Swindon&Wiltshire LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP		**Minutes of Business Environment Subgroup Meeting 3 July 2023**

Membership

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

Guest(s)	David Dewart (DD) Apologies- Swindon Borough Council Rachel Finlay (RFi) ✓ - Wiltshire Council Tim Burghes (TB) ✓ / Laura Arlott (LA) ✓ / - SWLEP
Chair	Alison North (AN)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	1pm
Finish Time	3pm

1.0	**Welcome and Introductions**	**Date**
	The meeting opened at 1.03pm. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted.	
2.0	**Minutes and Matters Arising**	
	Minutes from the meeting of 9 May 2023 were approved. • Action: PB requested notes on the contacts made at the conferences and any follow-ups, so we would be able to track. *Update: PB stated that these would now be added to the CRM system.* Other Matters Arising were on the agenda or completed.	
3.0	**Business Cyber Centre (BCC) Performance Report** TM spoke to the meeting on the latest status of the BCC and the presentation can be accessed by following the link below. https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/03-july/20230703-swlep-bcc-bes-update.pdf?sfvrsn=c321df6_3	

	Key points outlined:	
	- the success of the ICE 2.0 conference, with the attendance of businesses, schools/colleges and students; and - a key defence prime organisation was interested in SWLEP taking over the lease etc of its new offices. One of the key reasons for this was that it had been based at MOD locations across the country for the past 20 years, operating with MOD as its landlord. Moving out into the commercial world, owing to its background and history, its Change Management Team was not used to dealing in this environment. It was attracted by the simplicity and flexibility offered by SWLEP operating on its behalf. TM would update the group on progress of the contact. **The Business Environment Subgroup:** **NOTED the contents of the report.**	
4.0	**Business Support performance report**	
	PB spoke to the paper in CS's absence and updated the meeting on the status and progress of the following programmes within business support: - the Growth Hub; - Inward Investment; and - Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) loans. In addition, RFi requested an outline of the type of support programmes planned for delivery by the Growth Hub and added that it would be sensible for Wiltshire Council to feed into SWLEP's Head of Business Support what else was in the offing. Over the past few years, SWLEP and Wiltshire Council had been successful in not duplicating their offers. More information sharing on this would be beneficial to both. Details had just been issued from government on the operational requirements needed by Growth Hubs. Growth Hub Plus would operate outside these parameters and would be funded from commercial income. **Action: CS to ensure relevant information was provided to RFi.** PB advised of work being carried out within the LEP network on the rural economy. SWLEP had access to Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) for every local authority area in England and would be working specifically on LAs which were classified as "mainly rural". There were 41 mainly rural Local Authorities of which Wiltshire was one. SWLEP would investigate which sectors were growing and which were declining and compile an overview of the rural economy, ascertaining the overall balance of rural businesses. Wiltshire Council had been having a dialogue with UWE for some time and funding had just been received from the Vice Chancellor Challenge Fund to progress a	**July 2023**

	study. This was a post-pandemic study on the perspectives of resilience and recovery which was due to start at the end of August for 12 months. Wiltshire Council would be willing to share its findings. **The Business Environment Subgroup:** **NOTED the contents of the report.**	
5.0	**Financial health and growth potential of businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire**	
	PB spoke to the meeting on the financial health and potential growth of businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire by using data compiled by Red Flag and The Growth Company. The presentation can be accessed by following the link below. https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/03-july/financial-health-and-growth-potential-june-2023.pdf?sfvrsn=60be0e00_3 • The data had been anonymised, but SWLEP did know the names of the individual businesses concerned, which could then be targeted for prospective areas of business support. • The process could also be used to produce data on specific towns, such as Trowbridge or Salisbury for example. • The data could also be used for measuring the impacts of the work SWLEP had undertaken.	
6.0	**The implementation of Augmented / Virtual Reality within skills learning**	
	LA presented to the meeting as a follow-up from the meeting of 9 May. The presentation can be accessed by following the link below. https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/03-july/the-implementation-of-augmented-and-virtual-reality-within-skills-learning.pdf?sfvrsn=a1392c15_3 Key points: • the age profile of staff was changing; • gaps in employment could be filled by retraining; and • the AR and VR systems developed were more efficient in retraining and upskilling.	
7.0	**Items for the next meeting**	
	• The standard reports for BCC and Business Support; • Rural Economy Sector Group (RESG) update;	

	• Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) update; • The two colleges in the Swindon and Wiltshire area had immersive lab environments. The Careers Hub was working to get young people into these immersive labs for a work experience.	
8.0	**AOB**	
	RFi advised the meeting of forthcoming meetings to be held shortly by Wiltshire Council: • an information webinar scheduled for 11 July regarding the UKSPF grant programme; and • a further "Doing Business with us" procurement meeting set for 18 July. **Action: RFi to contact TB for promotion of these events.**	**July 2023**
	Date and time of next meeting	
	Next meeting: Monday, 18 September 2023 – 1pm to 3pm Online via Teams **Future Dates for 2023:** Monday, 6 November 2023 – 2pm to 4pm Business Cyber Centre, Unit 7, Greenways Business Park, Chippenham, SN15 1BN	
	Meeting closed at 2.46pm	

Alison North

Chair BES-G

25 September 2023