

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Monthly Update

November/December 2011

Context

The Swindon & Wiltshire LEP has begun to develop plans to support economic growth in the sub-region. Its primary focus is to create wealth, jobs and new business opportunities by forging a meaningful partnership between the private and public sectors. The Working Group of leading business people has continued the work of making the Partnership a reality and is on track to have a fully formed and operational model in place by the end of January 2012.

Key Events and Timelines	
2 November 2011	Third Business Working Group meeting
7 November 2011	Board & Chair recruitment process commenced
29 November 2011	Chancellor's Autumn Statement : includes plans to boost the Economy:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BIS/CLG: Growing Places Fund - £6.3m provisional Capital loan funding allocation for Swindon & Wiltshire;• Regional Growth Fund – a further £1billion allocated to England to boost capital projects;• DEFRA: £15m new funding allocated to develop Rural Growth Networks – 6 Pilots will be commissioned
2 December 2011	Swindon & Wiltshire LEP web-site goes 'live' – www.swlep.biz
9 December 2011	Board & Chair recruitment process closed – 25 Applications received
14 December 2011	LEP Network Event: Access to Finance DECC Ministerial Event : Environmental policy (Green Deal)
20 December 2011	Growing Places Fund proposal submitted to BIS/CLG
21 December 2011	Fourth Business Working Group meeting

September/October Activity

The Business Working Group has continued to develop the short-term priorities that the Partnership needs to focus on up to March 2012. The third/fourth formal meetings of the Group agreed a work programme that will drive the structure, ready for the Board to refine in the New Year. Key actions in place are:-

- Refining the strategy and draft the initial Business Plan (2012-15)
- Raising the profile of the Partnership
- Commissioning research to provide the evidence base on which the Business Plan will be built
- Responding to investment opportunities such as those outlined in the Autumn Statement above.

Board recruitment – the application process has now been closed and the applications have now been assessed. The second (interview) stage of the process is now in place with 14 applicants being interviewed the w/c 16th January. The Chair's interview takes place on the 9th January and the Partnership is on track to announce its formal Board by the end of January. The first formal Board meeting will take place on February 10th 2012.

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Building the Profile of the LEP – Establishing the LEP as the ‘independent’ voice of /conduit for Business is a critical success factor and building awareness within the business community will be key. The first stage, a live web-site, has been completed:

www.swlep.biz

The site will continue to be refined over the coming months and the main priorities remain:-

- a) That it is easy to use, and
- b) That all visitors get value from the information that is posted.

Developing plans for much wider business engagement / input – if the LEP is to successfully engage, and retain interest from, the business community in its plans to grow the economy it needs to ensure that it has all the right communication channels in place to make that happen. The Working Group is still actively seeking feedback/thoughts from the wider community on how this can be best achieved and will look at ways of encouraging interest – such as seminars, consultations, conferences – in collaboration with key partners.

Work Programme – the BWG approved at the November meeting three pieces of research to support the evidence base:-

1. Mapping of key strategic development sites, including existing brownfield land – focusing on deliverability of such sites to the market;
2. Forward-looking economic intelligence on the economies of Wiltshire & Swindon;
3. Value and impact of Tourism to the area, including identification of key growth potential segments.

Business Working Group membership – now accurately mirrors the proposed Board.

Current Membership

Private Sector			
Paul Johnson	WSEP Chair (Knorr-Bremse)	Nicky Alberry	SSEP Chair (GWE BusinessWest)
Mark Burnett	The Consortium	Mike Godfrey	Honda
Peter Wragg	Visit Wiltshire Ltd	Robin Bailey	Nationwide
Harry Hilliard	Wessex ACoC	James Lockhart/ George Paton	Whitmarsh Lockhart/ Webb Paton
Secretariat : Lead - Steve Richards C2R			
Alistair Cunningham	Wiltshire Council	Ian Piper	Forward Swindon
Public Sector			
Jane Scott/Fleur De Rhe- Phillipe	Wiltshire Council	Rod Bluh/Gavin Jones	Swindon B.Council
Steve Stone	FE/HE Sector	Brigadier Piers Hankinson	43 Wessex Brigade

Support for the LEP

The government has recently published its criteria for supporting the LEP network beyond March 2012. There will be a 3 year settlement and the funding proposal will need to be submitted by the end of January. Focus will remain on the areas already being supported – Communications, Research and LEP development. Partners will be expected to ‘match’ the government’s contribution – covering administration and running costs.

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Priority Sectors – the sectors below will be reviewed as the results of the recently commissioned research are received. How we intend to support growth will flow from the Business Plan – one of the first tasks of the new Board will be to refine this and sign it off. The Sectors are:-

• Advanced Engineering inc Manufacturing	• Financial and other Business Services
• Tourism	• Logistics
• Food & Drink / Land-based industry	• Low Carbon & Renewable Energy
• Life Sciences	• ICT
• Pharmaceuticals	• Military (Army)

Building wider Strategic Alliances with other LEPs – the BWG joint chairs and the secretariat have undertaken a number of meetings with neighbouring LEPs to start a dialogue around areas of common interest/ wider strategic interests. These include:-

- Thames Valley
- Gloucestershire
- West of England
- Dorset

Project Development/ Funding opportunities

The partnership is keen to 'do' as well as 'say' and a number of initiatives have been started.

The BWG has identified **the re-development of RAF Lyneham** as a tri-service training facility as a critical priority for the LEP and is working with local partners on an engagement strategy to exploit to the full the opportunities that will arise – areas such as:-

- Supply chain development – both in terms of the development of the site and once it becomes operational;
- Local procurement;
- Links with industry – skills retention, up-skilling, project collaboration and clustering.

Local Transport Schemes (Consortia) – the Department for Transport (DfT) have signalled that they want to engage with around 20/25 consortia across England to develop the next round of sub-national transport infrastructure capital spend – from 2014 onwards. The BWG have started dialogues with neighbouring LEPs on potential alliances that would best meet Swindon & Wiltshire's needs.

Rural Growth Networks – the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has a focus on Green issues and the Rural economy. As a LEP with a large rural footprint, development of economic tools to support business growth is key. We will be submitting a proposal to become one of the pilots outlined in the Autumn Statement.

Growing Places Fund – we are waiting for confirmation that we will be allocated £6.3m from this central fund. Designed to kick-start stalled or 'oven-ready' capital (infrastructure)

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projects to help boost the economy, this is a loan – not a Grant fund – and the LEP secretariat are developing a set of criteria for the Board to use when assessing proposals. Partners are now looking to see whether projects within the area ‘fit’ the spend profile.

Around the LEP Network

LEP Network web-site – now live, you will be able to access the previous event and future newsletters etc. direct. The web-site address will be:

www.lepnetwork.org.uk

For further information on the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP please contact the Secretariat:-

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