



Membership

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Claire Alexander (CA)	SWLEP	✓
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓
Phil Clement (PC)	SWLEP	Apologies
Dragana Houston (DH)	SWLEP	Apologies
Alison North (AN)	SWLEP Director	✓
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	Apologies
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Prof Ian White (IW)	SWLEP Director	Apologies

Guest(s)	
Chair	Alison North (AN)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	3.15pm
Finish Time	4.40pm

1.0	Welcome and Introductions	Date
	The meeting opened at 3.18pm. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted. Although IW was unable to attend the meeting, his comments had been sent to the Chair.	
2.0	Minutes and Matters Arising	
	<p>Minutes from the meeting 30 June 2021. ToR needed more work. Appendix. Sort out for the next meeting. Concentrated time with AN, CA and DS. Assign to people.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AN and DS to have offline conversation to reword the ToR. (as part of the Governance Review 2021). The Chair suggested a further meeting with the SWLEP Governance Lead, DS, to look at wording and accountability of the Subgroup. 	



- DS to reflect discussions into the Terms of Reference document and recirculate ahead of the next meeting. (as part of the Governance Review 2021). **See above.**
- **Microsoft Teams as means of communication.** It was stated that this means of communication was more secure than emails. PB suggested it be used as a pilot before we rolled out across the other Subgroups. CA added that until now SWLEP had used a small local company for its IT provision, but that we had outgrown it. With the impending implementation of the Business Cyber Centre, greater risk and security controls were necessary and that the IT support contract had been re-specified and put out to tender.

3.0 Business Cyber Centre update

With CA's departure from SWLEP, the attendance at this Subgroup was discussed. PB was in the process of reviewing the SWLEP structure but advised that the Business Development Manager and the Growth Hub Manager would continue to provide reports to this meeting.

Many of the Board Directors had visited the Business Cyber Centre building on Monday, 13 September for a guided walk through and were impressed with the size and aspirations of the development. The Chair asked about the post-launch activities.

The delivery of the Business Cyber Centre had been broken into three blocks:

- obtaining the money and investigating potential partners;
- mobilising resources, sourcing and refurbishing the building; and
- setting out the operation to keep the building running with the initial focus on tenancy to cover costs.

The plan now was how to develop the products and services which the Project Steering Group had already discussed.

SWLEP was on the verge of signing the lease, and once signed there would be an intense period with contractors on site. SWLEP was actively recruiting for a Cyber Resilience Manager and a Business Centre Manager. Through the autumn, working with the Cyber Resilience Manager, SWLEP would be co-developing and piloting some services. Longer term, SWLEP was aiming to have its own incubation and accelerator programme and both the Business Development Manager, and the Growth Hub Manager, were currently working to develop this. SWLEP was aware that the BCC and its activities needed to be different to that already out in the market and develop ground-breaking products and services to maintain its USP. The local SME base would be used to pilot these products and services and case studies and testimonials would then be created. The BCC was committed to working with partners that were happy to approach the co-design of products and services on an ethical CSR basis.



The BCC had created an identity and brand for drawing people into Wiltshire such as that of the Carriageworks in Swindon and Porton Science Park near Salisbury, and together they would form a unique circle of assets.

The logo created was deliberately national not local, as it was anticipated that the centre would be used by organisations across the country; it just happened to sit within Wiltshire.

The Business Cyber Centre was a different business to those usually provided by the SWLEP in that it was operating within a competitive environment and SWLEP was new to this sector.

Other challenges included:

- the outcome of the LEP Review;
- whether the Growth Hub received its three-year Spending Review funding, enabling it to continue to grow and become a well-respected service with a wide(r) reach;
- how to demonstrate our difference;
- how to entice the people with the skills we needed to move the project forward and to get Government to promote its activities;
- the local digital/cyber agenda was perceived to be dominated by the Golden Valley and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol worked closely with GCHQ;
- the Western Gateway had made submissions to the Comprehensive Spending Review which included:
 1. a digital accelerator; and
 2. a nuclear fusion project. (This project was years away from implementation.)

Cyber and sustainable technology was included in the Digital Accelerator programme, but PB had to battle every meeting to get a mention about the BCC. It was felt that SWLEP was not receiving enough Central Government attention despite the allocation of £3.7m through the Getting Building Fund; Government was more focused on GCHQ, and it would be investing £millions in that.

Every business needed cyber security. It was crucial not to dilute the offering and try to be too many things to too many people as there were already organisations delivering in the field of cyber. Definitely needed to adhere to what would be our niche. The building would be a very closed community; if you moved away from that you were increasing the physical and IT/data risks. The services provided remotely to SMEs needed to be relevant and affordable.

Digital had been a strategic priority in the Local Industrial Strategy and would remain so in the Plan for Growth. Priority actions had been drafted within the Business Plan with accompanying KPIs. In the spirit of openness and transparency, the Joint Scrutiny Panel had been informed about the Business Cyber Centre. The



Panel comprised three members of Wiltshire Council, three members of Swindon Borough Council and three business leaders. The Panel had recently completed a deep dive into the Growth Hub and was now looking at the Business Cyber Centre. Panel members had been sent a redacted version of the BCC Business Case, owing to commercial confidentiality, and had reverted with questions. They were informed that they were only able to review the public aspect of the BCC, that is, the £3.7m of public money being used.

Unfortunately lease completion had been delayed. As a result, the press and marketing associated with the project had been stalled. As the project had been allocated public money, there was a need to comply with Government regulations on comments for Press Releases etc. which SWLEP was in the process of obtaining, liaising with primary sponsor, BEIS.

4.0 Growth Hub

Growth Hub update

CS updated the meeting and quoted some key points from the Highlight Report:

- contact volume had reduced significantly since the closure of the grants;
- the Growth Hub was now receiving 20-30 calls per week;
- there had been a rise in popularity around the green economy and carbon reduction support;
- the business reporting link had been launched to gather business intelligence;
- CRM eform format. Export data directly from HubSpot, increased efficiency
- one Skills Advisor was leaving to go into Higher Education, and interviews were planned for next week to find a replacement;
- Growth Hub community membership had grown by 71 and it was now driving towards 2,000 members;
- the latest ERDF claim had recently been submitted;
- website updates continued to improve the browser experience;
- Swindon, Salisbury and Chippenham remained the highest areas accessing support;
- SME Competitiveness Programme – met with MHCLG, and the match profile had been revamped;
- the uptake for start-up support from ex-Honda employees had been lower than expected, but this was consistent with other agencies;
- there was a slight uptake in universal credit registration for ex-Honda staff and the Growth Hub was working closely with JCP in Swindon on this;
- the Advisors specifically for Digital and the Green Economy were now in place;
- Hugh Williams (Green Economy Advisor) recently attended the BEIS Carbon Battle Bus event at STEAM and was plugged into the South West Climate Hub. With this appointment, the Growth Hub had been acknowledged by the Lead Director at BEIS for Growth Hubs, as ahead of



the curve for recruitment. Hugh was already promoting the benefits to the business community;

- the webinar series took a break over the Summer and the return was focussed on skills and the end of furlough;
- Peer Networks – one cohort for professional services had already started, and a further three would start in September. There had been some challenges regarding numbers per cohort, but there had lately been a relaxation in eligibility, and you no longer needed 11 businesses registered to proceed;
- there were 60 young people in placements with the Kickstart Scheme using SWLEP as a Gateway organisation. 294 placements had been pledged across 12 cohorts with 101 employers. 58 live vacancies were currently on the database;
- funds accumulated via the Kickstart Scheme by SWLEP acting as a Gateway organisation had been used to employ a full-time digital marketing apprentice; and
- the Growth Hub was focused on how to reach new businesses which had not used the service before and to bring them on board.

Future sustainable operations

The desire was to make the Growth Hub community more vibrant, but areas of activity were limited due to the funding cycle. If Government were to move towards a three-year funding cycle, it would allow the Growth Hub to plan strategically and expand. Technology and systems were considered by BEIS as a major factor in the future of Growth Hubs. Data gathering and analysis would be crucial to mapping the journey and growth of SMEs and the value provided by joining up the various programmes and initiatives funded by Central Government.

Key members of the team were also mentioned for their outstanding enthusiasm for what the Growth Hub was trying to achieve:

- Brea Woods - Peer Networks Project Manager, for undertaking complete series of marketing and engagement and for providing feedback to the funder that had influenced the future shape of the programme;
- Rob Creer – recently promoted Assistant Growth Hub Manager for stepping up to the challenges of managing a larger team whilst working to provide a greater level of reporting to the Board and public via the Highlight Reports;
- Tim Burghes - Digital Marketing Manager, for enabling the redevelopment and improvement of the Business Intelligence Report that was sent weekly to BEIS and for his work supporting, not only incoming Kickstarter placements, but also for overseeing and directing two Digital Marketing Apprentices; and
- Paula Harsley - Webinar Co-ordinator for stepping up and supporting the SWLEP CEO to pull together the structure and comms for the forthcoming SWLEP digital conference.



	<p>Although SWLEP was restricted on commercialising the Growth Hub as it had been started and was funded from public money with a specific remit to provide free business support, it should be able to commercialise products and services such as data analysis. For example, SWLEP was currently working with Wiltshire College to analyse its data to help it improve the marketing of its courses to prospective students.</p> <p>The only source of recurring income at present was the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF), soon to be boosted by income arising from the BCC. However, it was recognised that should public sector funding be cut then the associated public interest and public betterment activities that currently take place would have to cease, and SWLEP would need to make some decisions based on commercial factors. SWLEP had been looking at and identifying ways to become commercially sustainable.</p> <p>Financial sustainability would continue to be a matter for discussion.</p> <p>The Chair requested that Growth Hub updates be more clearly linked to the GH business plan and the overall SWLEP business strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showing costs under/overspend or on track and timeline within scope; • where there were delays or challenges these should also be included; • details regarding statistics and daily activities could be provided as a short report or slides and included in meeting pack, but did not need to be delivered verbally at the meeting; and • meeting attendees could ask questions relating to these if so required. <p>Action: Growth Hub to provide details as requested above.</p>	On-going
5.0	Items for the next meeting	
	Continued updates.	
6.0	AOB	
	None raised.	
	Date and time of next meeting	
	<p>Next meeting: Tuesday, 9 November – 3pm-5pm</p> <p>Future Dates for 2022: To be advised.</p>	
	Meeting closed at 5pm	

Alison North