



Membership

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Rory Bowen (RB) and / or Rachel Finlay (RFi)	Wiltshire Council	Apologies (RB) ✓
Richard Bell (RBe) and / or Dave Dewart (DD)	Swindon Borough Council	Apologies (RBe)
Tom Harrison (TH)	SWLEP Board	Apologies
Victoria Moloney (VM)	Wiltshire Council	Apologies
Tom Marshall (TM)	SWLEP	✓
Alison North (AN) - Chair	SWLEP Board	✓
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP CEO	✓
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Prof Ian White (IW)	SWLEP Board	Apologies
Suzanne Wigmore (SW)	SWLEP Board	✓

Guest(s)	SWLEP Comms Tim Burghes (TB) ✓ Chris Parsons (CP) ✓ – Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities (DLUHC) South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC) / West of England Cluster Rhianydd Griffith (RG) ✓
Chair	Alison North (AN)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via video / teleconference call
Start time	1pm
Finish Time	2.15pm

1.0	Welcome, Introductions and Conflicts of Interest	Date
	The meeting opened at 1.03pm. The Chair welcomed attendees and particular welcome was extended to Rhianydd Griffith West of England Industrial Decarbonisation Cluster for joining the group today. Apologies were noted. No additional Conflicts of Interest were declared.	
2.0	Minutes and Matters Arising	
	The Minutes from the meeting of 9 January 2024 were approved.	



	The Matter arising was ongoing.	
3.0	SWIC / Western of England Cluster	
	<p>Rhianydd Griffith presented to the meeting on the West of England Industrial Decarbonisation Cluster. 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/2024/8-march-2024/20240308-decarbonisation-cluster.pdf?sfvrsn=20ad0a2c_5</p> <p>DS introduced the item and explained that she and Rhi had met whilst she had been on secondment with the Western Gateway through business engagement activity to bid to UKRI's Local Dispersed Industrial Decarbonisation Plan. Together they had brokered a bidding collaboration bringing together industry networks, local authorities, universities and the private sector to submit a joint bid. The hub was the industrial area at Severnside and Bristol Port. Spokes included opportunities for Swindon and Wiltshire and Gloucestershire to be involved in this hub and spoke model. The plan would compliment work undertaken by the South Wales Industrial Cluster through round one of funding, completing coverage for the Western Gateway area. Funding had been awarded in October 2023, but had only just been publicly launched. RG was now onboard as the project lead.</p> <p>The aim was to support the big carbon emitters first, thereby reducing carbon emissions quickly and in large quantities. Applications could then be used by smaller companies.</p> <p>The Subgroup offered to make introductions to stakeholders and partnerships including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Western Gateway Subnational Transport Body concerned with decarbonisation of both passenger and freight traffic. Although PG was aware of the Rail Vision of the "other" Western Gateway, she had not engaged directly with this transport group; and• iCAST, the research gateway in Swindon, with a re-introduction to RG. <p>The question was raised about obsolescence. If things moved on fast enough, this reduced the asset life of the equipment. The Cluster would help and support businesses to make choices which would last. The Cluster would also like to work with smaller businesses, particularly within the sectors of transport and logistics and the food and beverage industries and aggregate demand across all technologies. A survey was due to be issued in April.</p> <p>The NetZero agenda lent itself to collaboration outside Local Authority borders for scale and connectivity and there were opportunities for Swindon and Wiltshire to become an active spoke.</p>	



	<p>A stakeholder calendar was being produced for those organisations which had sent letters of support to keep them updated on developments. Attendees were also advised to monitor social media channels and to sign up to SevernNet to receive updates on activity. SevernNet was operating as the marketing/communications company for this project.</p> <p>RG was thanked for her interesting presentation. The Subgroup was glad to hear about the project and offered help to assist with communicating opportunities for local businesses to become involved.</p>	
4.1	BCC update	
	<p>TM presented to the meeting on the status and progress of the BCC and the Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster.</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/2024/8-march-2024/20240308-swlep-bcc-bes-update.pdf?sfvrsn=eb6f295f_3</p> <p>The BCC was nearly two years old and as of March 2024 it was fully occupied. Onboarding of recent tenant's employees had gone smoothly, and staff appeared happy with the work environment. The BCC had received good publicity about the company's arrival and had office enquiries beyond current capacity and was now operating a waiting list. Focus now was on marketing the event space on the top floor and this was also picking up traction.</p> <p>A series of events had been organised within the Swindon and Wiltshire Cyber Cluster and the Growth Hub team. Periculo Melksham, a cyber security firm aiming to help SMEs, together with the Police Cyber Protect Team had run an activity at the BCC with a cyber escape room to demonstrate the importance of cyber security. The next event was due to take place in Salisbury and then later in Swindon.</p> <p>The next Cyber ICE event, version 3.0, was scheduled to take place at iCAST in Swindon on 21 May and 15-18 people had already signed up.</p> <p>Franco's Café & Deli had now been operating for a year. It had been a huge success with its quality offer, not just for the members of the BCC but was fast becoming a community asset, attracting not only residents on Greenways Business Park, but also from further afield in Chippenham. The café was now employing additional people and was keen to do more.</p> <p>Congratulations were offered to the team for increasing the building's reputation.</p>	
4.2	Business support	



	<p>CS presented to the meeting on the current status of business support. This included the Growth Hub, the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) and inward investment. 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/2024/8-march-2024/buisness-ideas-place-buisness-support-update-mar-24.pdf?sfvrsn=6f6a424d_3</p> <p>Key points made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enquires into the Growth Hub were still high, and more than 40% were regarding start-up businesses;• applications to the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) had been paused to enable the capital fund to replenish and the pipeline of enquiries was still strong; and• the Growth Hub continued to supply information to the Department of Trade on enquires into the area, even though no funding was received. <p>There was a brief discussion regarding the Spring Budget and the impact on the business community and some anecdotal feedback was shared from recent business engagement events, the main focus of which had been on raising local rather than national issues.</p>	
5.0	Items for the next meeting and AOB	
	Bring forward for future discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• England's Economic Heartland update	
	Date and time of next meeting	
	Not applicable.	
	Meeting closed at 2.12pm	