

## Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership

### Minutes of the Partnership meeting 17 February 2011

**Present:**

<b>Steve Stone</b>	Chairman	<b>Peter Wragg</b>	VisitWiltshire Partnership
<b>Victoria Nye</b>	North Wiltshire Economic Partnership (NWEPP)	<b>Ken Teal</b>	Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
<b>Mark Barnett</b>	Mid Wiltshire Economic Partnership (MWEPP)	<b>Ian Larrard (for Nicky Alberry)</b>	Business Link/GWE Business West Ltd.
<b>Jackie Tuckett (for Glen Leat)</b>	Jobcentre Plus (JCP)	<b>Tony Mitchard</b>	Community First (CF)
<b>Steve Richards</b>	South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)	<b>Steve Sharp</b>	Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

**Others:**

Alistair Cunningham (Wiltshire Council)  
 Peter Wheelhouse (Wiltshire Council (Company Secretary))  
 Councillor John Brady (Wiltshire Council)  
 Lynda Cox (Wiltshire Council)  
 Ed Bovingdon (Wiltshire Council (taking minutes))

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

Jack Wills (South Wiltshire Economic Partnership Chairman)  
 Nicky Alberry (GWE Business West) – Ian Larrard attended in her absence  
 Glen Leat (Jobcentre Plus) – Jackie Tuckett attended in his absence  
 Mike Williams (Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce)  
 John Matthews (Rural)  
 Andrew Kerr (Wiltshire Council, Chief Executive)

Steve Stone (SS) announced the appointment of the new MWEPP chairman Mark Barnett, who is currently COO for The Consortium. Ed Bovingdon was also introduced as the new WSEP assistant.

**Item 2: WSEP Limited business**

See separate minutes

### **Item 3: Matters arising from the Minutes of the Partnership meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010**

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

#### **Item 5: Local Transport Plan 2011-2026**

The Chairman highlighted the issues with the Council's Car Parking Strategy raised at the last meeting, which have been fed to the consultation. The economic impact assessment had been raised by Chambers of Commerce across Wiltshire.

John Brady (JB) stated that the Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce was unhappy about the car parking charges. However, JB emphasised that the impact would be minor and temporary given that many market towns rely on buses for transport to the town centre. The economic impact will be monitored and assessed, especially in towns which experience larger increases in charges. Evidence suggests that raising car parking charges will not undermine the viability of a successful town but can kill off a struggling town.

#### **Item 8: RAF Lyneham**

Alistair Cunningham (AC) confirmed the letter to Lyneham has been sent and a Task Group has been established to push the MOD for a decision. The base will close but an attempt is being made to either reinstate full operational use, rather than using it as a temporary holding base, or to dispose of the site. North Wiltshire Economic Partnership is currently undertaking economic research into the impact to bolster lobbying power.

AC informed the Board that Wootton Bassett has applied for status as a Vanguard, under new Department of Neighbourhood and Planning policy, which will provide funding to support the area and stimulate economic growth.

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

The Chairman informed the Board that on 14 February he had attended a Broadband meeting with Caroline Godfrey and Ian Baker (ICT and E-learning Advisor).

On 11 February the Chairman attended the Action for Wiltshire Programme Board.

#### **Action (PW):**

**Organise a meeting between the three Local Economic Partnership managers and Ian Baker to discuss the upgrade to superfast broadband.**

## **Item 5: Proposed Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

AC presented the latest draft of the Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) proposal, written in collaboration with Steve Richards (SR), which has been circulated to Andrew Kerr and Jane Scott. After it is discussed with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the concept will undergo a consultation period and a Shadow Board will be established. The formal document should be completed within one month.

SS supported the proposal and highlighted the tidiness of a single county LEP but did note the need to interface well with surrounding areas. The floor was then opened up for discussion, during which the following points were raised:

- AC confirmed that Wiltshire 100 and the Chambers of Commerce will be used to involve the business community because relationships and good communication will drive the LEP forward. Steve Sharp (SSh) expressed his desire to involve small businesses in addition to larger businesses. Feedback from small businesses will be important to enable business to drive the LEP forward.
- Steve Richards (SR) confirmed that the public sector would be the enabler and that the LEP would be private sector led. The LEP will assist in giving business a voice to pro-actively drive forward the business agenda.
- When asked why the 'Big Society' was not mentioned in the proposal, SR indicated that the LEP was about creating jobs and supporting business so the Big Society concept fits better within Wiltshire Council's remit.
- It was raised that if the LEP was to be business led, the Board would need to instate new members taken directly from businesses to generate a stronger business input.
- JB suggested that the leaflets containing information about business rate relief could include a letter carrying the message of the LEP.
- When asked if there was business awareness of WSEP, SSh confirmed that 87% were aware of WSEP according to a recent report.

The Board was in full support of the LEP Proposal.

## **Item 6: Child Poverty Strategy (Lynda Cox, Wiltshire Council)**

Lynda Cox (LC) introduced the Child Poverty Strategy 2011-2014. The report highlighted that after 18 months a child's life is fixed based on environmental factors, which underlines the need to intervene within the first five years of a Child's life. Without intervention, the generational cycle of poverty is perpetuated. The rate of child poverty in Wiltshire stands at 11%, which is half the national average but it was noted that the numbers of children in poverty are thinly distributed across the county, primarily in rural areas.

Jackie Tuckett raised the need to support the unemployed in gaining employment and enabling part time employees to obtain full time jobs through creating the right kind of environment.

It was pointed out that at present, businesses will only hire employees if they have a good CV and sufficient experience, which underlines the need to provide sufficient opportunity for the unemployed to gain work experience. The attitude of employees was claimed to be equally important for businesses.

Peter Wheelhouse (PW) raised the idea of encouraging employers to link up more closely with schools in the poor areas. SR suggested there is a need for a change in pastoral care and culture within schools, which the three Local Economic Partnerships can promote. It was agreed that there is a need for schools and entrepreneurial headmasters to encourage businesses into the classroom under the support of the Local Economic Partnerships and perhaps local Rotary Clubs.

### **Item 7: Action for Wiltshire Programme**

AC introduced the new version of the Action for Wiltshire schematic and drew attention to the latest additions and changes. The Action for Wiltshire Board meeting will write up a project brief and Gantt Chart for each item on the schematic using the Prince 2 method. More specifics will be introduced as the Local Area Agreement merges into the Action for Wiltshire scheme. JB confirmed the £4m investment in the project over the next four years and the addition of EC grants. The investment must be made in the light of the recession.

It was asked what were the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and actions to be completed during the project. JB indicated that some KPIs were easily measurable and others might be more qualitative.

#### **Action (AC):**

- **Introduce the Green Deal to the Action for Wiltshire schematic and discuss the Green Deal alongside a written paper at the next Board meeting**
- **Discuss Action for Wiltshire at next Board meeting**

### **Item 8: Proposed Career Transition Partnership Event**

PW circulated the paper outlining the proposed Career Transition Partnership Event. WSEP contacts and the Wiltshire 100 Programme will be used to find suitable employment for all ranks of ex-servicemen and to encourage them to live in Wiltshire. No funding will be required and the only requirement will be staff time.

The proposal was approved.

**Item 9: Items for information**

Visit Wiltshire Tourism Partnership

PW'r announced the establishment of Visit Wiltshire Limited and thanked Wiltshire Council for its support of tourism. An interim Chief Executive is in place whilst a permanent post holder is being recruited. JB stated that local town and parish councils will takeover the remaining Tourist Information Centres in the hope that they can be run at a reduced cost.

Mid Wiltshire Economic Partnership

MB stated that MWEPP had re-written its objectives and raised the need to link up the objectives with the three Local Economic Partnerships and WSEP. SS suggested establishing Len Turner as a 'super-officer' to train and mentor new members of WSEP.

North Wiltshire Economic Partnership

JB suggested scaling up the North Wiltshire Industrial Estates Audit to throughout Wiltshire for its use in planning and attracting business. Victoria Nye (VN) pointed to the audit being short on detail at present but there is potential for it to be developed further.

JB raised some issues with access, specifically the link road onto the A360 and the 100 Hectares of land available to development, which has yet to have any takers. AC raised that Action for Wiltshire would open up such sites and bring in business.

The circulated SWEP, Broadband and Countryside and Land Based Group reports were noted.

**Item 10: Any other business**

Investment Proposal:

SS circulated an investment proposal outlining the hiring of a WSEP Executive Officer. AC confirmed that Peter Beech-Allen who is currently working on incubation environments will be contracted directly to WSEP and not Wiltshire Council. It was raised that specific objectives would need to be created for the role.

A trial period of one year was approved.

Wiltshire Council Budget Cuts:

AC raised the 12.5% cuts required and the corresponding management review. AC confirmed the merger of the Economic Development and Regeneration teams after David Roberts has taken voluntary redundancy. Peter Wheelhouse has now been confirmed as Head of Economic Regeneration. Economy and Enterprise has now moved to the Shurnhold site at Melksham.

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

**Signature:** .....

**Dated:** .....