

**Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group
14 March 2018**

MEADFOOT ROOM, TORQUAY TOWN HALL TQ1 3DR

Attendees

Alan Denby (AD)	-	Torbay Development Agency
Barbara Shaw (BS)	-	Westward Housing
Derek Phillips (DP)	-	South West Chambers of Commerce
Eifion Jones (EJ)	-	HotSW LEP
Ellen Vernon (EV)	-	North Devon District Council
Helena Davidson (HD)	-	HotSW LEP
Ian Harrison (IH)	-	HotSW LEP Local Transport Board
John Dixon (JD)	-	Plymouth City Council
Mike Deaton (MD)	-	Devon County Council
Mike O’Dowd-Jones (MODJ)	-	Somerset County Council
Pat Steward (PS)	-	Torbay Council
Paul Hickson (PH)	-	Somerset County Council/HotSW LEP
Sarah Jennings (SJ)	-	Devon County Council
Sue Wilkinson	-	Federation of Small Businesses
Tim Jones (TS)	-	Devon and Cornwall Business Council

Supporting Officers

Rob Hensley (RH)	-	HotSW LEP Place Secretariat/Somerset County Council
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Apologies

Chris Garcia	-	HotSW LEP
David Northey	-	Network Rail
David Scott	-	Federation of Small Businesses
Doug Bamsey	-	Somerset District Councils
Heidi Hallam	-	HotSW LEP
Ian Bowyer	-	Plymouth City Council
Judith Gannon	-	LEP Business Forum
Mark Worsfold	-	South West Water
Mel Squires	-	NFU

	Agenda item	Lead
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies BS welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves. Apologies are noted above.	BS
2.	Declarations of Interest PH and MODJ declared an interest in Huntspill Energy Park (agenda item 7)	BS

3.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting Minutes of the last routine Place Leadership Group meeting (17th January 2018) were approved as an accurate record.</p>	<p>BS RH – <i>To forward minutes for publication</i></p>
4.	<p>Natural Capital Advocacy Document SJ provided an overview of what natural capital is and the benefits that assets (e.g. landscape, soils and fisheries) and ecosystem services (e.g. clean air and water) provide to the HotSW region. At national level, the context is the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Industrial Strategy. Examples of case studies across the region include Upstream Thinking, Poole Harbour, Slow the Flow (Somerset hills and levels), Lyme Bay and Derriford. The North Devon Pioneer (http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/) and collaborative SWEEP research programme (https://sweep.ac.uk/) were also cited as examples of natural capital research and project activity.</p> <p>The Natural Capital Protocol, a framework to inform decision making was flagged as a potentially useful tool. For information see: https://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/protocol/</p> <p>SJ suggested that the setting up of a joint LEP/LNP/Health & Well Being Board HotSW Natural Capital Coalition to champion and lead a NC approach for the HotSW could be one way forward.</p> <p>The discussion highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are likely to be opportunities from Brexit (e.g. from funding arrangements made to replace the Common Agricultural Policy). • The challenge is to define actions; noting that the Draft National Planning Framework contains no real reference to Natural capital. • Assets are subject to condition management, but we must also look for opportunities for economic gain from ecosystem services and environmental benefits. • Natural capital is a cross-cutting theme in the Productivity Strategy and is one of the region’s USPs. There is opportunity to pull through opportunities at the delivery plan stage; what projects should we be doing? • Risk of separate board is that Natural Capital is “pushed away” rather than woven into the Leadership Groups who will be integral to the delivery of the strategy and plan. • Agreed that leadership on Natural Capital is needed. • Agreed actions and associated time sequence would be useful including “quick wins”. • Knowledge sharing, particularly through the next generation via education, training and CPD would be valuable. • Innovation to overtly demonstrate principles and value e.g. via North Devon 	<p>SJ</p>

	<p>Biosphere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofwat's price Review 2019 (PR19) will set high standards for water companies as part of its Water 2020, vision for the water sector in England and Wales. • A toolkit for business needs an urban component and we need to understand how to monetise natural capital initiatives. For example, in the US companies need to demonstrate environmental credentials in order to get investment. In HotSW region, Dartmoor represents a very large carbon capture asset. • Can we reduce the bureaucracy to simplify it whilst respecting local viability and values? • Could we make better use of Land Development Orders and how do we measure progress? • Agreed that work through the LEP and Joint Committee on this important issue would be useful. • We should celebrate what has already been achieved as shown by the case studies. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting group to be formed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distil the presentation - Provide input to Productivity Strategy Delivery Plan - Develop an LNP and Place Leadership group endorsed presentation for the LEP Board in May 2018 - Draft a business facing bulletin • Please provide any further feedback on Natural Capital to SJ. 	<p><i>RH to coordinate group</i></p> <p><i>All to provide any feedback to SJ</i></p>
5.	<p>Rail Update</p> <p>IH gave an update on the following rail items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWR Franchise Consultation – it is thought that the majority of stakeholders support the retention of a single franchise. The LEP made a submission and the DfT is expected to publish a summary of the responses in summer 2018. The GWR response is expected by early autumn with the DfT decision announced by the end of 2018 or early 2019. • SW Railway Franchise – timetable change proposals have been out for consultation and a response from DfT is expected soon. • Interrail Taskforce 20 year Plan – A positive response from Government was received on 28th February as it includes a commitment to resilience, acknowledgement of the need for capacity on other routes when the Somerset levels are flooded. This is encouraging for the LEP and there is now a need to press Network Rail to carry out the work. IH also reported that the Secretary of State is supportive of the preparation of a business case on development work at Exeter and proposals for services from Exeter 	IH

	<p>to Okehampton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWR 2018 Timetable Plans – These have been submitted to Network Rail and include the use of new Intercity train and Exmouth to Paignton services. In due course, rail strategy development will mean better train services from 2019 with service patterns subject to consultation with stakeholders. • Rail Industry Representation on Place Leadership Group – Train operators are interested in representation and this was welcomed by those attending. <p>TJ thanked IH for the valuable insights that he had provided and raised the following areas for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the length of the franchise period was seen as an issue for capital investment - Time improvements from signalisation - Stations (front of house) <p>Franchise Period - IH advised that the short franchise timescale reflected the delay in electrification but this had not stopped the LEP from pressing GWR to replace the train fleet. New trains are currently being built and will be delivered at the end of 2018 and there will be a new time table in 2019. The trains will be maintained by Hitachi in London and Bristol. In addition the more local train fleet will be based in Exeter (where the depot is currently being expanded). The local trains are approximately 30 years old so there is a strong case to replace them in the 2020's. The franchise arrangements won't constitute a blockage if DfT is minded to support the replacement of the trains.</p> <p>Time improvements - will be achieved through revised stopping patterns with signalling put back for now as aggregate time improvements are difficult to achieve at the moment.</p> <p>Stations – There is some funding for improvement in some stations such as Taunton and Plymouth, with an Exeter project in development, but not all stations in the region.</p>	<p>IH – To advise rail operators to liaise with PH & RH</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Coastal Enterprise EV presented a North Devon perspective. See: Coastal Enterprise – an ND Perspective.pptx.</p> <p>The area is diverse and the local economy is traditionally resource based (e.g. tourism, fishing etc) with affluent and impoverished areas adjacent to each other. Challenges include; peripherality, poor connectivity, property and the relatively small hinterland for the economy to draw upon.</p> <p>EV illustrated the issues using Ilfracombe as a case study where the strategic principles are to achieve regeneration through growth by responding to changing consumer behaviours and understanding business needs. This includes steps to support tourism and manufacturing, regeneration using North Devon Council</p>	<p>EV & AD</p>

owned sites and housing growth (e.g. more housing for families).

Since 2012 the unemployment rate has fallen and key lessons have been learning to change perceptions and the need to engage with businesses, both large and small. Obstacles to growth, broken down across sectors were summarised and solutions such as the need for improved digital connectivity and skills, better infrastructure, investment and business support were identified.

The discussion that followed highlighted the need for local ambition and that a major road network to connect to North Devon is a priority.

AD followed with a presentation on coastal enterprise and productivity.

See: Coastal Enterprise Productivity Place140318.pptx

He drew the Group's attention to the National Coastal Communities Alliance (CCA), a partnership of local authorities, organisations and individuals (for details see: <https://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/>). The CCA has an established relationship with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG) on coastal matters.

AD described the work undertaken by the Torbay Development Agency for Torbay Council which sets out the case for actions which are linked to the LEP Productivity Strategy and Industrial Strategy. The challenges, which are common to many coastal areas include, aspiration, ambition, productivity and connectivity. For example, in Torbay, business start-up rates are good, but "scale-up" rates are not. Support is needed to develop skills, to upgrade infrastructure to connect the coast with the hinterland and to support business to unlock the potential of coastal areas. The aspiration is for HotSW LEP to push for national leadership on the issue.

The subsequent discussion highlighted the following key points:

- Where will the skills come from? This is a consistent challenge for local businesses and will need to involve engaging with schools to show the diversity of opportunities.
- The themes described are consistent with those covered in the West Somerset social mobility delivery plan which offers the opportunity to learn lessons and provide a narrative to Government.
- Important that the points of difference in coastal areas are seen as building blocks for the future and not lost.
- What next and what is needed from Place Leadership Group? Need to make sure that the agenda is actively being pursued as the LEP's productivity targets and goals cannot be achieved without addressing the issues. A collective consensus is needed and there is an analogy to the Rural Productivity Commission.
- It also needs to be made clear in LEP documents and dialogue that the

	<p>coastal areas have distinct issues. More emphasis in the Productivity Strategy to raise poor performance would help elevate overall achievement not just the “Golden Opportunities”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To achieve “traction” the scale of what might be broadly thought of as “coastal enterprise zones” need to be right and that is arguably of similar size to Local Authority areas. - It was agreed that an update on this issue would be brought back to the Place Leadership Group in 6 months (September 2018). 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Huntpill Energy Park Growth Deal Business Case</p> <p>IH provided an overview of the presentation that was going to be provided to the Local Transport Board (LTB) later the same day. Whilst there was relatively little traffic when the site was in use by the MoD, the economic case for the development of the site has a strong transport scheme emphasis, the timing of which fits with the schedule for the remediation work. The LEP is contributing almost £4million with the overall cost of the scheme being approximately £10million. The expectation was that the LTB would approve the business case.</p> <p>The subsequent discussion highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 2000 people were employed there when it was an MoD site. A travel plan (to deliver sustainable modes of travel to the site) has been developed. - TJ felt that public funds should not be used to meet the costs of the road scheme as it was part of the original Enterprise Zone allocation. - SJ raised the adverse impacts of the scheme on biodiversity and landscape. IH explained that the scheme has planning permission and therefore Sedgemoor District Council would have taken a view on landscaping. The impact on biodiversity is a result of removing some improved grassland, but a green bridge will be part of the scheme. SJ flagged this as a question for the LEP to consider where an assessment of natural capital should be “up front” and at the start of the process. IH assured that the appropriate due process had been followed when developing the scheme. 	<p>IH</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity Strategy – EJ advised that the strategy will be signed off by the LEP Board and Joint Committee at a joint session on the 23rd of March. The Delivery Plan requires discussion including the approach across the Leadership Groups and Place Leadership Group delivery plan. • Joint LEP Energy Strategy – RH advised that the Strategy and supporting Delivery Plan are nearing completion. Once the final versions have been agreed they will be subject to a final, focussed round of consultation with the aim being for CIOS, Dorset and HotSW LEPs to jointly sign them off by the end of May 2018. • SW Energy Hub – PH reported on the ongoing development of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and operating model for the Hub. • MoD Estates Special Project – RH advised that the specification for the work to analyse the economic impact and opportunities of the sites in question 	

	was ongoing. It was agreed that the work should be Local Authority led with the LEP in a supporting role.	
9.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PS raised the Transforming Cities Fund and the possibility of a LEP led Plymouth – Exeter bid. Should the LEP lead or is LEP endorsement the requirement? • PH raised the need for a LEP response to the Defra consultation on the replacement for Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which closes on the 8th of May 2018. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment • SJ made the group aware that Devon Local Nature Partnership is currently looking for a new Chair. Those with interests in business and farming would be good for the role. 	<p>PH, IH & PS <i>to raise and discuss with Chris Garcia</i></p> <p>RH <i>to convene a meeting to formulate a response.</i></p>
10.	<p>Next meeting: 8th May 2018 – Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Roundswell, Barnstaple EX31 3NP</p>	

Actions Log Summary	Meeting Date	Owner	Status Update	Next Steps
To forward previous Place Leadership Group meeting minutes for publication on HotSW LEP website.	14/03/2018	Rob Hensley	Completed 15/03/2018	N/A
North Devon Corridor rail strategy update to be provided at January Place Leadership Group Meeting.	30/10/2017	David Northey	Deferred	Agenda item at PLG on 08/05/18
Update on transport needs and agenda policy paper for Joint Committee to be provided at January Place Leadership Group Meeting.	30/10/2017	Chris Garcia & Doug Bamsey	ADEPT transport paper to be discussed at next meeting (14/03/2018) Deferred	RH to circulate paper when available
Presentations from March meeting to be circulated.	14/03/2018	Rob Hensley	Completed 27/03/18	

A Natural Capital discussion group to be convened to develop next steps and LEP Board presentation.	14/03/2018	Rob Hensley	Meeting held 11/04/18	Paper taken at PLG on 08/05/18
Please provide any post-meeting feedback on Natural Capital to SJ.	14/03/2018	All		
Rail operators to be advised to liaise with PH and RH regarding participation in future PLG meetings.	14/03/2018	Ian Harrison		
Role of LEP in Transforming Cities Fund bids to be clarified with Chris Garcia.	14/03/2018	Paul Hickson, Ian Harrison and Pat Steward		
Defra consultation response drafting group to be convened.	14/03/2018	Rob Hensley	Meeting held 16/04/18	Draft to be submitted by 08/05/18