

Date: Wednesday, 2 February 2022

Time: 10am – 11.30am

Venue: via Microsoft Teams call

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



Guest(s)	Prof Janet Dwyer (JD), National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) ✓ Parsa Mohammadpour (PM) ✓ and Dr Maik Schneider ✓
Chair	Paddy Bradley (PB)
Notes	Deborah House (DKH)

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	The meeting opened at 10.03.am. PB welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes from 3 November 2021	
2.1	The minutes from the meeting on 3 November 2021 were read and approved.	
2.2	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the Rural Productivity All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) when available. TM to advise. Update: PB had not seen any report as yet. <p>Action: DKH to send email to TM to ascertain status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JH to bring results of Wiltshire Council's consultation on the Business Plans for the blue and green infrastructure and NetZero agenda when available. JH to advise. Update: the strategies for the blue and green infrastructure were with the Council's Cabinet. The link to the papers is provided below. Pages 267-450 refers. <p>https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/g13780/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2001-Feb-2022%2010.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10</p> <p>The Climate Action Plans for each council was independently assessed by Climate Emergency UK. https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/</p> <p>The individual links to the scorecards can be found below.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/councils/wiltshire-council/</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/councils/swindon-borough-council/</p>	Feb 2022

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	<p>RB advised that Wiltshire Council had published its draft Business Plan 2022-2032. The document can be accessed by following the link below.</p> <p>https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/5755/Wiltshire-Council-unveils-its-new-business-plan-outlining-its-strategy-for-the-next-10-years</p> <p>This included high-level themes, which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevention and early intervention; • improving social mobility and tackling inequalities; • understanding communities; and • working together. <p>More information should be available by the next meeting in May.</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council's Plan 2022-2025 can be assessed by using the link below.</p> <p>http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s121924/02%20Appendix%20One%20Council%20Plan%202022-2025%20-%20FINAL.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JH to revert with note on Wiltshire Council's intent on Local Nature Recovery Strategy. COMPLETED. Update: Lynn Trigwell, who was responsible for this area of work, was happy to attend this meeting to update on the recovery strategy. <p>Action: to invite to the meeting on 20 July meeting.</p>	<p>Feb 2022</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) presentation</p>	
	<p>Prof Janet Dwyer presented to the meeting and advised that the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) was a collaboration of the Centre for Rural Economy and Newcastle Business School, the Countryside and Community Research Institute at Gloucestershire and Royal Agriculture Universities and the Enterprise Research Centre at Warwick University. 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/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2022/02-feb-2022/nicre-sore-swlep-mtg.pdf?sfvrsn=a39e5b5b_4</p> <p>The collaboration had been awarded funding in 2018 to start in work in 2020 and the aim was to raise the profile of rural enterprise and process of innovation within a rural context.</p> <p>There were three work strands:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the evidence base; • innovation, projects and networks; and • influencing policy to try to improve the environment. <p>At present, more work had been carried out on the research front than the other streams. The State of Rural Enterprise Survey 2021 was launched during the pandemic in the Northeast, West Midlands and the Southwest areas, gathering data from 1,000s of farming and non-farming businesses. The first publication was now available and can be accessed by using the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2022/02-feb-2022/nicre-state-of-rural-enterprise-report-no-1-january-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=9f39983b_4</p> <p>Dialogue had been carried out with LEPs and the Rural Impacts Stakeholder Forum (RISF) to design the survey and an agency was contracted to interview a selection of rural enterprises.</p> <p>Questions raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how did you measure innovation within small firms? <i>Response: this was qualitative, not quantitative. Firms were asked what they thought they had done differently or what was it they had which was new.</i> • what were the skills gaps in these enterprises? Were there more shortages in labour supply? How were the skills gaps being reduced? <i>Response: skills and recruitment were particular issues for rural, small businesses, but not the bigger corporates. The resource areas were larger and challenges greater.</i> • how were these businesses structured? How many were family owned? <i>Response: more rural businesses were family owned than those in urban areas.</i> • were you compiling what rural businesses were doing on the environmental front? They were more advanced on the green agenda as they were more aware of the issues and particularly vulnerable to climate change. <i>Response: biodiversity and water were increasing in importance.</i> <p>Further analysis of this data was needed. More targeted work could be commissioned, and a revised survey would be going out again in 2023. A request was made as to whether we would be allowed to view data sets and whether we could input to the revised survey as we would be interested in specific results for Swindon and Wiltshire.</p> <p>JD stated that infrastructure issues in particular would be investigated more deeply. Rural businesses had not been on the BEIS radar in the past, so one of NICRE's roles was to educate the department in this regard</p> <p>NICRE had been established to act as a rural equivalent to the Centre for Cities.</p>	

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	<p>JD was thanked for her interesting presentation, and she offered to attend future meetings to update on progress.</p>	
4.0	Natural Capital - PhD study	
	<p>PM presented to the meeting on the six-month progress of his PhD study of Natural Capital.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2022/02-feb-2022/natural-capital-(resg).pdf?sfvrsn=7d645f49_4</p> <p>Comments made were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no estimation given of the extent of quality of habitats. <i>Response: value of initial stock was cited and would be expanded later in the study. Environmental quality would be factored in and captured.</i> <p>Action: PB to follow up with GM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From a SWLEP perspective, understanding the natural capital was very important within Swindon and Wiltshire; its impact on strategy and inward investment such as why companies stayed here and why people liked to live here. PB advised the meeting that SWLEP was sponsoring this PhD Study in order to gather the evidence base about the natural capital in the SWLEP area. At present there was no consistent methodology for applying a value to natural capital. We can compare with other areas when the methodology was made robust and what implications that would mean to business cases and local planning policy. SWLEP wanted this study to be influential with this LEP and across the country. Were there any opportunities to quantify the benefits provided for Health & Wellbeing? How would nutrient flows and recycling be picked up? <i>Response: Layer 2, which was outside the current scope of ONS, but it was now being scoped out for the study and ONS was looking at how it collected data.</i> <p>Discussion also covered the value of natural assets which did decline over time but in some instances, they can gain value. Our focus on asset growth and decline is also over a long timescale, much greater than is used in current business case methodology.</p> <p>The Study would provide the evidence demonstrating how important the rural economy was. PM was thanked for his informative presentation.</p>	<p>Feb 2022</p>

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5.0	Plan for Growth update	
	<p>DS presented to the meeting on the current status of the Plan for Growth and the process to be employed. The presentation can be found by following the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2022/02-feb-2022/plan-for-growth-020222.pdf?sfvrsn=2c8926b8_4</p>	
6.0	AOB	
	<p>GM mentioned that the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust would be able to present a session on the Bristol Avon catchments trading environmental credits at the next meeting on 11 May.</p> <p>JH advised the meeting that Wiltshire Council would be making two types of grants for COVID response and for members to check the website.</p>	
	<p>Attendees were thanked for their contributions to the debate.</p> <p>Next meeting: Wednesday, 11 May - 10am to 11.30am</p> <p>Future dates Wednesday, 20 July - 10am to 11.30am Wednesday, 2 November - 10am to 11.30am</p>	
	Meeting closed at 11.29am	

Paddy Bradley

12 May 2022