

Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group**7 May 2015****Westward Housing Group, Newton Abbott**

Attendees: Barbara Shaw (BS), Derek Phillips (DP), Doug Bamsey (DB), Heidi Hallam (HH), Ian Harrison (IH), Joe Keech (JK), Jonathan Bell (JB), Judith Gannon (JG), Mike O’Dowd Jones (MODJ) Natalie Wainwright (NW), Pat Steward (PS), Paul Hickson (PH), Paul Taylor (PT), Stephen Bird (SB), Tim Jones (TJ).

Apologies: Barbara Richardson (BR), Helena Davison (HD), Mark Robins (MR), Mel Sealey (MS)

Guests: Dan Janota (DJ) and Kevin Bishop (KB) – Dartmoor National Park, Nigel Stone (NS) – Exmoor National Park.

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1. Welcome and Apologies BS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members introduced themselves for the benefit of guests. Apologies were noted, as above.</p>	
<p>2. Declarations of Interest A declaration of interest was made by Paul Hickson/SCC under Item 7, in relation to the appraisal of the Flood Action Plan – Flood Risk Reduction Measures package of projects. Five group members have completed and returned their Declarations of Interest forms for 2015.</p>	<p>All – To complete and return form</p>
<p>3. Notes of meeting – 3 March 2015 The notes of the meeting held on 3 March 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
<p>4. Matters Arising Please refer to the updated actions log at the end of these notes.</p>	
<p>5. Thematic Focus – Rural Housing, Economic Growth and Transport: A Perspective from the National Parks Kevin Bishop and Nigel Stone presented a prospectus for the National Parks, highlighting the importance of this internationally recognised brand in an individual’s decision to relocate to the Heart of the South West and the significant benefits to the health and wellbeing of the local population/workforce. These areas are sensitive to wider events. For example, the flooding of the Somerset Levels and Moors during 2012 resulted in reduced visitor numbers across Exmoor during August of that year, with a knock-on impact on the local economy. The ‘Prosperity through Partnership’ slide (see PowerPoint Presentation) identified that the business profile of these two areas tended to be focused upon tourism, recreation and farming; the workforce profile of the latter becoming increasingly entrepreneurial. Planning and Development - The National Parks are actively challenging the assumption that they are anti-development and stressed that they adopt a solutions focused approach in</p>	<p>NW – To circulate presentation <i>COMMUNICATE</i></p>

their assessment of potential developments, i.e. accepted the erection of a mobile mast, to provide coverage across the 'not spots' as this was in the interests of local people and businesses in the area. Pre-application work is critical in this regard.

- The Ashburton Master Plan is in development;
- Opportunity to regenerate the old Axminster Carpets site in Buckfastleigh;

Connectivity – The NPs contributed additional funds to the Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband Programme, reaching 700 and 300 premises in Exmoor and Dartmoor respectively.

Housing - The provision of local affordable housing has more or less stopped on Exmoor. The NPs stressed the need for the gaps and small-scale delivery to focus on the LEP's radar. Low numbers don't generally attract government interest but collectively the smaller developments are significant.

Businesses and Business Premises – A number of local and distinctive businesses were highlighted. At Cutcombe, Weddon Cross, there is a desire to extend the business hub and provide a nursery for some larger enterprises.

Potential to apply for a new Food Enterprise Zone, i.e. use vacant premises and build on existing food cluster, e.g. Buckfast Tonic Wine, Riverford Organics;

Income/Finance – The NPs' DEFRA grant is calculated according to NP formula and is based on population and nature conservation. They do not/cannot currently benefit from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Business Rate Retention. The New Homes Bonus is paid to the District Councils.

Transport – Additional signposting of the NPs is sought, particularly to Dartmoor NP from the A30/A38. Exmoor hopes to benefit from the A358 improvements.

The potential for a cross-channel ferry service between Ilfracombe and Swansea has been explored. The West Somerset Railway presents a key opportunity, as well as restoration of the Lynton and Barnstable area railway line.

The benefits of the Tour of Britain are still being felt. Further investment in cycling infrastructure is proposed through the Granite and Gears project– which will see new routes and improvements to routes. Funding opportunities to link cycling provision to businesses are being explored;

Other -

- Interest in the future of the prison site at Princetown (owned by the Duchy);
- Dartmoor Hill Farm Project including skills programmes, with health elements i.e. addressing tick-borne diseases;

- Potential to continue Renewable Energy pilots, such as the Lynmouth Bay Wave Hub;
- Growing interest in the heritage and archaeology of Exmoor's Lost Garden.

COMMENTS:

Hinkley Point (HPC) is seen as a mixed blessing for the NPs. There is the potential for a boost to the local economy from all year round tourism and increased spend by the HPC workforce, an increase in house prices would be detrimental however. The Somerset Local Authority study of tourism/research estimated a negative impact of £42k per annum.

TJ - Responding to the funding challenge for core delivery, how can the relationships with the authorities adjacent to the National Parks be developed, i.e. use of New Homes Bonus, etc? JG added that NPs are not housing authorities and rely on LAs to deliver. There could be a role for the LEP in securing funds for NPs. Improved Broadband provision will also be critical for entrepreneurs.

An independent study on the state of farming on Exmoor, shows that the average age of farmers has declined. There is still a healthy interest in farming among young people and a desire to adopt more innovative production methods. In contrast, the age profile of farmers on Dartmoor is old. A 'Next Generation' programme is aimed at 16-25 year olds. The Farm Family model is also providing hard to break. 35-40 year olds have entered farming but their parents still have overall control of the business. Some individuals setting up as a contractor, requires – affordable housing, location to store machinery, farmers use technology but absence of SuperFast Broadband holding the area back.

- Potential opportunity presented by Pillar 2 of CAP programme - £32m for countryside - productivity focused on Business Support. Broadband infrastructure included. Growth Programme links with ESIF. Leader programme focused on farm productivity, diversification, etc. Collective ownership of drones.

Hill Farm projects were funded through the RDPE. No capacity locally to pick up new ESIF strands – farmers need agents, promote collaboration – study tours.

NPs seeking help to identify and access opportunities. Heidi highlighted some of the mismatch between what the NPs want to do and what the funding is for.

QUESTIONS:

National Parks for the nation – how do Parks reach out? - Bridgwater, Taunton, Barnstable, Bristol – could facilitate visits.

How does the wider community engage?

How do we make more of the NP brand?

How do we ensure appropriate balance.?

How can the NPs obtain long-term sustainable funding?

PS stressed that NPs are not islands and strategic connectivity issues need to be picked up. Is the NP supporting the Okehampton to Tavistock Railway connection for example? Would more complete signage be helpful? Employment land should be looked at in terms of value-added, not size and scale.

6. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Heidi Hallam introduced herself as the LEP's Partnerships Manager. She works with, among others: the District Councils, the business community and provides support to Paul Taylor and Stephen Bird in their roles relating to the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF).

Heidi shared an outline proposal for the development of the LEP's Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which is due to be completed by early June. Initially the work will collate details of those stakeholders already engaged with the LEP at various levels and identify who is important, how much power and influence they have and how much resource is dedicated to them.

The first action is to collate the current stakeholder lists; an activity that is being supported by the Leadership Group Support Officers.

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7. Programme Management Update

Growth Deal Plus - The Management Team are anticipating a continuation of the Growth Deal programme, irrespective of the outcome of the General Election. The critical activities in preparation for this, and other opportunities are, to develop:

- A pipeline of projects;
- A process for bringing forward projects, despite not having clear or guaranteed funding sources or values.

European Funds - In respect of the ESIF the LEP has an important influencing role to ensure funding is deployed appropriately. The Implementation Plan is used to determine where funds are invested.

Technical Assistance makes up 4% of the National Programme. The LEP has submitted a bid to assist with publicity and promotion, support feasibility, and the development of an evidence base to support marine development and other Smart Specialisation sectors.

Growth Deal 1 Update - Paul Hickson/SCC Declared an interest in this item. The Flood Action Plan – Flood Risk Reduction Measures Business Case and Interim report was due to be presented to the Strategic Investment Panel (SIP) this afternoon (7 May). Since SCC is the project lead, the Business Case had been externally appraised by Torbay Council. It is anticipated that a final decision will be taken at the June meeting.

8. Transport Infrastructure

An overall green/amber ranking of the transport action plan is being developed for consideration by the LTB and SIP. Issues raised include clarity on governance, capacity of organisations, approaches to procurement, stakeholder engagement, how sustainable transport schemes can support growth. Unlocking growth focus on urban areas. Are we reflecting enough the benefit of sustainable transport schemes?

A significant component of the GD1 programme is transport projects. All 15/16 start projects have been assessed by the LTB and are in a good position to deliver from early Autumn.

The Great Western Franchise Direct Award will take the franchise through until 2019 with the

option for Government to extend into early 2020. There will be significant things happening on the western route, including electrification of the main line to Cardiff and intercity. Benefits will be derived from having an experienced operator. Whilst the focus is not the HotSW, there will be implications for the area. For example, timetable changes will affect our area from May 2017. This is part of plans to enable more rolling-stock to be cascaded to the SW as part of the electrification of Thames Valley services.

Some trains are to be replaced by slightly more modern trains, including an Express train fleet introduced by Dec 2018, which will increase the number of trains running to Paddington; offering a mix of fast and stopping services, including two trains per hour between Paddington and Exeter, which should reduce journey times. Stopping trains will replace the station stops provided by the current service. The franchise deal includes provisional approval to replace the fleet of High Speed Trains. Although the announcement was made in March it is to be signed off by the Department for Transport (DfT) in the post-election period.

TJ asked whether the evidence base could be improved to support sustainable local transport. IH responded that there was an opportunity for additional support from DfT to assemble more evidence to look at the quantifiable benefits of sustainable transport scheme, although these have not been prioritised by the LTB. The first round of investments have focused upon unlocking employment and housing sites to address market failure. The focus could turn to urban sustainable transport schemes.

It was considered useful for the LEP to obtain evidence of the wider benefits of sustainable transport schemes, including promotion of health and well-being and knock-on economic benefits of this.

9. Environmental Resilience – Task and Finish Group Update

The tender has now been let. Parsons Brinckerhoff have supported the Task and Finish Group to devise a stakeholder questionnaire, the results of which will refine the nature of the research and target audience for ongoing engagement. The process has been delayed. Report findings are expected to be presented back to the Leadership Group in three months' time.

10. Housing

a. What next? Discussion Paper

This discussion paper had been drafted to prompt dialogue about housing devolution and to assist the LEP Board in drafting its asks and offers for the incoming Government Administration. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) had indicated that it was wise for the LEP to be preparing its 'asks' ahead of time.

NS raised a question regarding affordability, since the National Parks do not look to the HCA as a source of funding. He suggested it would be great to explore some potential financing models that tackle several policy objectives at the same time.

? commented that the paper currently comes across as rather urban centric. It is unlikely that we will achieve a 15,000 homes site within Devon and Somerset, therefore we need to look at the issue of

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rural housing delivery in more detail.

JG suggested that the LEP needs to go back to the interpretation of planning policy and see how this impacts on delivery. 179,000 new homes by 2030 will not be deliverable due to community veto / Parish Council objections.

The majority of Devon and Somerset is designated as a rural area therefore 5 of less....

Local Plans are currently at examination stage. Do Local Plans fit with the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) of the LEP?

Initial proposals/next steps:

- Confirm definition of affordable housing. Does the LEP wish to secure local affordable housing for local people?
- Seek more support for local innovative housing delivery and particularly smaller developments by local house builders;
- Need to take greater risks to unlock and develop difficult sites;
- Make more of the New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Request increased flexibility within HCA funding to support delivery in rural areas;
- Determine the LEP's housing 'focus'.

b. Task and Finish Group Update

Awaiting preparation of paper.

NW – To recirculate Housing paper with some killer questions for feedback – successes, quick wins, what would make a difference?

NW - To recirculate Task and Finish Group paper.

11. A Spatial Framework for the Heart of the South West – Project Plan

PH reiterated the context for this piece of work, i.e. LEP response to Local Plans, the need for a combined evidence base to refresh and inform the next version of the SEP. The document that was circulated sets out how the work will be taken forward.

This work is being conducted by one of Somerset County Council's Planning Policy Officer, who is providing a part-time project-lead function, supported by a task and finish group.

Green infrastructure has been referred to as natural capital within the document.

The Group was advised that Regen SW were leading/influencing the debate about electricity distribution. It was suggested that Regen SW be invited to the joint meeting with the Business Group on 8 July. Chris Garcia has a meeting with other LEPs and Western Power at the end of the month – work together to obtain SWW already has a strong relationship with Regen SW. LEP has low-carbon SIG.

Upgrading costs – companies with no strategic investment plans.

TJ asked whether this work 'stretched' the LEP enough? Is it forward looking enough? It was agreed that the LEP should ensure the work with universities connects

Comments/considerations:

- Duty to cooperate policy – a lot of people haven't read it or choose not to;
- Consultee process is out of control;
- Ensure we do not reinvent the wheel;

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Local Enterprise Partnership

Creating opportunities in Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to understand the ambition of areas; • How will the business community/private sector be engaged? • Workshop to include key stakeholders - Heidi to be involved in scoping these; • The document articulates the purpose but doesn't articulate the objectives – these need re-emphasising at the beginning of the document. 	
<p>12. Any Other Business</p> <p>TJ – How do we capture future agenda items? NW advised that a forward plan was in development. Suggestions should be made during meetings or via email to NW, who will collate.</p> <p>The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has published the following invitation to tender: http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/research/projects/national-and-regional-research-projects/</p> <p>The People Leadership Group are exploring Construction Skills Client Based Approach, which will have implications for the Place Leadership Group in terms of the LEP and LEP partners' approach to generating and quantifying the employment and skills benefits of their Planning and Procurement activities.</p>	<p>All – To send items for inclusion in the Forward Plan for Place meetings.</p>
<p>13. Next Meeting</p> <p>10:00-12:30, 8 July 2015, NFU, Agricultural House, Pynes Hill, Rydon Lane, Exeter EX2 5ST. Please note the change of venue. This will be a joint meeting with the Business Leadership Group.</p>	

Actions Log Summary	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	Complete	Ongoing PMO function
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	Project Plan presented 07/05/2015	Formation of Task and Finish Group. Workshop 8 July tbc
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
Recirculate Broadband papers	03/03/2015	Natalie Wainwright	Complete	Close

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