## Membership

| Name of Member | Organisation | Attendance |
|---|---|---|
| Paddy Bradley (PB) | SWLEP CEO | Apologies |
| Mandy Clarke (MC) | SWLEP Board Director | Apologies |
| Tom Marshall (TM) | SWLEP | ✓ |
| Alison North (AN) | SWLEP Board Director | ✓ |
| Chris Stevens (CS) | SWLEP | ✓ |
| Prof Ian White (IW) | SWLEP Board Director | ✓ |

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|---|---|
| **Guest(s)** | Tim Burghes (TM)✓ / Laura Hutchings (LH)✓ / Melody Thompson (MT)✓ – SWLEP<br>Ramona Derbyshire (RD)✓ – SWLEP Director<br>Rachel Finlay (RFi)✓ – Wiltshire Council<br>Dave Dewart (DD)✓ – Swindon Borough Council |
| **Chair** | Alison North (AN) |
| **Minutes** | Deborah House (DKH) |
| **Venue** | Via video / teleconference call |
| **Start time** | 1.30pm |
| **Finish Time** | 3.15pm |

| **1.0** | **Welcome and Introductions** | **Date** |
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| | The meeting opened at 1.32pm.  The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted. | |
| **2.0** | **Minutes and Matters Arising** | |
| | Minutes from the meeting of 4 July 2022 were approved.<br><br>The Matters Arising had been completed. | |
| **3.0** | **Following discussions with both Local Authorities, representation to be included to the Business Environment Subgroup, except when items are confidential to SWLEP Limited.** | |
| | CS explained to the meeting that a request had been expressed by Wiltshire Council representatives at the Ideas, Infrastructure & Place Subgroup for attendance also at the Business Environment Subgroup.  After discussion, attendance at this subgroup was extended to representatives of both Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council with the proviso that they would be asked to leave the meeting when there were commercially confidential items to discuss. | |

| 4.0 | **Business Cyber Centre update** | |
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| | TM presented to the meeting and highlighted the progress of the Business Cyber Centre project.<br><br>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2022/07-nov/20221107-swlep-bcc-bes-update.pdf?sfvrsn=dce0cd03_4<br><br>Following successful pilot schemes in Teesside and Liverpool from Innovate UK for Launchpads a bid had been submitted on 7 November for a cyber-themed Launchpad on the English side of The Western Gateway.  If the group were successful with the bid, it could then push into South Wales at a later stage.<br><br>The eco system and community was critical to the success of the BCC, but it was difficult to determine what was classed as a cyber business and the question being asked was whether the BCC should be opened up towards the tech focused sphere or even broader, to any business sector as cyber should be embedded in every business.  The question was raised as to whether there were any constraints from the funding agreement which would dictate how the BCC could operate, as Wiltshire Council's TEN centres were constrained by eligibility criteria and had to ensure that the offer did not unfairly impact on the private business sector.  In response, the meeting was told that as SWLEP was operating as a private company there were no constraints.  As it was anticipated that public funding would reduce, so SWLEP was increasingly moving in a commercial direction.<br><br>TM advised that the BCC would not hit the income target for this year, and we had been very open about that in these meetings.  He also advised that the BCC had received an allocation of monies from GPIF to offset costs in the first year as we had anticipated a slow start to income growth.  But uptake was gathering momentum and he described the current work underway such as:<br>• discussions with Hub 8 in Cheltenham, which worked with the intelligence community, for a reciprocal arrangement so that members of either organisation could make use of the other site;<br>• marketing the centre via Setsquared and Techspark contacts in the tech community, so that it would be passed to their members; and<br>• at the moment, people were using the BCC for a change of scenery from home working.<br><br>AN added that the Delivery Plan was built around the strategy, so we needed to remain agile in this environment as things changed and to keep in mind what we were trying to achieve.<br><br>**The Business Environment Subgroup:**<br>**NOTED the contents of the report.** | |
| 5.0 | **Growth Hub update** | |

CS spoke to the paper. CS had increased his role to be Head of Business Support which included oversight of the Growth Hub, the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) and Inward Investment.

The presentation can be accessed by using the following link.

https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2022/07-nov/bus'-env'-subgroup-update---nov-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=a188de24_4

Key messages across the three areas were:

**Growth Hub (Slide 2)**
Growth Hub Plus membership service launch was scheduled for the early part of 2023. When the date was set, CS would bring back to the group.

**GPIF (Slide 3)**
Detailed the number of loans out to business which totalled £17.8m. Recycling Technologies had gone into administration with a potential loss of £935,000 but SWLEP was awaiting the outcome of the process before understanding the full financial impact.

The question was raised as to how our GPIF programme compared to other areas.

**Action: CS to take this away and see how that it compared to other regions**.

Jan 2023

**Inward Investment (Slide 4)**
One of the Growth Hub Business Navigators, Melody Thompson, was deployed on inward investment for the area. The inward investment response tended to be more reactive than proactive owing to funding constraints. The requests from businesses to move into our region came via the regional contact at DIT. Melody liaised with Local Authority representatives or private companies and returned the form with the appropriate information.

The requests were mainly around sites sourcing and informing them of potential problems, for example, with electricity supply. Land availability and site and grid capacity were issues which were constraining larger projects. We would like to see more high-end type businesses being attracted to the area. Developers were keen to work with us and bridge the gap between them and the Local Authorities. Greater access to our local planning authority would give us more chance of bringing in some key developments. Policial uncertainty was also another issue, for example, it now looked like Investment Zones were going to be shelved.

Melody offered to facilitate a meeting with Swindon Borough Council planning.

**The Business Environment Subgroup:**
**NOTED the contents of the paper.**

| 7.0 | **Items for the next meeting** | |
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| | The Chair asked that the next meeting be focussed on strategy, present and future with a short look back to the last year to ensure that we have delivered on all the actions that were noted. This meeting should help to provide ideas for the commercial strategy meetings.<br><br>The performance reports would be taken as read with no presentations but an opportunity to ask questions and make any comments. | |
| | **Date and time of next meeting** | |
| | **Next meeting:**<br>Monday, 16 January 2023<br><br>**Proposed future dates for 2023:**<br><br>Monday, 6 March – at the Business Cyber Centre, Chippenham<br>Monday, 8 May<br>Monday, 3 July<br>Monday, 18 September<br>Monday, 6 November - at the Business Cyber Centre, Chippenham<br><br>All meetings will be held via teleconference / Microsoft Teams unless otherwise indicated. | |
| | **Meeting closed at 14.35pm** | |

**Approved at meeting
16 January 2023**