



Membership

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Tom Marshall (TM)	SWLEP	✓
Alison North (AN)	SWLEP Board Deputy Chair	✓
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP, Acting CEO	✓
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Prof Ian White (IW)	SWLEP Board Director	Apologies

Guest(s)	David Dewart (DD) - Swindon Borough Council ✓ Rachel Finlay (RFi), Rory Bowen (RB) - Wiltshire Council ✓ Tim Burghes (TB) ✓ / Ian Lloyd (IL) ✓ - 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 1.02pm. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes and Matters Arising	
	<p>Minutes from the meeting 3 July 2023 were approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachel Finlay to contact Tim Burghes for promotion of events for UKSPF and “Doing Business with us”. Dates now passed. <i>Update: although these initial dates had passed, there were two more workshop events coming up in the Autumn for “Doing Business with us” and further UKSPF events and spin offs the information for which would be shared when available.</i> <p>Action: RFi to share with TB when available for SWLEP to promote.</p> <p>The other Matter Arising was in train.</p>	
3.0	Governance: Subgroup merger	
	DS spoke to the paper and explained the rationale for merging the Business Environment Subgroup with the Ideas, Infrastructure & Place (IIP) Subgroup to the	



	<p>meeting. The proposal had already been discussed at the IIP Subgroup meeting on 13 September and the group was in favour of the merger.</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/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/18-sept/subgroup-merger.pdf?sfvrsn=2a0900b5_3</p> <p>Given the progress on the priorities within the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), merging the Subgroups at this time seemed appropriate and would result in savings in time and effort. Valuable work was still being delivered.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion regarding how the SME Champion role could be reflected in the agenda for example digital communications for SMEs. The Chair thought that a review of the SME Champion role would be beneficial.</p> <p>DS indicated that an update on Project Gigabit had been requested from Wiltshire Council for this meeting as digital connectivity was an important and ongoing issue for some communities. RB fed back that the project was progressing, and two areas were currently out to tender. The January meeting would be a better time to update to the Subgroup.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that the proposed name for the new combined Subgroup would be “Business, Ideas and Place”.</p> <p>Governance would need to be amended slightly because of this change.</p> <p>Action: DS to amend Governance Framework if accepted by the Board.</p> <p>The Business Environment Subgroup: AGREED to merge its activities with the Infrastructure, Ideas and Places Subgroup; and Would recommend to the SWLEP Board that the merger of the Subgroups be approved.</p>	<p>26 Nov 2023</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Business Cyber Centre (BCC) Performance Report</p>	
	<p>TM presented to the meeting on the latest status of the BCC and 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/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/18-sept/20230918-swlep-bcc-bes-update.pdf?sfvrsn=2deea870_3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants were from a range of organisations and sectors, predominantly within defence and security, with some financial and professional services. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of organisations ranged from micros and SMEs up to headline companies. • A discussion was underway with two prospective tenants which were looking at joining the BCC in January which would mean the lettable office space would be full. • Attention had now shifted to fully utilising the event space on the top floor. • A new General Manager was starting on 9 October. • SWLEP had received funding in July to run the Cyber Cluster for another year albeit with reduced funding. A work experience day was being planned with Wiltshire College & University Centre and Quartercloud based in Cirencester for a crisis simulation day. In addition, the Unlock Cyber event in October would be held at the Institute of Technology (IoT) in Swindon. Employers would bring stands, games and sessions etc, giving students an opportunity to meet employers. This could also be rolled out in March 2024 enhancing the work of the Swindon & Wiltshire Careers Hub. <p>The Business Environment Subgroup: NOTED the contents of the presentation.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Business Support report</p>	
	<p>CS spoke to the paper and updated the meeting on the status and progress of the following programmes within business support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Growth Hub; • Inward Investment; • Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) loans; and • Business Intelligence Reports (reflect on business trading conditions and the support given by the GH/portal use). <p>Key points mentioned included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £261,000 had been allocated for core Growth Hub activities which was £30,000 increase on last year; • the Growth Hub was now managing the transition from the SME Competitive programme to continue levels of service maintained by SWLEP's reserves, including inward investment support. Good levels of engagement with businesses on the patch continued; • The Business Festival would take place on 15 November and 126 registrants had signed already signed up to attend; • there were 26 GPIF loans out at present and the fund was almost fully allocated with a pipeline of businesses when capital monies are repaid; and • SWLEP and Wiltshire Council had a meeting planned for Friday to discuss core funded Growth Hub activities. <p>The Business Environment Subgroup: NOTED the contents of the report.</p>	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>SME Competitive Programme Summative Assessment</p>	



	<p>CS gave a presentation summarising Summative Assessment of the SME Competitiveness Programme. The report had been quality assured and signed off by DLUHC.</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/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/18-sept/erdf-sme-competitiveness-project-summative-assessment---final-v2.pdf?sfvrsn=8307f758_3</p> <p>The Subgroup was alerted to the c.2000 hours of support provided which could not be claimed because they fell below the three-hour threshold. These were predominantly COVID-support grant enquiries. Overall, the report was very positive and can be accessed using the following link.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/business-environment-subgroup---main-meeting/2023/18-sept/erdf-sme-competitiveness-project-summative-assessment---final-v2.pdf?sfvrsn=8307f758_3</p> <p>CS offered his thanks to Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council as well as other stakeholders for their support, particularly at the start of the programme.</p> <p>The Business Environment Subgroup: noted the contents of the presentation.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>The Business Intelligence & Network Group (BING) agenda</p>	
	<p>DS spoke to the meeting and outlined the thinking behind the reason for the discussion. The BING meetings had originally been established for the sharing of business intelligence but had of late become one-sided. SWLEP was looking to refresh how BING worked in order to add value to all participants and a short questionnaire would be issued to BING members to gather their views and encourage the two-way dialogue, discussion and debate and add vitality.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council indicated that they would need its own group like BING as a part of its UKSPF programme for business support delivery.</p>	
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Items for the next meeting</p>	
	<p>With the Board's approval for the merger of the two subgroups, the next meeting would combine items from both the IIP and BE subgroups.</p> <p>AN would be the Chair of the combined Subgroup, and SWLEP Directors Suzanne Wigmore and Tom Harrison would sit as Deputy Chairs.</p>	



9.0	AOB	
	None	
	Date and time of next meeting	
	Next meeting: To be confirmed. Future Dates for 2024: To be confirmed.	
	Meeting closed at 2.19pm	

Alison North

Alison North - Chair BE-SG

16 November 2023