

 Swindon & Wiltshire LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP	Minutes of Infrastructure, Ideas and Place (IIP) Subgroup Meeting 6 July 2022
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Date: Wednesday, 6 July 2022

Time: 10am – 12 noon

Venue: via Microsoft Teams call

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	✓ Left at 11.30am
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓
Phil Clement (PC)	SWLEP	✓
David Dewart	Swindon Borough Council	
Tom Harrison (TH)	PA Consulting	✓
Prof Maik Schneider (MS)	University of Bath	✓
Pam Webb (PWe)	SWLEP Director	Joined at 10.18am
Suzanne Wigmore (SW)	SWLEP Director	✓
Guest(s)	Emma Carpenter (EC), Wiltshire Council ✓ James Slade (JS), IMSM Ltd ✓ – left meeting at 11am	
Chair	Suzanne Wigmore (SW)	
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	The meeting opened at 10.01am. SW welcomed everyone to the meeting and particular welcome was extended to James Slade from IMSM Ltd who was joining the meeting as an observer. Introductions were made and apologies noted.	
2.0	Minutes and Matters arising	
2.1	Approval of minutes from 7 March 2022. There was no meeting in May.	
2.2	Matters Arising: There were no matters arising from the last meeting.	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
3.0 The aspects of the Delivery Plan to be overseen by the IIP Subgroup.		
3.0	<p>PB spoke to the meeting and highlighted aspects of the Delivery Plan which would be overseen by this Subgroup.</p> <p>Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Capital – the PhD Study with the University of Bath • Levelling Up agenda projects were mainly council-led • Attendance at Place Boards for Salisbury, Trowbridge, Chippenham and Swindon <p>Ideas</p> <p>The projects around Innovation Centre for Applied Sustainable Technologies (iCAST) and Innovation Campus for the Circular Economy (ICCE).</p> <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Although SWLEP was less involved in large infrastructure projects now as there was no capital pot of money, it would continue to support Broadband connectivity, the provision of new rail stations and contribute to road developments via the two Sub National Transport Bodies (SNTBs) in its area – Western Gateway and England's Economic Heartland.</p> <p>PB proposed that the Growing Places Infrastructure Fund be moved to the Business Environment Subgroup for monitoring as it was deemed a better fit. The Loan Working group was due to meet on Friday, 8 July to discuss the latest loan applications whereafter it would make recommendations to the main board.</p> <p>Decision: The group agreed to this proposal.</p> <p>RB mentioned that the Business Environment Subgroup did not have local authority representation on the group. RB would like a conversation about this and the wider business support landscape.</p> <p>Action: RB and PB to hold initial discussion.</p> <p>The 2022/2023 Delivery Plan had now been published and SWLEP was working on the 2023/2024 Delivery Plan. It was expected to have the plan ready in time for November submission to BEIS. There was an element of uncertainty about Government requirements, and it was thought there may even be a particular format / template to work to this year. In the meantime, however, SWLEP was working up the options for content. The Working Group was overseeing the development of the Delivery Plan and would provide the outline in time for the September Board. Certain elements of the content would be brought to the Subgroups for a first view.</p>	July 2022

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4.0 Ideas		
4.1	<p>Sustainable Technologies initiatives: Innovation Centre for Applied Sustainable Technologies (iCAST)</p> <p>PB spoke to the meeting and outlined the collaborative work of the University of Bath in partnership with the University of Oxford. Their geographical locations meant that the Carriage Works at Swindon would be an ideal base. Both universities had excellent reputations in the field of chemical Research & Development and were looking to develop sustainable technologies to aid recycling and reuse of materials, which aligned with SWLEP's ambitions for a net zero environment. iCAST had received funding from the Towns Fund and Research England and although operating, it did not yet have its physical location in the Carriage Works. These works were due to be completed by 2023. It was at the end of year one of its three-year funding cycle from Research England and was looking at further funding streams for what would happen next.</p>	
4.2	<p>Innovation Centre for the Circular Economy (ICCE)</p> <p>One of the stakeholders in ICCE was Recycling Technologies, which had made its first sale in Scotland for the machine which recycled waste plastic. PB was now a member of ICCE Ltd's Board, and they were working on a phased approach to development, initially looking at an area around North Star in Swindon. This was at an early stage of discussion.</p>	
4.3	<p>Proposed Westbury Site Development Group</p> <p>Discussions were also underway with Hills UK about its waste site at Westbury. This site handled Wiltshire's waste collection which was compacted and then shipped elsewhere in England and to Germany for incineration. Wiltshire Council was open to an alternative option if viable. The site at Westbury was a brown field site with incineration of the waste proposed at present to generate energy. The Environment Agency had approved the operating method for the incineration, but opposition had caused the Secretary of State to review. This review had been rejected by the Secretary of State. Wiltshire Council's Strategic Planning Team was re-evaluating the planning application and a decision is expected later in the year.</p> <p>The idea therefore was to link up all these facilities and get into commercial development of products. The waste could be used to produce hydrogen through a chemical process.</p> <p>The funding for iCAST from Research England would run out in two years and SWLEP had allocated £200,000 from Local Growth Fund monies to ICCE to develop the concept and needed to turn this into a capital project.</p>	

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	<p>It was unlikely to receive public sector money and would need private investors to proceed.</p> <p>There were a lot of interested parties to see if the project could be progressed and such a plant at North Star would create jobs and attract private investors as well as aligning to SWLEP's net zero aim. Discussions had already been held with a French investor which had shown an initial interest in the Westbury project. This project would bring high value jobs into the area and create a centre of excellence, leading to potential patents and licences.</p> <p>PB would come back to this group with updates as plans progressed.</p>	
5.0 Infrastructure		
5.1	<p>Road</p> <p>PB advised the meeting of the situation with regard to the A303. National Highways viewed the A303 as an alternative route into the Peninsula if motorways became locked as well as an important national route in its own right. However, the road had heavy traffic use at various times causing blockages travelling through Wiltshire, and particularly around Stonehenge. For years there had been talk of a tunnel under or around Stonehenge and the tunnel option had finally been chosen. However, there was a lot of opposition to this project.</p> <p>It was currently with the Secretary of State for clarification on certain aspects of the project, but National Highways had proceeded whilst awaiting the final decision to determine a preferred bidder for the £1.25bn tunnel project. A three-way European joint venture between Spanish contractor FCC, Italy's WeBuild and Austria's BeMo Tunnelling had been given preferred bidder status awaiting the outcome of the Secretary of State's decision. Throughout this process, there had been close involvement with Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>The tunnel would mean a significant impact on the local community, leading to jobs and apprenticeships. National Highways was working closely with Wiltshire Council's Skills Team on apprenticeships. It had expressed an interest for the digging equipment to be hydrogen powered. The challenge was how to furnish the area with hydrogen. The hydrogen refuelling station outside Johnson Matthey in Swindon M4 was due to be removed and it was possible it could be relocated after donation to National Highways, but there were questions of reliability to be resolved. It was important that green hydrogen was used, that is, produced from renewable sources such as solar and wind.</p>	

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	<p>There were no comparable examples where hydrogen had been used to this scale. JCB was strongly behind hydrogen in HGVs, and hydrogen powered 7-ton trucks for local distribution services into London were likely to happen next. There had been the will in the past for supply chains to create hydrogen powered plant machinery, but there had been no clients. There was always a risk at being the first. The benefits from such a scheme may take longer to be seen with upskilling, apprenticeships and the Levelling Up Agenda looking to the longer term.</p> <p>National Highways was keen for the LEPs along that route to collaborate for joint communications about the project.</p> <p>Rail</p> <p>RB presented to the meeting on the current status of the plans for the stations at Devizes and Corsham.</p> <p>Devizes Gateway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devizes Gateway had received £400,000 from the Restoring Your Railway Fund to develop the plan to an Outline Business Case (OBC) stage by March 2023 • SWLEP's Rail Strategy had cited Devizes Gateway as a potential station for development and had achieved a reasonable rating for viability if works were also carried out at Westbury. • The rail improvements at Westbury and Devizes were interconnected. • Devizes had significant cultural and heritage assets; with its own station, tourist opportunities for the town could increase and act as an alternative landing place for access to Stonehenge. <p>Action: RB to go back to Rob Murphy, Wiltshire Council, to ascertain whether there was any further support required of SWLEP.</p> <p>Corsham station</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development for the Corsham station business case was further behind than Devizes Gateway • £80,000 had been allocated to the project to develop the Strategic Outline Business Case; £50,000 from DfT and £15,000 each from Wiltshire Council and Corsham Town Council • Stakeholder meetings had been held in May and June • Letters had been issued to potentially affected landowners • Train service options were being discussed. • Atkins is leading as the transport consultant and was on track for submission to DfT in September 	<p>July 2022</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PB advised the meeting that SWLEP's Rail Strategy had outlined the possibility for Corsham as a linked necklace of towns Bristol/Bath towards Chippenham and perhaps Royal Wootton Bassett through Swindon to Oxford, potentially avoiding Didcot. 	
5.3	<p>Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) programme update PC spoke to the meeting and outlined the programme status to-date and the loan applications currently being assessed.</p> <p>Programme update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were 20 live loans One loan had been paid back in full £15m of loans had been issued so far Loans and interest were recycled and issued to more businesses £16m had been leveraged by the companies and had supported leveraging of other private money of £17.5m The businesses had good traction with other public bodies, such as Innovate UK, which attracted a further £12.5m of other public funds The number of jobs created / would be created from these businesses was 1,000 during the course of these projects PC did track these figures and had met some of those employees impacted Some of the businesses had hired from Honda after it announced its closure Case studies would be used in the annual report The Loan Working Group would meet on Friday, 8 July to make recommendations for the forthcoming board There were four projects with total loans requested of £1.2m There were another three companies in the pipeline which PC was hoping to bring to the September Board. However, the total value of loans requested was £2.75m. There might not be enough funds remaining in the GPIF pot for them to receive all they had requested. 	
5.4	<p>An in-depth look at which businesses were being supported The majority of businesses taking the loans were in manufacturing, particularly in food production, using the loans to install new equipment or to refurbish old buildings. Examples of companies receiving GPIF loans were given:</p> <p>Potts Partnership in Marlborough A company producing cooking sauces used the loan for new production lines and was expanding its products into supermarkets. The company had a strong growth curve and was starting to export. The number of staff had increased.</p> <p>Seamach Energy</p>	

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	<p>Planning decision awaited on Wroughton airfield for a new design of wind turbine.</p> <p>PRP Optoelectronics Ltd in Swindon A company developing new products for water purification. It had been heralded as a game changer and was used particularly on leisure craft. It exported globally.</p> <p>Advanced Biofuel Solutions Ltd in Swindon A company manufacturing hydrogen and involved in a project with Wales and West Utilities to add 1% hydrogen to the gas supply in Swindon.</p> <p>Clinical Partners in Wiltshire A company providing mental health services. It used the loan to develop IT products and was now linked to NHS service provision. Patients could now access the relevant service through their GP. Since the pandemic, its service had expanded significantly. The company had received two loans from SWLEP.</p> <p>The benefit for the companies of taking a GPIF loan was that they may not be successful from other sources, as banks etc were more risk adverse. Two independent advisors worked with us on the Working Group, one previously at a high street bank and the other a private investor. Their input was greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Many referrals were directed by Business Navigators in day-to-day enquires from businesses looking for assistance from the Growth Hub. PB added that SWLEP had contributed further money to this GPIF pot from the Government's initial fund from interest accrued and some LGF unspent funding. These loans were having a real impact on the business landscape as well as being an important asset for SWLEP.</p>	
5.5	<p>Porton Science Park EC presented to the meeting on the current status of the Porton Science Park, with Phase 2 nearing completion and future development for the remaining land.</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/infrastructure-ideas-and-place-subgroup/2022/06-jul/porton-presentation---6-july-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=72eafad5_4</p> <p>Businesses using Porton on the whole did not lend themselves to home working, so had remained on site and open for the duration of the pandemic</p>	

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	<p>lockdown; some of them being heavily involved in the treatment and products for COVID-19.</p> <p>Businesses involved in health & life sciences wanted to be located as close to DSTL as possible. Porton Science Park gave them this opportunity with no need to be behind the wire with all the restrictions that entailed. The Phase 2 building had lab space which could be hired temporarily for the duration of a test or project, something which was not possible in the first building.</p> <p>Most of the businesses in Porton Science Park were long-term tenants staying on the park; some had expanded within the building; one had come from behind the wire; and one was going to move into the new building. Some of the businesses had strong ties with American companies so there was both national and overseas interest.</p> <p>Phase 3 could potentially be bigger as Wiltshire Council developed the remaining land after the relevant planning permissions. There was potential to attract investment from private companies, with tenants from overseas businesses growing high-value jobs in defence and life sciences.</p>	
6.0 Place		
6.1	<p>Capital and revenue funding updates Levelling Up Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>In the absence of Local Authority representation at this point of the agenda, PB updated the meeting. There was now less public money available for projects and there would be even less for the immediate future. The Government was targeting its levelling up agenda, with more funding going north and to the Midlands, although Cornwall had received the largest single block of money overall. The Swindon & Wiltshire area was not deemed as requiring as much assistance as others, with £5m allocated for Wiltshire and £2m allocated for Swindon. There was additional money available for a numeracy programme for adults to achieve Level 2 or equivalent in maths.</p> <p>Bids were being submitting from both authorities. The process was strict and would be undergoing strong scrutiny, with bids submitted being directed to adhere to the priorities and objectives of the fund. The deadline for UK Shared Prosperity Fund was in August. PW advised that of the £2.1m allocated to Swindon from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, they had received 41 proposals worth about £10m.</p>	
6.2	<p>Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund</p> <p>The Place Boards were looking into projects that suited their individual areas for the best spend of the funds. Swindon's Town's Fund Board had been very successful in evaluating the projects submitted and the chosen</p>	

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	<p>projects were now being delivered. Stakeholders had been consulted for wide-spread engagement. The Board had now evolved into an Advisory Group and would stay in touch with developments.</p> <p>A lot of private funds could be directed into such infrastructure.</p> <p>SWLEP was continuing engagement with both LAs on these funds and offering support as required.</p>	
7.1	<p>AOB and Items for the next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full rundown on the bids submitted by Councils for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up Fund • Natural Capital PhD Study presentation • Updates on developments of iCAST, ICCE and the site at Westbury • Decision by the Secretary of State regarding the A303 • Any update on rail for Devizes and Corsham • Understanding of availability of private investment funds <p>Swindon's bid to house the Headquarters of GB Railways had not been successful. The short list of successful bids were towns/cities based in the north. We would await the decision for the regional HQ.</p>	
	<p>Next meeting: Monday, 12 September – 1pm to 3pm</p> <p>Further dates for 2022 and Thursday, 3 November – 10.30am to 12.30pm</p>	
	Meeting closed at 11.46am.	