**Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group**

**3 March 2015**

**Yarlington Housing Group, Yeovil**

**Attendees:** Barbara Shaw (BS), Barbara Richardson (BR), Helena Davison (HD), Ian Harrison (IH), Joe Keech (JK), Jonathan Bell (JB), Judith Gannon (JG), Mark Robins (MR), Natalie Wainwright (NW), Paul Hickson (PH), Paul Taylor (PT), Stephen Bird (SB).

**Apologies:**  Derek Phillips (DP), Doug Bamsey (DB), Mike O’Dowd Jones (MODJ), Peter Ashton (PA), Tim Jones (TJ).

**Guests:** Paul Coles (PC) and Matthew Ballard (MB).

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| **Agenda Item** | **Action** |
| 1. **Welcome and Apologies**

BS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members introduced themselves for the benefit of guests. Apologies were noted, as above. |  |
| 1. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were noted. |  |
| 1. **Notes of meeting –** 6 January 2015

The notes of the meeting held on 6 January 2015 were agreed as an accurate record. |  |
| 1. **Matters Arising**

Please refer to the updated actions log at the end of these notes. |  |
| 1. **Thematic Focus – Connectivity: Broadband coverage in the Heart of the South West**

Paul Coles, Regional Director at BT provided an overview/intro to BT and highlighted their success in delivering the Superfast Broadband programme ahead of schedule. 3 million customers are now connected to the OpenAccess network. He confirmed that:* The cabinets installed through the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS)programme are compatible with the new G-Fast technology, which will increase speeds further;
* The UK holds a leadership position in terms of connectivity and is a world leader in online use for commerce;
* Gigabit services are available to businesses in the South West now;
* The South West currently has the highest regional rate of flexible working; but
* Although the BDUK programme has been influential in improving take-up more support is required to increase take-up, since 70% of SMEs do not use video/web conferencing and 50% of SMEs are not trading online;
* £800k comes back to Devon and Somerset for every 1% increase in take-up of services.

Matthew Ballard, Connecting Devon and Somerset, reminded the Group of the objectives of the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme: To provide 90% of properties with Superfast Broadband by the end of 2016 and deliver a minimum of 2mbs to all properties in the programme.The Programme consists of eleven phases and four sub phases, including a £1m demand stimulation programme to encourage businesses to get up to speed and realise the benefits of Superfast Broadband. It is a highly fluid programme, affected by various planning conditions that must be taken into account when selecting and confirming the location of new cabinets.The three solutions for delivering the Superfast Service were explained. These are: ADSL Broadband, Fibre to the Cabinet and Fibre to the Premise.The attached presentation provides more information about additional funding; i.e. Rural Communities Broadband Fund; Broadband Innovation Fund; Superfast Extension Programme. **LEP Place Group considerations**New sites/developments present both opportunities and issues. *Opportunities:* There is evidence to suggest a 3% uplift on house prices if Superfast Broadband is available. Some house sales have fallen through on the basis of internet speeds.Broadband roll-out to be an early consideration in Local Plans.Accessibility - Open Housing Hubs are being explored by Yarlington Housing for use by residents accessing the internet via mobile/handheld devices. PC advised of BT’s Broadband proposition to Housing Association tenants and Benefit claimants.*Challenges:* 3,670 sites are notified each month but 63% don’t provide sufficient notice to invest in fibre-optic broadband with open access network. Ideally conversations with Construction firms need to take place 9-12 months ahead of build. Customer dissatisfaction, i.e. white (non-delivery) areas within towns, e.g. Plymouth and Taunton. The LEP can support by communicating the key messages to businesses, using some of the existing tools available:* CDS website: [www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk](http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk) The ‘Where and When’ function allows users to track roll-out;
* Twitter Feed.
 | **NW** – To circulate Presentation x 2**PC** – To share Point Topic report on the Social Digital Divide (2013). **HD –** To liaise with CDS Team**BR –** To provide CDS Team with the postcodes of housing developments identified for Open Housing Hubs/new Broadband infrastructure**PC –** To share ‘new sites portal’ in order that stakeholders can notify BT of developments**? –** Data from Cornwall to be shared re: the balance between enablement and exploitation activities. |
| 1. **Spatial Framework for the Heart of the South West**

PH introduced the skeleton report and thanked JK, Steve Jackson and Richard Grant for their input to date. The LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) provides the strategic framework for investment but was based on the existing spatial understanding of the Heart of the South West area. The Place Leadership Group was challenged to provide additional insight into the spatial element of the SEP. This review is timely since Local Planning Authorities are increasingly looking to the LEP for a strategic steer. Some local planning inquiries have begun to look at the links between local and LEP plans. PH proposed that the following key areas should form part of the spatial assessment:* Developing our understanding of the functional economic geography of our LEP;
* Complementarity of growth ambitions of LEP areas;
* Looking at strategic infrastructure requirements, e.g. access to higher education;
* Aggregated position on new homes;
* Transformational opportunities;
* Sectoral growth opportunities;
* The planning system.

The group endorsed the work and the broad timeline for its completion.**Discussion/Comments/Questions to be considered in the development of the Project Plan:** * Local Planning Authorities are acting in a vacuum in terms of strategic understanding of the HotSW area. The outputs/benefits of this work, e.g. as a tool for local planners should be stressed;
* IH questioned the assertion that housing drives economic growth and suggested that some economic forecasting work be completed. Economic Assessments were being refreshed within the LEP area and an aggregation of these would provide valuable economic intelligence – It was agreed that work would be conducted through existing resources and a stitching together of evidence held by local authorities;
* MR requested that the work pick up ‘natural capital’, mapping of clusters and bundles, i.e. visitor activity, tourists, food, high quality environments. He also pointed out that Coast and Maritime issues were missing from the scoping document and questioned how adequately the resilience of sub-LEP geographies was understood;
* Do we understand the spatial dimension of sectors?
* Where can resources be pooled to conduct assessments of sub-LEP geographies?
* HD – Reason why it only covers Growth Deal? No – should include others
* Overlap with health and well-being
* IH – start from scratch – fresh eyes approach
* JG – Examples of best practice – consistency

It is anticipated that this work be completed over the summer. The Place Group would act as a reference group and a draft version of the assessment presented to the September meeting.  | **PH –**To bring a project plan to the next meeting 07.05.15**PH –**To present draft spatial assessment 09.09.15 |
| 1. **Programme Management Update**
	1. **Growth Deal**

Growth Deal 1 = £130.3m Growth Deal 2 = £65.2m Investment over the next 6 years. The Strategic Investment Panel provides the governance mechanism for bringing sub-programmes together as a single package.* 1. **European Structural Investment Funds**

The ESIF Committee ensures that all LEP funding gets spent in accordance with the ESIF Strategy. The LEP has an influencing role. The first committee meeting is to be held on 11 March. DCLG will publish call for proposals to deliver against certain outcomes. First calls are already open – Water Capital Grants, Woodland Capital Grants, Environmental - Rural Tourism, Diversification, Stephen Bird has been nominated as the rural representative on the national monitoring committee.* 1. **Pipeline Development: Flexible Prioritisation Methodology**

In subsequent calls for projects the Leadership Groups will play a key role in identifying and bringing forward projects that fit. Process maps will be circulated. It is anticipated that the assurance framework be signed off on 17th March.* 1. **Programme Management Decisions: Scheme of Delegation**

Ultimate authority rests with the Board. Through the Scheme of Delegation, the Place Group will have responsibility for leading/managing the Place Group package of projects. |  |
| 1. **Unlocking Growth Fund Progress Report**

This is led by the Business Leadership Group but is of interest to the Place Theme. A further update on this item can be expected.The possibility of joint meetings with the Business Group on other shared interest items will be explored.Projects included in Tranche 1 are from original Growth Deal submissions.No new project submissions are sought at this time. This mechanism is to be used to address project viability for future calls. | **NW –** To circulate paper with notes. |
| 1. **Transport Infrastructure**

*Growth Deal 1*: 18 transport interventions are due to commence in 2015/16. 15 Business Cases have gone to the Local Transport Board (LTB) to date with the next meeting scheduled for the 9 April. The first schemes are likely to start on site this spring.*Future projects:*The LTB is to start looking at future pipeline projects during spring/summer 2015 for consideration by the Place Leadership Group.*Other:*Ian confirmed that the Infrastructure Act had been passed. This will see the proposed move from the Highways Agency to Highways England come to fruition. From then on we can expect five year budget settlements.A Peer Review is being conducted week commencing 9 March (1 of 15 sponsored by the Department for Tranport - DfT) regarding the way the LTB/LEP Transport mechanisms have identified and prioritised projects on the basis of budget, etc. *Questions:*JG - How much interaction is there between the Spatial Infrastructure work and CIL contributions? LTAs must sponsor projects and have match-funding, therefore CIL funds included. Is the LTB developing a revolving fund?IH - Are match-funding contributions large enough? There is a case for pooling resources in some areas. | **IH –** To respond to questions posed. |
| 1. **Task and Finish Group Updates**
	1. **Environmental Resilience**

The final version of the project brief is to be signed off and consultants commissioned to undertake work in the next fortnight. Recommendations are due to be presented to the next Place Group meeting in May. * 1. **Housing**

Full scope has now been confirmed. Discussions to date have been with Savills. Other consultants are now being approached to support delivery of this. Contributions have been sought from developers to fund production of the report. PH confirmed that he had approached the HCA for a contribution. |  |
| 1. **Any Other Business**

JG - Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks are part of the Right to Build Vanguard project, aimed at providing more affordable housing within their areas. Suggested that Nigel Stone be invited to present to a future meeting to cover the subjects of housing, economic growth and transport within the National Park. LEP representation on the Local Transport Board is to be updated. Going forwards Chris Garcia will represent the LEP, replacing Tim Jones and Liz Waugh. PT – Advised that he had been in discussions with Climate South West on the subject of resilience/ adaptation. They are keen to run a session with the LEP for no cost and it was agreed that a joint meeting with the Business Group on this subject would be beneficial. PH – Confirmed that the Royal Bath and West showground had been selected as one of eleven pathfinder areas under DEFRA’s call for Food Enterprise Zones. Another call is anticipated. The LEP is to communicate this opportunity to the local authorities in an attempt to identify other credible projects. Heidi Hallam is coordinating.  | **NW –** To include Nigel Stone and Climate South West in the forward plan for meetings. |
| 1. **Next Meeting**

10:00-12:30, Tuesday 7 May, Westward Housing Offices, Newton Abbott.Future agenda items to include:* IH Transport Excellence
* Supporting Housing, Economic Growth and Transport within Exmoor National Park

Joint areas of interest with Business Group: * Unlocking Growth Fund
* Resilience and Adaptation - Climate South West
 | **NW** - To liaise with Business Leadership Group |

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| **Actions Log**  | **Meeting Date** | **Owner** | **Status Update** | **Next Steps** |
| Start work on flexible prioritisation methodology to develop and progress pipeline/‘hopper’ projects. | 03/11/2014 | Paul Taylor | In progress | Continue |
| *Send notes of most recent meetings to T&F Group members and cc PH.* | *03/11/2014* | *Barbara Richardson/ Mark Robins* | *Complete* | *Continue* |
| Present scope of Spatial Framework at meeting on 06/01/2015. | 03/11/2014 | Paul Hickson | Included as an agenda item 03/03/2015  | Project Plan to be presented 07/05/2015 |
| Circulate forward plan of dates for all LEP Leadership Meetings in 2015/16. | 03/11/2014 | Natalie Wainwright | LEP Board and Place Group meeting dates circulated with agenda. | Recirculate with Business and People Group dates, when available |

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| *Confirm whether the LEP Board or EUSIF Committee Declarations of Interest template should be adopted by the Leadership Groups* | *06/01/2015* | *Paul Taylor* | *LEP Board Template circulated with agenda.* | *Closed* |
| *Amend minutes of the last meeting to include Stephen Bird of South West Water/LEP Board.* | *06/01/2015* | *Natalie Wainwright* | *Completed* | *Closed* |
| *Circulate Housing TF Group scoping document for comment.* | *06/01/2015* | *Barbara Richardson/**Natalie Wainwright* | *Circulated with a request for comments by 16/01/2015* | *Closed* |
| *Expressions of Interest sought from L**As by 09/01/2015 in relation to Food Enterprise Zones/Food and Farming Local Development Order* | *06/01/2015* | *Paul Hickson* | *Bath and West Showground successful* | *Closed* |
| *Include Connectivity: Broadband as a future agenda item.* | *06/01/2015* | *Natalie Wainwright* | *Completed* | *Closed* |