

	Minutes of Ideas, Infrastructure, & Place (IIP) Subgroup Meeting 8 March 2023
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Date: Wednesday, 8 March 2023
Time: 10am – 12 noon
Venue: via Microsoft Teams call

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	✓
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓
David Dewart	Swindon Borough Council	
Tom Harrison (TH)	SWLEP Director	Apologies
Victoria Moloney (VM)	Wiltshire Council	✓ - joined at 10.35am and left at 11.30am
Prof Maik Schneider (MS)	University of Bath	Apologies
Suzanne Wigmore (SW)	SWLEP Director	✓
Guest(s)	SWLEP Ltd Sarah Pearce (SP) ✓ Rachel Sweet (RSw) ✓ SWLEP Board Directors Basit Mohammed (BM) ✓ Cities & Local Growth Unit Jenna Hunt (JH) - apologies	
Chair	Suzanne Wigmore (SW)	
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.0	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	<p>The meeting opened at 10.09am. SW welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made, and apologies noted.</p> <p>PB declared that he may have a potential conflict in future as he was deciding whether to become a Trustee of a charity which would be discussed under Item 5.0, the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) item.</p>	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
2.0	Minutes and Matters arising	
2.1	Approval of minutes from 18 January 2023.	
2.2	Matters Arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Transport & Logistics update. <i>TH had written to Viscount Waverley to request a meeting.</i> Other Matters Arising were completed, in train or on the agenda.	
3.0 Future and Present Strategy		
3.0	PB spoke to the meeting. The quarterly update on the Delivery Plan was due to be delivered at the Board Meeting on 30 March. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One item had been RAG rated at AMBERRED, which was the delivery of Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) materials. This had been stalled owing to resourcing issues but was now moving towards RAG rating GREEN. Other items were also on track. • The question was how we tackled LEP responsibilities for FY 2023/24 when we had received reduced core funding. This could possibly be the last year of government funding for LEPs, with no funding available beyond March 2024. • Government had made a commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to continue to support LEPs in an area where devolution deals were not forthcoming, providing finance were available. • SWLEP wanted to maintain ever closer links with neighbouring universities and particularly with the University of Bath. The University was committed to this area, for example, with sustainable technologies via iCAST working with the University of Oxford. • The Hills Group site of Westbury had recently received approval from planning following the appeal. • There were strong links to help create research and innovation, but currently no finance available. • Membership of the SME Climate Hub demonstrated SWLEP's commitment to the NetZero agenda. • Given the activity of The Western Gateway, in particular the hydrogen agenda, which was a significant part of our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), SWLEP would continue to be involved in the partnership and continue to be a financial contributor. Paul Moorby was the Chair and David Renard the Vice Chair of its Hydrogen Working Group. Good work was being carried out on hydrogen and thanks were offered to Debby Skellern for her continued commitment in this area. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, if SWLEP continued its membership within The Western Gateway, and yet the LEP function no longer existed, this would cause a governance issue for the partnership which would need resolving. • Even if SWLEP were not part of The Western Gateway Board, we would still do something from a local point of view. SWLEP would maintain its interest in hydrogen. For example, the development of the Hills site at Westbury could generate hydrogen for powering Hills' waste trucks. • The partnership of the SWLEP with other groups, such as the Local Authorities on boards for Salisbury, Trowbridge and Swindon and involvement with MPs, would depend on their perceived role of LEPs. • SWLEP was committed to continuing sponsorship of a part time PhD student for postgraduate research on Natural Capital. • However, it could be that SWLEP would drop its engagement with Subnational Transport Bodies going forward. • The amended Delivery Plan would not be available at the next Board Meeting, as SWLEP still did not know what level of funding would be given to Growth Hubs. • This issue would be flagged at the March Board. SWLEP would manage the budget between March and May and finalise at the May Board. • It would become more difficult to operate a publicly funded AND privately funded model, but SWLEP would maintain this model until government halted its funding. • Wiltshire Council had just published the Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus and SWLEP would be bidding for contracts to do some of the work outlined. • SWLEP would continue as many of its strands of operation for as long as possible, but it would not be able to contribute as much resource as in previous years. • SWLEP's ESG commitment was strong because funding for skills increased productivity and improved inclusivity, so expenditure would be justified. • The GPIF loan scheme was SWLEP's biggest lever for ongoing income, so the company would aim to continue to operate this fund. • A change of Government could impact priorities and change everything. 	
4.0 Infrastructure		
4.1	Porton Science Park	

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	<p>RB was unable to present at the previous meeting owing to time constraints, so he continued at this meeting. The presentation can be accessed via the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/infrastructure-ideas-and-place-subgroup/2023/8-mar-2023/porton-science-park_update_18_1_23.pdf?sfvrsn=c223f9c9_3</p> <p>RB outlined the progress of the project. Phase 2 had just opened and the first tenants were already moving in. Typical businesses in the centre had 5-10 employees, utilizing differing sized office and lab space on the cutting edge of life science and defence. This was increasing high value growth and jobs in the South Wiltshire area and Porton was already a centre with one of the highest concentrations of research scientists in the world.</p> <p>High profile organisations at Porton behind the wire included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), previously Public Health England (PHE); • Defence Science & Technology Laboratory (DSTL); • Defence Digital; and • Ploughshare, a company within the public sector which was helping to commercialise products. <p>By encouraging movement across the wire, private sector companies were coming into the area.</p> <p>Two recent major incidents, Novichok in Salisbury and the COVID pandemic, had increased the area's already high profile. Wiltshire Council had a good working relationship with DSTL and the organisation joined meetings and shared its plans. It was fully invested in the science park as a concept and, as landlords, its use of the park helped the council to sell it to incoming tenants.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council was delighted at the level of demand for Phase 2, but there were constraints on the realisation of Phase 3 because of restrictions on power and water capacity for the site.</p> <p>The energy supply problem was going to be around for years to come, and Wiltshire Council was working with partners to find solutions to the situation. A recent discussion with SEN outlined longer term development plans and tools, but it was uncertain how long it would take to implement. Increasing solar farms in the area would be one of the shorter-term solutions and there was active interest. In future, the Hills</p>	

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	Group site at Westbury could also generate energy through waste processing.	
4.2	<p>Economic import of road improvements report for DfT</p> <p>PB spoke to the meeting and explained that SWLEP Board Director, Dr Mark Matthews, was employed by Ipsos UK and worked on economic aspects, consultancy and analysis with various government departments. The current project was with the Department for Transport (DfT) on how to measure the local economic impact of road improvements.</p> <p>This was not just about decreased journey time, better air quality, and reduced risk of accidents, but the project would contribute to policy debate and demonstrate how future investment could generate economic benefits. The link to the slide is given below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/infrastructure-ideas-and-place-subgroup/2023/8-mar-2023/ipsos.pdf?sfvrsn=5ca97b82_3</p> <p>The LEP Network had been informed of the project and had circulated an enquiry on whether LEPs wished to be involved. 11 LEPs had expressed an interest and the initial meeting would be held on 9 March.</p> <p>Even if you reduced the number of vehicles on the road and used other sources of fuel, we would still need a good road network. The rail network was not robust enough to take large numbers of vehicles off the roads.</p> <p>The DfT was looking at biodiversity gain which linked well to SWLEP's Natural Capital project. One measure the Department used was a points system whereby the closer mitigation schemes were to the road the more points it accumulated. However, this was not always the best remedy for the local area. A report of this nature together with the Natural Capital project would give clearer indications of where to place mitigation and produce better impact.</p> <p>Wiltshire Council was awaiting the publication of the North South Route Study with National Highways. This would allow some decisions on the siting of employment land and road investment that would unlock the economy. The Ipsos work would help inform those decisions.</p> <p>Action: PB to bring update back to the group when appropriate.</p>	<p>When appropriate</p>
5.0 Ideas		
5.0	Environmental, Social & Corporate Governance (ESG) Responsibility update	

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	<p>PB reminded the meeting that inclusivity and sustainable economic development was behind everything SWLEP did.</p> <p>Alabaré was a charity that supported people furthest away from the point of employment, for example, military leavers, who could have mental health issues and emotional difficulties which made it problematic to hold down a job. By providing financial resource to support some of its work, SWLEP could support the charity that helped these people and improve the social fabric of our area. There was still lots of work to be done around military leavers. Charities like this received intermittent funding which meant a stop-start approach to support. The SWLEP would not be a big contributor, but it would work with a smaller number of partners over the longer term.</p> <p>It was felt both companies and charities could help each other achieve their objectives if the engagement was strategic and for the longer-term. For example, although useful, companies meeting their ESG commitments by sending a group of volunteers to paint a room for a charity did not have the impact charities were seeking.</p> <p>RB added that several companies in the area felt that they had lost the link to being part of the community and that for some new staff a company's ESG credentials and ownership of place was a crucial consideration in deciding to take up employment.</p> <p>The Alabaré Board had approached PB to become a Trustee. If he were to join the organisation, he would not be able to take part in this discussion.</p> <p>Action: formalise into ESG statement and make a strong case in order that money could be set aside within the budget for the Board to approve for FY 2023/24.</p>	
6.0 Place		
6.0	<p>Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)</p> <p>PB presented to the meeting showing the economic landscape for the Swindon & Wiltshire area, including growing and declining sectors, skills shortages and job postings. The presentation can be accessed by using the link below.</p> <p>https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/infrastructure-ideas-and-place-subgroup/2023/8-mar-2023/swlep-labour-market-080323.pdf?sfvrsn=f1e26ce6_3</p>	

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	<p>More technical skills, for example, robots and monitoring people requiring health interventions at home, etc would be required in the care sector. It was less about the skills, but more that they simply could not employ people to do the jobs. Brexit had had a significant impact on this situation as large numbers of care workers from Europe left the UK.</p>	
7.0 AOB and items for the next meeting		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Capital PhD Study presentation – update to this group in between the Board updates • Infrastructure Plans from Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council – current performance and future strategy • Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) update • Ipsos/Dft road project update • Wiltshire’s Economic Strategy if ready. Look at different aspects of the Strategy appropriate to the different Subgroups. <p>Action: PB to work with RB.</p>	
	<p>Next meeting: Wednesday, 10 May - 10am to 12noon</p> <p>Dates for 2023: Wednesday, 5 July - 10am to 12noon Wednesday, 13 September - 10am to 12noon Wednesday, 8 November - 10am to 12noon</p> <p>Meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams/video conferencing unless otherwise advised.</p>	
Meeting closed at 11.58am.		

Approved

10 May 2023