

**Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group
9 September 2015
Exchange House, Taunton**

Attendees:

Barbara Shaw (BS)	-	Westward Housing
Paul Hickson (PH)	-	Somerset County Council
Barbara Richardson (BR)	-	Yarlington Housing Association
Alan Denby (AD)	-	Torbay Council
Judith Gannon (JG)	-	LEP Business Forum
Doug Bamsey (DB)	-	Somerset District Councils
Mark Robins (MR)	-	Devon, Plymouth and Somerset Local Nature Partnerships
Jonathon Bell (JB)	-	Plymouth City Council
Stephen Bird (SB)	-	South West Water/ HotSW LEP Board
Joe Keech (JK)	-	Devon County Council
Ian Harrison (IH)	-	HotSW LEP Local Transport Board

Presenters

Chris Balch (CB)	-	University of Plymouth
Mary Elkington (ME)	-	University of Plymouth

Supporting Officers

Natalie Wainwright (NW)	-	HotSW LEP Place Secretariat/Somerset County Council
Mel Sealey (MS)	-	HotSW LEP Programme Management Office

Apologies

Helena Davison (HD)	-	HotSW LEP
Paul Taylor (PT)	-	HotSW LEP
Derek Phillips (DP)	-	South West Chambers of Commerce
Pat Steward (PS)	-	Torbay Council
Tim Jones (TJ)	-	HotSW LEP Board
Heidi Hallam (HH)	-	HotSW LEP

	Agenda item	Lead
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies BS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted, as above.	
2	Declarations of interest Declarations of interest were made by Local Authority Officers in respect of Items six and seven – Local Authority led Growth Deal bids. SB declared an interest in the Exeter Smart Cities work, referred to in Item 10 – South West Water are project sponsors.	
3	Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising Mark Robins and Stephen Bird will establish the truth behind rumours that Climate South West has been wound up. The added value of a joint meeting with the Business Group was questioned. One of the reasons for the joint meeting was the relevance of the Climate South West presentation to both Leadership Groups, as suggested by the LEP Core Team. The purpose of joint meetings should be clearer in future.	MR/SB

<p>4</p>	<p>The role of LEPs in the Planning Process – Presentation by Chris Balch</p> <p>Chris Balch, and his colleague Mary Elkington, presented details of their current research, which builds on the work of the RTPI (see briefing note) and will include interviews with key LEP stakeholders, case studies and workshops.</p> <p><u>Questions/Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not quite as simple as the LEP leading or following planning processes. There are statutory functions that must be fulfilled by local planning authorities, e.g. economic assessments, etc, and informal, non-statutory planning roles that the LEP can lead upon. A connection between this study and the LEP’s emerging spatial assessment work was considered important. • CG commented that it is common for us all to fall into the trap of viewing the LEP as a separate body rather than a partnership. The LEP encompasses many diverse partners and should be considered a platform for addressing common challenges. We are structured to integrate working practices as far as possible. • Cornwall and Wiltshire have demonstrated the added value of the LEP. Whilst the HotSW is more complicated, due to the two tier LA environment, collaboration should be encouraged and made possible. JB – welcomed the work of CB and team, and supported CG’s description of the LEP as a ‘platform’. One output he would particularly like to see is some targeted recommendation and ideas about how LEPs and planning authorities can work better together. He also noted that the Cornwall Local Plan was put on hold by the Planning Inspector as more evidence of collaborative working, rather than ‘support’ was sought. • MR remarked that there were a number of sustainability issues that needed responding to urgently. The HotSW is fortunate to have two NPs, AONBs, and miles of coastline. Some would argue that the LEP is set up to promote an economic pillar of growth, rather than an environmental one. CG’s contribution, regarding the role of the LEP as a diverse partnership, was considered relevant again here. • DB added that the more the LEP can develop recommendations focused on Devon and Somerset, the better, as we need something that reflects with our diverse place and capitalises on the above natural assets. The devolution proposal that has gone in along the LEP boundary is evidence of the Local Authorities’ support for greater collaborative working across the HotSW. • IH – In relation to the RTPI, is this also about cross-LEP collaboration? CB – Agreed that it was. In this region, LEPs have been successful in making the case for strategic connectivity for the SW, i.e. Broadband, so there are already some good practice examples to draw upon. • JG remarked that while LEPs and LAs are being interviewed, those ultimately delivering will be from the private sector. How will their views be taken into account, particularly since LAs can slow down the process through ineffective two tier negotiations? ME – Stakeholder workshops have been scheduled and will include private sector representatives. • SB reminded members of the competitive, national and international landscape in which many of the businesses in the HotSW operate. Their aspiration to increase the ‘size of the pie’ is often constrained by differing views/definitions of 	<p><i>NW to circulate a copy of the slides.</i></p> <p><i>PH to ensure links to spatial assessment.</i></p>
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	<p>‘strategic actions’, i.e. LAs have a tendency to be more parochial, whilst businesses are acting globally. It was suggested that the LEP needed to recalibrate it’s relationship with Whitehall – do we have an appetite to remain in a competitive environment or not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IH highlighted the challenge posed by the increasing involvement of the Treasury in Spatial Planning. There is a need to examine how, as a profession, we cope with this change within Government. CB confirmed that the ‘productivity plan’ does not mention LEPs. Some have suggested that the devolution agenda is about ‘handing the dirty work to local bodies’. 	
<p>5</p>	<p>Programme Management Update - General</p> <p>CG provided the latest position on Growth Deal 3: The LEP is anticipating an announcement from Government following the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). This may include separate specialised ‘pots’ of money held by different departments and not necessarily for pure Growth projects either, i.e. DfT for sustainable transport, BIS for estate management for colleges. We are expecting devolution deals to be announced in stages; as part of Conservative Conference, Budget, etc. The Statement of Intent, submitted for the HotSW, puts us in a good position and work continues on developing the project pipeline.</p> <p>MS provided an update on Enterprise Zones and the SIP: Enterprise Zones Process - An assessment panel met yesterday. Five projects were reviewed. A paper will be presented to the Board on the 16th September. Final submissions are sought by the 18th September.</p> <p>Strategic Investment Panel – Continues to meet monthly, including some special meetings. There is some slippage on spend under GD1. A paper is going to the Board highlighting the potential for one or two projects to be brought forward and/or the introduction of different intervention rates or loans. Although GD2 won’t be confirmed until after CSR, if we have a specific GD2 project that has the potential to pick up some of the slippage, we can push for authority to proceed with one.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Programme Management Update – Growth Deal Update – non transport</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growth Deal 1 – The Flood Action Plan Project Sponsor is working on providing the additional evidence required to meet the conditions of grant funding. A formalised contract is expected to be signed imminently. 2. Growth Deal 2 - Broadband is the Place Group’s sole GD2 project (excluding transport schemes). This could be a potential option for bringing forward, as per the update above re: slippage. 3. GD3 – Project Pipeline – At the time of the meeting, the Place Group had been notified of 18 separate expressions of interest, following the LEP’s most recent call for projects. A list of projects was circulated, which will now be subject to further sifting between the Leadership Groups (to find the most appropriate ‘fit’). Packaging projects as programmes is currently being explored. <p>DB – What does ‘assessed by’ mean. PH- Essentially, which secretariat will act as the case office for projects.</p>	

<p>7</p>	<p>Transport - Presentation by Ian Harrison</p> <p>IH presented the latest position – see slides.</p> <p>It was explained that schemes withdrawn from the LEP programme as part of DfT retention could result in the LEP losing money that will not necessarily be returned. PH suggested that we would need to understand the financial implications of this for the LEP?</p> <p>Details of the First Great Western Direct Award, and an update on other potential Direct Awards, was provided. The electrification strategy is still awaited. The implications of higher costs of electrification are now being worked through.</p> <p>GD 3 - 23 transport proposals have been received by the LTB to date. Bidders have been asked to price their schemes at 2017, rather than 2015 prices. Three possible thematic programmes are emerging and projects have been grouped according to a number of headings (see presentation). A sifting and prioritisation methodology has been adopted and an Officer Group will meet on 10 September to assess further. Cost pressures associated with the new stations at Edginswell and Marsh Barton have resulted in additional funds being sought for these schemes in GD3.</p> <p>JG – How many projects have been held up by s106 negotiations by the Local Planning or Transport Authorities? Perhaps the LEP has a role in managing the protracted debates about housing, education contributions that often hold up delivery of schemes. IH - We do not have a full toolbox to influence these things; the power of persuasion or scheme withdrawal being the main two. It would clearly be ideal for schemes to have support of both the District and County Council, however there is still a need to over-programme to ensure spend.</p>	<p><i>NW to circulate slides.</i></p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Task & Finish Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Housing – The input of colleagues to the draft report has been really valuable. Final tweaking is almost complete and a final version of the report will be presented at our next meeting in November. This will include three or more recommendations for the LEP to discuss/progress; b. Environmental Resilience – . A report, summarising a set of stakeholder interviews, has been shared with Task and Finish Group members. The workshop, originally scheduled for this afternoon (9 September), has been postponed. The group is not entirely happy with the outputs to date and will be following up with the consultants in the coming weeks to ensure that any further involvement, particularly in the workshop planning and delivery, adds value. The project does not expect to report in November as originally planned. c. Spatial Assessment – SCC is leading on this piece of work and will provide a more thorough update to the November meeting. 	<p><i>NW to include Housing and Spatial Assessment on the Forward Plan for November</i></p>

<p>9</p>	<p>Other Groups</p> <p>a. Unlocking Growth Fund – PH stated that £5m had been indicated, which will support projects or programmes in the GD programme. An initial assessment of the GD 2 list has been undertaken.</p> <p>b. Construction Labour and Skills Steering Group - NW attended the first meeting of the Steering Group as an interim representative of the Place Group. Any group member with an interest in attending future meetings, should contact Natalie Wainwright - NEWainwright@somerset.gov.uk for more information. Meetings are currently held every six weeks. There are potential implications of this work for Place Group, since a construction labour and skills shortage will inevitably impact on the ability of the region to deliver the major infrastructure projects within the LEP’s project pipeline.</p> <p>c. Area ESIF – SB said that this group was now moving from shadow form and will next meet in October. An email will be sent seeking to refresh the membership of the area ESIF committee. Details of current ESIF calls can be found here.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Healthy New Towns – Details of this NHS led initiative had been received by the local authorities. Expressions of Interest are sought by 30th September for sites of 250 homes minimum that are at master-planning stage. There may be an opportunity for the LEP to champion a site or pull together existing work in this field. There is a possible overlap with Exeter Smart cities work and the Districts are picking up something similar through their open-space/leisure/health and well-being strategies.</p> <p>DB remarked that while the group receives useful updates, individuals are not asked to contribute the views of the organisations they represent or make decisions. It feels, at times, that there is limited added value. BS reminded everyone of the task and finish groups that had been established to progress some key pieces of work and make recommendations to the LEP Board. The Spatial Assessment work will be important but there was agreement that the role of the Place Leadership Group was not as clear as that of the LTB, for example.</p> <p>BS and PH to review and consider how to incorporate more ‘meaty’ agenda items, ensure the purpose of those items is clear and provide greater opportunity for involvement with GD projects.</p>	<p>AD</p> <p><i>BS/PH to raise with the LEP Board/ Management Team.</i></p>
	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>4 November; 10:00-12:30; Caddsdow Business Support Centre, Bideford EX39 3DX</p>	

See Actions Log Summary Overleaf

Actions Log Summary	Meeting Date	Owner	Status Update	Next Steps
<i>Send notes of most recent meetings to T&F Group members and cc PH.</i>	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	PH to report progress at September meeting - 09/09/2015 – deferred to 04/11/2015.
<i>Circulate forward plan of dates for all LEP Leadership Meetings in 2015/16.</i>	03/11/2014	Natalie Wainwright	LEP Board and Place Group meeting dates circulated with agenda.	Update as required
To complete and return Declarations of Interest form	07/05/2015	Natalie Wainwright	Five completed forms received	All members to complete and return forms.
Recirculate Housing paper with 'killer questions'	07/05/2015	Paul Taylor/Natalie Wainwright	No responses received?	TBC
Recirculate Housing Task and Finish Group paper	07/05/2015	Natalie Wainwright/ Barbara Richardson.	Complete	Consultant engaged to prepare final report.
Send Natalie items for inclusion in the forward plan for Place meetings	07/05/2015	All	Limited suggestions received	Continue
<i>Circulate details of the Resilient Network event to Business/Place Group members.</i>	08/07/2015	Jodie Davis/Natalie Wainwright	Complete	Close
Place Leadership Group to identify priority projects for Growth Deal 3 by 14 September	08/07/2015	All / Natalie Wainwright	In progress	First sift to LEP Board 16 September.