✓
Paul O'Collins (PO)	Innovate UK Edge	
Mandy Paterson (MP)	Inspire by Wessex Chamber	✓ - arrived 12.40pm
Kez Garner (KG)	Trowbridge Chamber	✓
Dee Temple-Multon (DT-M) OR Ian Larrard	BusinessWest	✓
Beverley Waters (BW)	ICAEW	Apologies
Katie Davis (KD)	NFU	✓ - left at 1.40pm
SWLEP: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓



Rob Creer (RB)	SWLEP	✓
Ian Lloyd (IL)	SWLEP	
Alison North (AN)	SWLEP Director and Chair of BING	✓
Laura Arlott (LA)	SWLEP	
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Swindon Borough Council: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Dave Dewart	Swindon Borough Council	
Wiltshire Council: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	Apologies
Rachel Finlay (RFi)		Apologies
Russell Frith (RF)		Apologies
Victoria Moloney (VM)		Apologies
David Perrett (DP)		

Guest(s)	
Chair	Paddy Bradley (PB)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	12.30pm
Finish Time	2pm

1.0	Welcome and Introductions	Date
	The meeting opened at 12.33pm. AN welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted. It was noted that there was no representation for either of the two Local Authorities for this meeting.	
2.0	Minutes of meeting on 7 December 2022 and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023 were read and approved.</p> <p>Matter Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trowbridge Partnership Board: Rory Bowen (RB) to update on at next meeting. ON AGENDA 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant Commercial Unit Fund: RB / Rachel Finley to talk offline with Rob Creer (RC), with possibility of Subgroup being established to include RB, RC, KG, Dee Temple-Multon and Mandy Paterson. <i>Update at meeting. Check with RB if this meeting was still required.</i> <p>The other Matters Arising were on the agenda or completed.</p>	
3.0	Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)	
	<p>PB presented to the meeting highlighting key economic facts about the Swindon and Wiltshire area, including average wages, job prospects and strengths and weaknesses of particular sectors. For this meeting, he had also added Gloucestershire to the data as it was a neighbouring area with worthwhile comparative data.</p> <p>The presentation can be accessed by following the link below:</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/2023/14-june/bing-lmi-presentation-14-june-2023.pdf?sfvrsn=891d2d8f_3</p> <p>The question was raised as to why there were differences between Swindon and Wiltshire. In response, the two areas had differing economies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swindon’s was based in finance and legal services, which was the largest single sector in the combined economy of Swindon and Wiltshire; • finance and legal had also been a significant sector in Salisbury until Aviva had relocated; • there were also a large number of small manufacturing companies and pharma around Swindon; • for Wiltshire, its significant sectors were Professional, Scientific and Technical businesses. Land-based industries occupied a large amount of land and maintained an attractive environment, but their contribution to economy was relatively small; • however, it did not have the same blend and mix of concentrations of manufacturing like Swindon, nor larger company Headquarters like Nationwide and Zurich; and • Approximately 98% of businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire were micro and SMEs. <p>There were changes in working patterns which in turn would affect employment land space and office blocks not being used for offices as more people were working from home. Good quality housing needed to draw in services and the hospitality sector. In order to survive, every town centre needed a mix of sectors, such as housing and leisure, not just retail.</p>	



Technical jobs could now be anywhere in the world which was the biggest potential change and small completely digitally based companies which did not have many employees, no offices, and ran their business from phones etc.

There had also been a decline in public provided transport such as buses and train which were not at the level of service provision as pre-pandemic. This was having an impact on learning and work journeys, and not reducing carbon levels as more people took to their cars.

4.0 Partnerships Advisory Board updates

There were no representatives from either Local Authority at the meeting.

Trowbridge

In RB's absence, KG updated the meeting regarding the situation in Trowbridge:

- seven businesses had opened since the beginning of the year in the town centre using vacant unit funding;
- a further two had set up with that support;
- nine were planning to open during the year with grants;
- flats were being made above the shops;
- a block of art studios was planned and a gin bar, deli, and restaurants were due;
- the Town Hall was closing in July and tenants needed to be relocated;
- Wiltshire Council had announced a new leisure centre next to County Hall which it was felt could lead to more traffic issues;
- Castle Place was now mostly empty and had just been sold to a developer;
- the remaining tenants were asking to move within the Town Centre, but some would unfortunately close;
- reaching end of funding allocations. Some funds agreed would not be claimed by landlords because plans were not going ahead;
- the Tech Trowbridge event scheduled for 30 June had been postponed; and
- CS had provided a list of potential attendees to Dr Murrison's office.

Salisbury

PB updated the meeting on the situation in Salisbury:

- projects were mainly around the station into the town and the River Park development;
- the main emphasis was around the culture provision and a strategy for making use of Salisbury's assets.
- developing some grass roots approaches;
- Wiltshire Council was looking at the financial options to develop City Hall, relocating the library and the art gallery into the revamped building;
- the Culture Strategy was being revised and would be published soon; and
- SWLEP would provide information on the financial health of companies in Salisbury for the dashboard.



	<p>Swindon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £19m had been allocated from the Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund and the selected projects were underway; • the location of the site for the development of a market in the Town Centre had now been changed after a study had been carried out on footfall for the original proposed site; • the new Zurich building on Kimmerfields had recently been officially opened, but a large part of the site was still to be developed; • developers were showing an interest in these remaining areas; • the Mechanics' Institute was now a significant priority; and • with the change of political administration from Conservative to Labour, there were three main areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to reduce inequality in the town; • to look at facilities Swindon needed for the next 30-40 years; and • the NetZero and carbon reduction agenda. 	
6.0	Updates from members of the Group	
	<p>Item taken out of order.</p> <p>SC requested a change to the timing of the meeting to avoid the lunch time period.</p> <p>Action: DKH to liaise with the Chair.</p>	Aug 2023
5.0	Other place-based initiatives	
	<p>Westbury Site Development Group</p> <p>PB updated the meeting on the status of the plans for the Hills Group site at Westbury.</p> <p>The site was owned by the Hills Group, which held the contract for the collection of waste in Wiltshire. The waste was pushed through conveyors and dried, then compacted and shipped elsewhere, either to other areas within England or transported on ferries to Europe. The waste was then burned and used to generate electricity.</p> <p>The question was what could be done locally on this site and increase employment opportunities.</p> <p>Key points made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wanted to create a centre of excellence for the circular economy; • planning permission had now been granted for an incinerator with a chimney. However, the proposal had met with local opposition; • SWLEP had introduced the University of Bath and the South West NetZero Hub to form the Westbury Site Development Group; • the hope was that, since planning had now been approved, Wiltshire Council would now become involved; 	



- generate power and heat and do carbon capture on that site as site.
- want to find a way of decreasing stuff that needs to be burned.
- heat generation to local area
- there was already a rail freight head at Westbury, which could be used to transport hydrogen products produced; and
- the proposal had great potential, but it was still early days.

EM added that this was an interesting prospect and that she would be happy to link relevant colleagues into the discussion at the appropriate time.

- the South West NetZero Hub had received funding from the Department of Energy Security & NetZero. The Group was applying to carry out a feasibility study to develop heat to power and carbon capture.

The question was raised as to what any new road plans in and out of the site were. There are conditions attached to the planning permission, so Hills was being careful at the moment locally etc.

Economic impact of road improvements

Ipsos had a Department of Transport contract to ascertain whether road improvements had any economic impact, but also the environmental impact, and it was hoped that findings would contribute to some policy development.

Mark Matthews from Ipsos, and also a SWLEP Board Director, had approached SWLEP’s CEO to see whether we could reach a wider audience. Contact had been established with interested LEPs and questionnaires had been drafted for businesses working in manufacturing or logistics based to gauge transport movements.

The group would be updated on any progress.

The A303 improvements, in particular around Stonehenge, was in the news again. SWLEP was in favour of a solution. The project lead was interested in running hydrogen vehicles throughout the construction.

The size and nature of the Rural Economy across England

SWLEP was conducting a proper analysis of rural areas together with other rural LEPs in order to make informed recommendations to defra. The perception was that the rural economy meant just agriculture. There were indeed large areas of agricultural land, but it held diverse businesses and occupations within it.

Action: KD to contact PB direct for offline discussion on how to become involved.

**July
2023**

Workplace key points:

- the higher quality commercial space and offices were charging premium prices and were being let;
- however, substandard accommodation, that is, tired and basic, were not being taken up at all;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of bigger concern was that companies were compressing. For example, Nationwide had a building which would hold 5,000 employees, but now, far fewer used the building on a daily basis; and • to combat this, other companies were actively asking people to come back to the office. 	
7.0	AOB and Items proposed for future meetings	
	<p>Attendees were thanked for their contributions to the debate for the items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the investment plan from Wiltshire Council • Overview of the investment plan from Swindon Borough Council • Experience Salisbury • Institute of Technology update 	
	Date and time of next meeting	
	<p>Next meeting Thursday, 21 September - 12.30pm to 2pm</p> <p>Dates for 2023: Wednesday, 6 December - 12.30pm to 2pm</p>	
	Meeting closed at 1.53pm	

Alison Nosta

BING Chair

15 December 2023