

**Wiltshire  
Strategic Economic  
Partnership**

**MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP MEETING DATED 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010**

**Present:** Steve Stone (Chairman)  
Peter Wheelhouse (Company Secretary) (Wiltshire Council)  
Nicky Alberry (GWE Business West)  
John Matthews (Rural)  
Tony Mitchard (Community First)  
Ken Teal (Federation of Small Businesses)  
Michael Williams (Wessex Association Chamber of Commerce)  
Steve Richards (South West Regional Development Agency)  
Alistair Cunningham (Wiltshire Council)  
Jackie Tuckett (In the absence of Glen Leat)

**In attendance:** Sara Vigor (WSEP Assistant)  
Ian Larrard (GWE Business West)  
Peter Beech-Allen (GWE Business West)

**Item 1: Apologies for Absence and Introductions**

- Glen Leat (Job Centre Plus); Jack Wills (SWEP Chair); Peter Wragg (Visit Wiltshire Partnership); Victoria Nye (NWEP Chair); Andrew Kerr (Wiltshire Council Chief Executive); Cllr John Brady (Wiltshire Council)
- Ian Larrard was introduced to the meeting and round the table introductions took place. Ian is a Director at GWE Business West.

**Item 2: Minutes of last WSEP Ltd meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

- The minutes were agreed and signed as being a true and accurate record.

**Item 3: Matters arising from Minutes of Partnership meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

Item 5:

- SEP Chairs' and Executive meeting – Peter (PW) reported that he is to stay in touch with other parts of the region.
- PW also reported to the meeting that he has become involved with discussions regarding the development of a mapping tool for analysing South West Functional Economic Market Areas – this has been launched and will be used to help develop a business case for LEPs.
- PW also attended the Endorsement Advisory Group of the SW ERDF Competitiveness Programme in Exeter on 12 July. Among other things the group reviewed the current position on ERDF nationally and endorsed a number of projects including I-Nets.

- PW and AC are attending the South West Economic Development Officers Group later in July.

#### Item 6:

- LEP Managers will shortly be meeting with a new member of the Climate Change Team to discuss how LEPs can support businesses to adopt sustainable practices. CAMCO have also completed their work on the potential for renewable energy production in Wiltshire. It is understood that a large amount of Wiltshire's electricity requirement could be met through renewable energy with wind power and bio-mass having the greatest potential. This issue could possibly be an item for a future board meeting.
- A question was raised with regard to whether the National Indicators on Climate Change have been changed with the new Government.

**Action: PW to speak to Ariane Crampton and report back**

#### Item 7:

- A report on the Strategy for the Development of the Economy in Wiltshire is being presented later in the meeting as a separate agenda item by Peter Beech-Allen.

#### Item 10a

- PW confirmed that he has briefed Len Turner on the situation regarding potential new company in Westbury

#### Item 11a

- PW reported that he has provided details of the next ICT Working Group meeting to Councillor Brady.

#### Item 11b

- PW informed the meeting that he has reported to the ESB Secretariat regarding the problem of people over 50 being out of work.

#### Item 11c

- With regard to HPA, PW confirmed that the Leader and Chief Executive of Wiltshire Council and also the Chairman of RDA have a meeting arranged with the Chief Executive and Chairman of HPA on 30 July. The preparation of a defence case is ongoing. However it will be ready ahead of the meeting. It is possible that there could be up to 600 job losses if HPA relocate their research operations to Harlow in Essex as proposed.

#### **Item 4: Chairman's Update**

The Chairman gave the following update:

#### Attendance at the following events:

- Two meetings of the **Six Towns and a Vale Initiative** – the meetings were very good and interesting.
- **Top 100 dinner** at Leigh Park Hotel on 29 April – the event was a very successful one.
- **Future Jobs Fund Move On event** at Hartham Park on 27 May – the Chairman viewed this as a super event, a wonderful evening.
- **Joint Strategic Assessment event** at Cumberwell on 9 July – the economic debate was first class. The event looked at National Health Service activities in the County.
- **New Methodologies for Remote Learning event** at University of Bath on 15 July. The event was attended by Knorr-Bremse and Invensys Rail. It was around stem based courses to make them viable railway activity. The Chairman felt that this was a practical activity and would require active commitment from both companies – and it is something that could be extended into schools. It would mean also that a course could be tailored to fit a specific need, ideally for smaller businesses and demonstrated new technology that would enable the two companies to run synchronised courses in various locations around the world.

#### **Item5: Economic Strategy**

Peter Beech-Allen introduced this item. He presented a report that had been previously sent around regarding progress on the development of the strategy. PBA confirmed that the vision had been modified to include the words: *sustainable* to suggest a low carbon economy and also *competitive* to reflect the need for inward investment.

The objectives in the strategy reflect the need to create new jobs and to ensure that existing jobs are sustained.

The Public sector cuts and redundancies will be picked up under the new SO1 objective. Overall 650,000 to 750,000 people could be leaving the public sector and the figure for Wiltshire was expected to be around 6,000 – 8,000. The public sector has to create an opening for private sector jobs.

Jackie Tuckett indicated that redundancies were increasing therefore leading to more people requiring re-training and also that there was not a lot of money remaining for older people to be re-trained. Smaller businesses are reducing their hours rather than losing labour.

Jackie Tuckett indicated that there was some short sharp training available from Job Centre Plus to transfer skills from one job to another which in turn leads to an internal qualification.

The new objectives and economic priorities were agreed.

#### **Item 6: Local Enterprise Partnerships – The Opportunities for Wiltshire**

Alistair Cunningham introduced this item. He presented a report which sets out the proposals to establish Local Enterprise Partnerships to replace the RDAs.

The LEPs need to create the right environment for business growth.

One suggestion for an LEP was Gloucestershire/Swindon/Wiltshire – this grouping represents a key economic zone and makes sense. Alistair confirmed also that there would be no funding for LEPs.

All felt that the challenge would be to get businesses on board – however this approach will be easier if the concept is marketed well. It was felt that testimonials from businesses would be useful to include into the bids.

Ken Teal indicated that the Federation of Small Businesses want to be represented on LEP Boards. Ken indicated that the FSB are keen to see small county based strategic alliances dealing with specific issues.

There will be approximately 12-16 LEPs across the country.

Alistair understands that there is no obvious partner for Wiltshire to work with. However Swindon have been a historic partner and discussions with representatives from Swindon are ongoing.

The Board supported the recommendations presented. It was also agreed that commitment to make a success of whatever geographical arrangement was decided was key to any future partnership.

#### **Item 7: Q4 report relating to LAA**

Peter Wheelhouse presented this information to the board for information.

Literacy and numeracy was deemed to be very important and Peter reported that Wiltshire was on target with this according to the Government figures that have been published.

Peter also informed the meeting that it was very important to get young people back into work. The Employment and Skills Board was a potentially useful tool. Councillor John Brady is currently the Chairman however in due course a private sector chair will be appointed.

Money for training young people and NEETS is still available. However the funds for adult training have been cut dramatically.

Concern was expressed regarding the availability of up to date figures relating to adult training.

#### **Item 8: Items for Information**

##### ***Visit Wiltshire Partnership***

Peter Wheelhouse presented the report to the board. He confirmed that there had been a lot of movement within the partnership recently. It was looking into restructuring to become a Company Limited by Guarantee to be led by a private sector Chair.

***Countryside and Land Based Group***

Peter Wheelhouse reported to the board that the group was currently undertaking a review of programmes to take account of national developments.

***North Wiltshire Economic Partnership (NWEPP)***

Peter Wheelhouse confirmed that he is to contact Victoria Nye to discuss the development of the Partnership's Action Plan.

Chippenham has won the right to host a national Market Towns event.

There was some discussion around RAF Lyneham and the impact on the surrounding economy when the RAF relocates their transport operation to RAF Brize Norton.

**RAF Lyneham will be a agenda item for the next Partnership meeting.**

***South Wiltshire Economic Partnership (SWEPP)***

Report circulated for information. No questions were raised.

***Mid Wiltshire Economic Partnership (MWEPP)***

Report circulated for information. No questions were raised.

**Item 9: Any other Business**

- Request was made that Board members email their contact telephone numbers to Sara Vigor in order that she may collate a list.
- Confirmation was received that there was to be a Broadband meeting next week
- Jackie Tuckett informed the board that Wiltshire Council had won the youth employment award category for the Future Jobs Fund work at the Job Centre Plus regional awards

**Agreed and signed as a correct record:**

**Signature:** .....

**Dated:** .....

