

Date: Wednesday, 3 November 2021

Time: 10am – 11.30am

Venue: via Microsoft Teams call

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
David Andrews (DA)	VisitWiltshire	Apologies
Charlotte Boole (CB)	Greenway Training	✓
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	✓
Sarah Dyke (SD)	Wiltshire Council	
Julian Head (JH)	Wiltshire Council	✓
Ruth Lambert (RL)	FSB	✓
Geraldine McKibben (GMck)	Consultant	✓
Gary Mantle (GM)	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	
Thomas Mason (TM)	CLA	✓
John Matthews (JM)	Pinkney Park	Apologies
James Miles-Hobbs (JM-H)	JMH Farming and Renewables	Apologies
Andy Parsons (AP)	Cotswolds AONB	Apologies
Harry Tipple (HT)	Community First	✓
Paul Walton (PW)	New Forest NPA	
Caroline Wheatley-Hubbard (CW-H)	Boyton Farm	✓
Andrea Witcombe (AW)	NFU	Apologies
Claire Wright (CW)	CLA	
SWLEP: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Claire Alexander (CA)	SWLEP	Apologies
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓joined 10.30am
Phil Clement (PC)	SWLEP	Apologies

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Dragana Houston (DH)	SWLEP	Apologies
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	✓
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Guest(s)	Brea Woods (BW)	
Chair	Debby Skellern (DS)	
Notes	Deborah House (DKH)	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	The meeting opened at 10.02am. DS welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that she would be chairing as PB was attending an All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting regarding skills provision and rural productivity. He would join the meeting when he was able. Apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes from 21 July 2021	
2.1	The minutes from the meeting on 21 July 2021 were read and approved.	
2.2	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Great West Way – nature tourism travel guide. DA and GM to discuss outside the meeting. BRING FORWARD FOR NEXT MEETING. Owing to the time lapse, this Matter Arising will be omitted. The Great West Way and the DCMS Review of Destination Management organisations (DMOs) update to bring forward for future meeting. DA was unable to attend the meeting, so did not present the item. PB gave an update. See Item 3.0. Rural Productivity - TM offered to speak to a future meeting when the results of the APPG were available. Any update? PB gave brief update at Item 7.0. PB to invite the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) to present to a future meeting. COMPLETED. The local representative for NICRE had been contacted and would present at the meeting on 2 February 2022. 	

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4.0	Peer Networks	
	<p>The item taken out of order.</p> <p>As a result of a discussion between the Growth Hub Peer Networks and NFU arising from a previous meeting, BW presented to the meeting on the Peer Networks programme. The presentation can be accessed by using the following link.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2021/03-nov-2021/peer-networks-presentation-november-2021---send-out.pdf?sfvrsn=ad502960_4</p>	
5.0	Natural Capital - PhD study	
	<p>The presenter was unable to attend.</p> <p>Action: Carry forward to next meeting in February. Action: DS to check PM's availability.</p>	Feb 2022
6.0	Wider discussion and topics for future meetings	
	<p>Topics for future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Capital; • carbon neutral tourism; • carbon sequestration; and • tree planting; • National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE); and • Wiltshire Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. <p>JH added that Wiltshire Council was working on its Business Plans for the blue and green infrastructure and the NetZero agenda but was waiting for the Levelling Up White Paper before it went before Wiltshire Council's Cabinet. The vision was set to achieve high level desirable outcomes with community engagement which would empower them to make the necessary decisions. Smaller focus groups would be working on particular issues and delegated funding would engender community-led development. The documentation would come to SWLEP sometime between now and February for its views. JH would bring the results back to this meeting when available.</p> <p>Action: JH to bring results of consultation back to the meeting.</p> <p>Plan for Growth DS advised the meeting that the Plan for Growth Working Group had met and had started planning the strategy and how SWLEP would respond. The Plan</p>	When available

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	<p>would be aligned to that of Government and would evolve from the SWLEP's Local Industrial Strategy. The item would be discussed at the next meeting of the RESG.</p> <p>A question was raised about the Local Nature Recovery (LNR) Strategy and biodiversity net gain. It was requested it ensure that enough people from farming backgrounds were represented.</p> <p>Action: JH to revert with note on Wiltshire Council intent.</p> <p>Other items which members would like considered for future meetings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rural infrastructure, where the area stood nationally and what was planned for the future for Broadband, mobile and road networks. These had a huge impact on the performance of rural businesses and the recruitment and retention of their staff; and • energy infrastructure for rural Wiltshire with issues around the electricity grid as a limiting factor as the Government was pushing on the use of heat pump renewable heating options and electric cars. 	<p>Feb 2022</p> <p>Nov 2021</p>
7.0	AOB	
	<p>PB joined meeting and gave an update from the APPG on Rural Productivity meeting which was focused this time on skills. There had been discussion on skills training and whether you should take the training to the population or bring the population to the training.</p> <p>Farming practices were changing with an increasing use of technology. Technological skills were changing the nature of farming and linked industries and re-skilling and up-skilling would be needed. This was an opportunity to level-up the rural population with that of the urban population, although access to training and skills qualifications in the rural environment was more problematic. Less investment in rural areas restricted opportunities and access, although the National Capital PhD project would give a monetary value to the area's natural assets and would increase the Cost Benefit Analysis calculations used to feed into investment opportunities/Business Cases in future. The Governmental push on apprenticeships and T-levels would mean an increase in the demand for work placements, but in the rural environment, this would still be dependent on businesses being there to offer these placements and students being able to access the work and learning opportunities. This was a significant equality issue.</p> <p>There was recognition that those working in agriculture could rarely survive as a family, without the dependence of other family members working within the rural economy in other jobs; 95% of the rural economy was not agriculture.</p> <p>The rural environment was still struggling with the impact of Brexit on the</p>	

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	<p>available workforce for crop and food collection. The reason why foreign workers came to the UK was that the home population did not want to carry out this type of work.</p> <p>There is a useful resource to access research into agri-food policy and practice, The National Library of Agri-food. (https://www.nlaf.uk/Library/home/home.aspx)</p> <p>Action: bring the item back to the meeting when the report from the APPG on Rural Productivity was published.</p>	When available
3.0	Great West Way and the DCMS review of destination management organisations (DMOs) update	
	<p>Taken out of order. Refer to Item 2.2.</p> <p>DA was unable to attend the meeting, so PB gave a brief outline of the item. Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) were currently subject to review and the report had been submitted to the Department for a response. The structure was likely to be the establishment of Tourist Boards covering large areas with strategic and response bodies reporting into these Tourist Boards, encouraging councils and LEs with tourism sectors to play their part in local economic development of the area for the likes of hospitality, tourism, and food production. The challenge was that this had been an independent review and therefore not bound to be Government policy. Changes were coming but what that would mean for VisitWiltshire was uncertain.</p>	
	<p>Attendees were thanked for their contributions to the debate.</p> <p>Next meeting: Wednesday, 2 February – 10am to 11.30am</p> <p>Future dates Wednesday, 11 May - 10am to 11.30am Wednesday, 20 July - 10am to 11.30am Wednesday, 2 November - 10am to 11.30am</p>	
	Meeting closed at 11am	

Paddy Bradley

2 February 2022

Item 6.0: Wider discussion and topics for future meetings

Response received from Julian Head regarding question on Local Nature Recovery Strategy

I thought I'd update you with information from Lynn Trigwell at Wiltshire Council, who is leading work on biodiversity and environment.

The approach to Nature Recovery Networks is still in development. The Council closed its consultation on its green (and blue) infrastructure strategy a few weeks ago, and the information will be used to inform the work for Nature Recovery Networks. The NRNs will form a large part of the approach on biodiversity within the strategy, and eventually it will become part of planning process.

The Council is awaiting decisions from Defra on whether it will be the responsible body for the NRNs, but as this is likely, it is pressing ahead with gathering information, evidence and using these to create maps and tools. These maps will declare the areas that will receive protections and enhancement, and the idea is to link-up already protected sites with new sites, as per Environment Bill, creating zones and corridors that are hotspots for biodiversity.

There are no decisions yet on governance, or the exact places and locations for recovery, but the consultation and furthermore detailed work will inform that part of the process. Eventually, developers will need to recognise NRNs and provide funding, in a similar way to s106, where a new development creates a net deficit. The funds (hopefully invested in the local NRN) will offset *net loss* developments by investing by improving existing, and creating new, sites so as to reach a net benefit for biodiversity for the development. Some conventions are needed on valuation of biodiversity and costs to developers.

Clearly, there will need to be an approach to governance which is inclusive and knowledgeable – and linked to planning. I have not invited Lynn to the RESG as I don't think she has all the information we need, due to the Bill still going through and Defra not yet being decisive. But we should keep this on the agenda, and perhaps I can get an update prior to each meeting, and at some point, probably early-ish in new year, once Defra has decided what it wants to do, we should hear more about the scheme, perhaps directly from Lynn or a colleague.

It is not the same as carbon trading, though there are similarities, but it is not to be linked to using farmland to sink carbon in some sort of new UK trading scheme, which the group discussed at its previous meeting.