

Date: Wednesday, 21 July 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	✓
Sarah Dyke (SD)	Wiltshire Council	Apologies
Julian Head (JH)	Wiltshire Council	✓
Lynn Gibson (LG)	Community First	Apologies
Ruth Lambert (RL)	FSB	Apologies
Geraldine McKibben (GMcK)	Consultant	✓
Gary Mantle (GM)	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Apologies
Thomas Mason (TM)	CLA	✓
John Matthews (JM)	Pinkney Park	✓
James Miles-Hobbs (JM-H)	JMH Farming and Renewables	Apologies
Andy Parsons (AP)	Cotswolds AONB	Apologies
Paul Walton (PW)	New Forest NPA	Apologies
Caroline Wheatley-Hubbard (CW-H)	Boyton Farm	Apologies
Andrea Witcombe (AW)	NFU	✓
Claire Wright (CW)	CLA	Apologies
SWLEP: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed		
Claire Alexander (CA)	SWLEP	Apologies
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓
Phil Clement (PC)	SWLEP	✓

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Lewis Durling (LD)	SWLEP	✓
Dragana Houston (DH)	SWLEP	✓
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	✓
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
Guest(s)		
Chair	Paddy Bradley (PB)	
Notes	Deborah House (DKH)	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	The meeting opened at 10.05am. PB welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes from 8 June 2021	
2.1	The minutes from the meeting on 8 June 2021 were read and approved.	
2.2	Matters arising <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 	
3.0	Great West Way and the DCMS review of destination management organisations (DMOs) update	
	DA was unable to attend the meeting, so the item would be discussed at the following meeting.	
4.0	Rural Productivity – the Rural Powerhouse campaign	
	TM presented to the meeting about the Rural Powerhouse campaign outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> four key reasons for the countryside’s lower productivity; the CLA’s five keys to success; six key themes that the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Rural Business was looking into. These were connectivity, planning, land use, skills, tax and government process. 	

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	<p>The presentation can be found by following the link. https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/appg-rural-powerhouse-presentation-for-resg.pdf?sfvrsn=fff29b45_4</p> <p>TM offered to speak at a future meeting about the results of the APPG when available.</p> <p>Attendees discussed the topic of rural productivity and points raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there was a lack of information about salaries and packages available in the rural sector to attract high calibre staff. For example, tractor operators could earn £40,000 per year; • to encourage ex-service leavers into the forestry and agriculture sectors; • to increase promotion of the sector. Most farmers tended to come into the industry by family association or it was seen as a lifestyle choice; • needed to encourage people from outside to join the industry, showing a clear career progression; • investment in the education sector was needed. PB and TM had been at Wiltshire College & University Centre's Lackham campus seeing the new robotic dairy etc, but this had been possible owing to capital investment from the Local Growth Fund; • the training and skills system had been too dependent on making capital bids for industry standard equipment. More businesses should be involved in the provision of equipment to keep the learning current and appropriate. The links between education and businesses were crucial. <p>The question was raised as to the reasons why rural productivity was 18% behind urban areas. In response, reasons were given as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of high value skills in the sector; • poor connectivity in rural areas to good broadband, which inhibited growth. Successful farms were now making use of automated systems; • farmers had become reliant on Direct Payments for their livelihoods; moving away from this subsidy would force landowners and farmers to focus more on productivity by becoming more efficient. • more traditional farmers may move away from food production to looking after the planet by saving carbon thus reducing overall productivity; and • PB advised that the economic methodology used was a factor. The value associated with the output was generally lower and with a fairly high number of low to middle income earners and fewer high incomes, the productivity was assessed as lower than average. SWLEP was co-sponsoring a PhD student at the University of Bath who was working 	<p>TBA</p>

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	<p>on a project to work out a methodology to value Swindon and Wiltshire's natural assets - Natural Capital and the value of the services operating from that natural capital.</p> <p>The National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) based at the University of Newcastle was now established. There was already a Centre for Cities, and the rural sector needed a parallel organisation to work on its behalf to provide comparable data. It received significant Government funding. LEPs with significant rural economies like SWLEP – Gfirst, North East LEP and Coventry & Warwickshire LEP - were network partners.</p> <p>Action: PB to invite the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) to present to a future meeting.</p>	<p>Aug 2021</p>
5.0	<p>Agriculture's role in net zero / carbon capture</p>	
	<p>AW spoke to the meeting about agriculture's role in net-zero and carbon capture and the various NFU policy documents available. The links to these documents are given below:</p> <p>NFU Achieving Net Zero https://www.nfuonline.com/nfu-online/business/regulation/achieving-net-zero-farmings-2040-goal/</p> <p>NFU 26 Case Studies https://www.nfuonline.com/nfu-online/science-and-environment/climate-change/doing-our-bit-for-net-zero-130820/</p> <p>NFU Net Zero Guide for Local Authorities https://www.nfuonline.com/nfu-online/science-and-environment/net-zero-and-agriculture-a-guide-for-local-authorities/</p> <p>Farming and farmers were key players in reducing carbon emissions. AW highlighted some points about agriculture in the UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK farmers produce high quality food to high welfare standards • They were asked to manage the environment whilst tasked with food production • The UK landscape offered recreational and cultural needs = natural capital • Extreme weather patterns would dictate the types of food to grow and the animals to farm • Agriculture contributed 10% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. • Significant contribution of which was from methane and nitrous oxide, that is, fertilizer application 	

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	<p>NFU's three key pillars were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to improve food productivity; • to boost carbon storage; and • to increase renewables energy generation. <p>This could be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping farmers to produce more food, in smarter ways, using fewer inputs and thereby reducing emissions; • better soil management; • better land management, for example, reducing soil runoff; • changing practices like ploughing to zero till methods; • the majority of methane produced by farming came from livestock cattle, so improve breeding and productivity of individual cattle; • better managed soil within peat bogs and woodlands would lead to increased carbon capture; • being smarter with energy use, for example, reducing ploughing and tractor passes; • moving towards sustainable farming, including diversification; and • moving to renewable energy, displacing fossil fuel use and creating assets to trade. <p>NFU was asking the Government to set baseline standards in order that the sector could work towards them. Grant funding schemes would be crucial to encourage take-up and maintain income. Farmers had a massive role to play in reducing carbon emissions but needed support to do this. Smaller farms needed carbon trading advice as this was a complex subject and difficult to understand. A discussion was needed on how this trading would actually work. A carbon market within the City of London had been suggested. What would be the form of this trading mechanism? And carbon trading would in no way make up for bad practices.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that business planning skills within farming was low. AW advised that there were forums, but these were aimed at commodities, not business planning. SWLEP offered support and thought a cohort within Peer Networks may be the way forward.</p> <p>Action: Meeting off-line with AW / TM / CS / CB / BW to shape that provision and bring back to meeting.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council was due to launch its Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Formal consultations were imminent. Attendees were requested to feed into that consultation.</p>	<p>Aug/Sept 2021</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Wider discussion and topics for future meetings</p>	

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	<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>Attendees were thanked for their contributions to the debate.</p>	
7.0	AOB	
	Meeting closed at 11.21am.	
	<p>Next meeting: Wednesday, 3 November 2021 at 10am</p> <p>Future dates End January 2022 – to be confirmed End April 2022 – to be confirmed End July 2022 – to be confirmed</p>	

Paddy Bradley

3 November 2021