

Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group

30 October 2017

**Westward Housing Group Ltd, Templar House, Collett Way, Newton Abbot
TQ12 4PH**

Attendees

Barbara Shaw (BS)	-	Westward Housing
Chris Garcia (CG)	-	HotSW LEP
David Northey (DN)	-	Network Rail
Derek Phillips (DP)	-	South West Chambers of Commerce
Doug Bamsey (DB)	-	Somerset District Councils
Heidi Hallam (HH)	-	HotSW LEP
Ian Harrison (IH)	-	HotSW LEP Local Transport Board
John Dixon (JD)	-	Plymouth City Council
Mike O'Dowd-Jones (MODJ)	-	Somerset County Council
Pat Steward (PS)	-	Torbay Council
Paul Hickson (PH)	-	Somerset County Council/HotSW LEP
Tim Jones (TS)	-	Devon and Cornwall Business Council

Supporting Officers

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

Apologies

Eifion Jones	-	HotSW LEP
Joe Keech	-	Devon County Council
Mark Worsfold	-	South West Water
Mel Squires	-	NFU
Sarah Jennings	-	Devon City Council

	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 Declarations of Interest were presented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Northey • Tim Jones CG stressed the importance of declarations of interest.	BS
3.	Minutes of the Last Meeting Minutes of the last routine Place Leadership Group meeting (15 th September 2017) were approved as an accurate record. Note, annex summarising HIF bids not to be included as contains commercial information.	BS RH – To forward minutes for publication

<p>4.</p>	<p>Rail Strategy</p> <p>DN gave an overview of rail strategy development. The key points that he highlighted were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current strategy development is seen as a collaborative effort with LEPs, Local Authorities, local communities etc and includes engagement events across the region. • Housing, economy and environment are important for context and potential impact on strategy development. • New developments are significant in that they influence the use of rail network such as regular short and long-distance commuting. • Next year will see the introduction on an hourly service from Taunton to London. • Enhancements identified as needed so far include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcrowding – East Devon to Exeter - Constrained route from Exeter to Newton Abbot - Lengthening trains (from December 2017) • Cross-Country and GWR franchises are up for review in 2019 and 2020 respectively. • Aspiration is to move away from 5 yearly strategic reviews to a more modular strategic planning approach that can be more responsive. • The first example of this approach is the proposal for the North Devon line to Barnstaple where capacity at peak times and the need to access education is important as is the opportunity to develop leisure services in the future. • The Exeter to Bristol corridor is important, particularly with regard to demand for travel to work. Areas where local growth is happening will inform future strategic development. <p>The subsequent discussion covered the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can the LEP do on behalf of the business community over the next 12 months to influence the investment strategy? DN advised that local engagement is planned in order to find out what the business community wants. The outcome could include LEP strategic messages (for key audiences) including the impact on the economy of the region. • Hourly services can be crowded and night services stop before the time that people need it. DN advised that maintenance time is needed. However there is also a need to find out about the value of the night time economy and feed it into franchise agreements. • In addition, people need to travel by a variety of means; where does the region decide what is best? “A travel strategy for the HotSW”. What is the right spatial level for this thinking? For example, how could links be made between areas such as wider Bristol, Cornwall and Devon County? • IH observed that there is a need to work within the regulatory framework, 	
------------------	---	--

	<p>where for example there is more direct control from the Secretary of State regarding rail improvements compared to the deregulated bus industry. The modular strategic approach is a good idea and has been taken on-board for the new SW rail franchise (at the suggestion of the LEP and Local Authorities).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that the GWR franchise consultation was significant and should be considered by the Place Leadership Group. • Further observations were that Reading has been transformed following electrification and connections from Bristol to Newbury compared to concerns over the constraints of the rail connection between Taunton and Bristol and that rail is an undeveloped part of the corridor compared to the M5 for example. • Rail freight is an option for the future but not well developed at the moment and Bridgwater risks missing out if people drive in preference to using a slow stopping service. • A key question therefore is how to engage with and influence the franchises and the regulator? • Commenting on rail as an input in response to the Productivity Strategy consultation would be a useful and valuable. <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DN to report back on the strategy work for the North Devon Corridor at the January Place Leadership group meeting. • A policy paper for the Joint Committee to draw together the transport needs and agendas is to be produced. DB/CG to take to CEO Group. Update to Place Leadership Group in January. 	<p>DN</p> <p>DB & CG</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Productivity Strategy – Place Delivery Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Productivity Strategy replaces the existing Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and it is an economic strategy focussed on productivity. • Consultation is now open and the desire is to maximise the response. The deadline for responses was 30th November – post meeting note this was subsequently extended to 14th December. • Feedback should be sent via Torbay Council website in electronic form for quick responses and free text and also via consultation events. • Delivery plans will follow. • Key parts of the document are the “chevrons” which represent the building blocks of the strategy. • HH advised that the Local Authorities are leading on the consultation event – 23rd November in Plymouth. • CG advised that it is thought likely that the Government will ask for local industrial strategies to contribute to the UK industrial strategy. Sector deals and transport will overlap and we need to work on these as a “Golden Thread”. • The degree to which the Delivery Plan is thematic or spatial will reflect the analysis of the consultation feedback (nothing ruled in or out). 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that the Delivery Plan was key, which raised the question of ownership. When the SEP and supporting Growth Deal documents were produced, it led to Growth Deal bids. • The Joint Committee and the LEP will need to agree policy development and delivery and the discussion will get underway in January 2018. • The Programme Management Office (PMO) is producing a paper to develop the questions around this and the new HotSW LEP CEO job description needs to reflect the outcome (e.g. LEP and/or Joint Committee). • A verbal update will be provided to the Place Leadership Group in January. 	CG
6.	<p>Rural Productivity Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key question was how to raise productivity and prosperity when the focus of the Government is on urban areas. • It was a joint piece of work between Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Dorset, HotSW and Swindon and Wiltshire LEPs. • The process used involved written evidence gathering and hearings following a similar approach adopted by the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission – for details see: https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/final-report-of-the-inclusive-growth-commission • The output was an independent report for SW LEP Chairs with each LEP putting forward a representative. • The main themes from the report were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for and importance of digital connectivity - Smart technologies e.g. to create higher value jobs - Hardworking and entrepreneurial culture, which when added to Natural Capital could be a “hot-house” for enterprise - Agri-food and tourism are strengths - Rural communities risk becoming “fossilised” as rural proofing is not working - Brexit is both opportunity and threat • Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for 100% high speed digital connectivity - Establish a SW Rural taskforce - More focus on Brexit - Links to other LEP areas – SW is not the only rural region - Raise the profile and visibility of strengths • Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National cross-LEP Working Group with Defra and wider Government - Rural Task Force to be established – Government departments contacted already - Feed into the Productivity Strategy 	

	<p>The subsequent discussion covered the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next step is to seek endorsement at the next LEP Chairs Meeting to form a task force to produce a breakdown of agendas for the various Government Departments. The possible outcome being a rural deal although whether this would be regional or national is not known at this stage and neither is it a given that it would receive Government support. • Digital connectivity is the number one concern, but alongside that, how do we help the agri-tourism sector, especially to promote productivity across the board? We must also maintain a focus on Brexit. • Is there an appetite for agri-food-tourism to invest and improve? This is a complex question as continued investment in higher value jobs will create pressure for increased salary costs as people will be attracted to higher paid/higher value jobs. Therefore, businesses need to assess their investment options, including take home pay, as a consequence of the productivity agenda. • There is a complex relationship between rural and urban and the focus on rural must not lose sight of this. However, the policy environment is not clear at the moment and the LEP is covering a broad range of issues (including rural) in order to be able to engage on all agendas when the opportunity arises. • One of the challenges for our land-based economy is how to be innovative and solutions may include collaborative working. 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEIS Energy Capacity Hub PH briefed on the proposal from BEIS for regional energy capacity hubs, which includes a proposal for one in the South West of England. The proposals and way forward for the South West region were to be discussed in more detail with BEIS at an event in Bristol the following day. Topics raised during the discussion included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grid constraints remaining as an issue - The implications for the energy strategy of plans to develop an energy grid interconnector between France and UK with a converter station near Exeter (http://www.fablink.net/category/uk-news/) - Ofgem and National Grid have important roles as well as the influence of the LEP which ties into the Productivity Strategy • LEP Conference HH emphasised the need to book a place to attend and outlined plans for the conference which included the LEP AGM, Leadership Group leading breakout sessions and a presentation by the Growth Hub • Special Project - MoD Estate PH advised that the proposal as supported at the previous Place 	

	Leadership Group meeting was approved for funding by the LEP Finance and Resources Committee. Local Authorities are now working up the study brief to examine high level options to inform the One Public Estate Programme.	
8.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CG advised that of the £490 million half of the National Productivity Funds have been allocated to highway schemes. Successful bids in the HotSW area were; Eastern Exeter Growth Point, Sherford Main Street, Forder Valley Interchange and Moorlake Drive Bus Scheme National Infrastructure Commission initial assessment consultation Volunteers from the Group to be sought to prepare a response on behalf of the HotSW LEP by the 12th of January 2018 consultation response closing date HIF Marginal Viability Funding Bid – Greater Exeter SANGS This bid has been submitted to Government and is seeking HotSW LEP support. RH will assess and circulate to the group for consideration out of committee 	RH RH
9.	Next meeting: 17 th January 2018 – Details to be confirmed	

Actions Log Summary	Meeting Date	Owner	Status Update	Next Steps
Network Rail future plans.	03/05/2017	David Northey	Item taken on 30/10/2017	
To forward previous Place Leadership Group meeting minutes for publication on HotSW LEP website.	30/10/2017	Rob Hensley	Completed 14/11/2017	N/A
North Devon Corridor rail strategy update to be provided at January Place Leadership Group Meeting.	30/10/2017	David Northey		
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		
Verbal update on Productivity Strategy Delivery Plan and policy development to be provided at January Place Leadership Group Meeting.	30/10/2017	Chris Garcia		
Volunteers to be sought to develop a HotSW LEP response to the NIC initial	30/10/2017	Rob Hensley	Invitations sent	Response drafted for

assessment consultation.			16/11/2017	submission by 12/01/18
Assessment of SANGS HIF bid to be circulated for LEP support		Rob Hensley	15/11/2017	Letter of support sent 07/12/17