

Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group 20 April 2021

VIA TEAMS

Attendees

Mel Squires (MS)- NFU (Chair and Board Member)
Andrew Ardley – South Western Railway (Part)
Andy Wood – East Devon Council
Chloe Thomas – Environment Agency
Claire Gibson – HotSW LEP Lead
David Lewis – SW Energy Hub Project Manager
David Northey – Network Rail (Part)
Derek Phillips (DP) - Exeter Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Helen Dobby – Environment Agency
Ian Harrison – HotSW Transport Board
Judith Gannon – Abbey Manor Developments
Julian Gray – South West Coastpath
Mike Deaton (MD) - Devon County Council
Paul Hickson (PH) - Somerset County Council/HotSW LEP
Sally Bell – Openreach
Steve Mewes – Somerset LNP
Tim Jones (TS) - Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Gareth Jones – Hardisty Jones
Liz Abell – DR Company
Daniel Newman - TDC

Supporting Officers - Anne-Marie Spalding - HotSW LEP Place Secretariat

Apologies

Caroline Ayre – Confor
Chris Garnsworthy - WPD
David Edmondson – Torbay Council
Doug Bamsey – Somerset Local Authorities
Hazel Williams - Regen
Helen Dobby (HD)– Environment Agency
Joanne Lee – Plymouth City Council
Lisa Roberts – Exeter University
Mark Worsfold - South West Water
Matt Lobley – Exeter University
Mike O’Dowd Jones (MODJ) - Somerset County Council
Richard Gibson - Cross Country
Ruth Lambert – Federation of Small Businesses

	Agenda item	Lead
1.	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies MS welcomed everyone to the meeting . Apologies are noted above. MS Highlighted that the LEP Review is currently taking place – review around their functions. Further detail will be provided once the review has been completed.</p>	MS
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest None recorded</p>	MS
3.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting Minutes of the last meeting - approved</p>	MS AMS – To forward minutes to publish
4.	<p>Future of Market Towns - See presentation and report Working group set up to inform the report – LEP and local business representatives. Overall objective was to look at the role of towns in the HotSW in the context of the LIS, population of 5,000 – 25,000. Looking at future potential, sustainability, challenges they face, potential contribution to Levelling Up, meeting the objectives of the LIS and Grow Back Better. Contributions to the Growth Plans and also a number of climate emergency and net zero plans. This will be a brief overview with the detail report circulated in the near future.</p> <p>Process has looked at data, modelling of towns and their vulnerability, consultation across the LEP area and then looking at 4 case study towns to get more ‘depth’. Map highlighting towns looked at in the study.</p> <p>One of the pieces of work was around the vulnerability of the towns both through Covid but also looking longer term around structural change. Table on vulnerability displayed from presentation. Looked at Covid vulnerability (eg hospitality, tourism) and also claimant changes in past two years. Also looked at higher age populations, index of multiple deprivation and income data.</p> <p>Challenges and Opportunities – see slide in presentation. Common challenges and opportunities being faced by towns – eg town centres, large new developments and issues around how these have been connected into the towns. Covid has thrown up opportunities around things like digital and home working. Also opportunities around revitalisation and shaping of town centres. New housing can become more inclusive and integrated into towns.</p> <p>Long list of interventions identified which can be delivered across towns. Recovery around Covid-19 – retail, festivals, markets – getting people back into town centres. Bringing more residential into towns. Business and sector support linked to sites and premises – making more sustainable joined up places with housing and work opportunities together. Active travel has come through strongly – eg cycling infrastructure. Road and rail connectivity but most strongly digital connectivity.</p>	Gareth Jones – Hardisty Jones

	<p>Series of recommendations coming out of the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying of UK Government • Strategic planning for town development – Planning white paper raises concerns • Prioritising towns for support • Governance of town growth • Development of town visions and plans – bring stakeholders together • Support project development – getting projects to ‘shovel ready’ state • Monitor and evaluate progress – inform refreshing of plans <p>Further detail in the presentation.</p> <p>Feedback given about scoring of towns– can be ‘toxic’ for towns involved. Financial markets have moved on from the effects of Covid now looking at transitional arrangements, digital, new criteria being used by financial institutions. Many of the points raised are addressed in the full report.</p> <p>Question raised around role of market towns in the future. There is analysis of the current roles in the report – consideration has been given as to how they relate to the rural areas and also cities.</p> <p>People are encouraged to make comment as this is an important piece of work.</p> <p>Report circulated for further feedback. Report to the next meeting about next steps post report.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Coastal Productivity Plan – see presentation</p> <p>Furlough data indicates higher levels of furlough in the Hospitality/Catering Sector and the Arts. This is reflected in our coastal areas across the HotSW. Work started on the plan in 2018, following sign off by the Joint Committee in January 2021, the Coastal Delivery Group (consists of officers from the coastal authorities) and Strategic Group (councillor representatives) were set up in April 2021.</p> <p>Focus on five key themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ideas – role of natural capital and cultural assets in ‘place making’ 2. People – key issues impacting coastal towns such as the ‘brain drain’, social mobility and widening pay gaps. 3. Infrastructure – highlights how it is a key enabler for productivity-led growth 4. Business Environment – identifies how the narrow industrial base of our coastal towns contributes to higher levels of low-wage employment. 5. Place – identifies the characteristics which define our coastal towns as being areas of low productivity. <p>The opportunities were then narrowed down into 5 Strategic Priorities –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Government to raise the profile of coastal economies and ensure the UKSPF recognises and prioritises the challenges in coastal areas. • Pilot a wider coastal business support programme which supports 3 areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital Business Academy supporting businesses to be ‘digitally ready’ 	<p>Dan Newman - TDC</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A small business co-improvement grants – up to £10K - A start-up business support programme. • Seek designation for a Coastal Action Zone (CAZ) in the HotSW. • Explore sector-specific approaches and centres of excellence for training (hospitality, health and social care, construction, advanced engineering) • Local partners should continue to work together to articulate the key road, rail and infrastructure challenges <p>Other priorities include affordable house, poor transport links, VAT relief for hospitality, challenges when furlough ends and Government loans need to be paid back.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify short, medium and long term priorities for delivery - Development of business cases for each of the key strategic priorities. - The CPP is used to proactively lobby Government & others (including LGA) and influence future policy on coastal issues <p>Update Noted and Endorsed.</p>	
5.	<p>Community Led Local Development Report – see presentation and report</p> <p>This study has been commissioned to help inform views about how arrangements for future funding programmes should be designed. This will help to set an informed baseline to assist with potential development of a programme when more information is released around the Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>The study on Community Led Economic Development has been prepared by DR Company and was presented at the Place Group Meeting on 1 July 2021. The Place Group and report contents were endorsed.</p> <p>The study looked at previous programmes to see what worked, what did not and what a future programme may look at. The consultants carried out an extensive literature review, held an online survey (90 respondents) and held 4 workshops as well as holding interviews with key individuals.</p> <p>It was highlighted that previous programmes had become very bureaucratic and top down which did not enhance the development of community led projects. However, the good far outweighs the bad. The bad can be fixed and a new programme would be an opportunity to do this.</p> <p>Key ingredients for Community Led Development are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Dedication • Hands on help – some volunteers help to mentor projects. • Passion for the area • Professional knowledge – ie help from individual professionals • Innovative thinking – thinking creatively how to delivery innovation in the local area • Local knowledge 	Liz Abell – DR Company

	<p>The programme needs to be a balancing act between risk and not stifling creativity. Accountability for public funds but allowing flexibility. Counting outputs is necessary but so is monitoring the overall impact. Drawing on past experience to deliver future success and innovation.</p> <p>Community involvement brings local knowledge and ownership with people willing to commit and give their valuable time. It was felt that enhancement could be made to what is good such as devising an outline framework to allow communities to develop strategies to fit their area. Existing groups have built experience and trust, they are ready for a new task and would maximise results. The identified opportunity would be to develop a new scheme swiftly. Public, private and third sector work well together. Local action is great at delivering small grants fairly and intelligently (use of local knowledge). Provide help on the ground.</p> <p>The interpretation of ‘community’ appeared to be different for people, eg local community, farming community, business community. Therefore, a successful scheme needs to identify the target audience and develop grants to assist the identified sector or develop a more holistic approach, eg Climate Emergency, Energy etc. It was considered important that any new schemes should include both grants and support. Also to have an application process which is proportionate to the level of grant – not one size fits all. Support in the application process and ongoing mentoring were considered to be necessary for the overall success of a programme.</p> <p>Consistency was found to be extremely important, previous programmes had been changed part way through and this creates confusion. Ways of measuring success need to go beyond job creation and numbers of businesses supported, alternative measures need to be considered.</p> <p>The overall conclusion was that community led programmes offer the help, support and knowledge that centrally run programmes cannot offer. Also that there is a current opportunity for a new programme, following the closure of LEADER, before the knowledge and expertise through the various groups is lost.</p> <p>Next steps – this acts as a baseline so that if we are consulted in the future around UK Shared Prosperity Fund – this provides stakeholder engagement and views.</p> <p>Feedback if there are any issues you wish to raise.</p> <p>Report Noted and Endorsed.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Community Energy Fund (Report circulated)</p> <p>Responsible for delivery of the Green Homes Grant (LAD Phase 2) approx. £51m for the region. The procurement has concluded and the HotSW winning bids were from E-on in partnership with Happy Energy.</p> <p>Meetings have been held with Local Authorities in Devon and Somerset. £25k per district offered to help with capacity – Devon are looking via Cosy Devon to get research and also people involved. 5,000 measures across the HotSW with approximately £10m.</p>	<p>David Lewis</p>

	<p>All aware of skills shortages, procurement and capacity within local authorities for the delivery of the available funds – all within incredibly short timelines.</p> <p>Tender has gone out looking at the rural archetypes with a focus on our significant distinct buildings looking at retrofit – not only for the fuel poor but also the emerging elements of ‘able to pay’. This will also look at the opinions of those people as to whether they will or will not take on the work to deliver that. This is to build information for the next 10 to 15 years. Recent meeting with BEIS focused on spend. Battle between Government departments as to who can get the most money so the focus is on what can be spent. It is hoped that with the BEIS focus on climate change that they will receive significant funding and be able to continue to fund the hub.</p> <p>Looking at deep geo-thermal in the South Hams.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Transport Update (Report circulated)</p> <p>Rail franchising has effectively ended. Operators are now moving on to National Rail Contracts. We are now in a new era however it will take legislation to bring it all together. Patronage on the passenger rail network is growing back well, particularly in the South West. Recent figures showed approx. 70% of the pre-Covid patronage. We are doing better than other areas of the country as we are not dependent on commuting. Freight nationally has already grown back to pre-Covid levels.</p> <p>Secondly, on Highways England – the judicial review on Stonehenge took place at the end of June but they do not have any views as to how this went. The hearing was not about whether it was a good scheme or a bad scheme, the key question was if the Secretary of State had acted lawfully or unlawfully in confirming the development consent order. The formal decision will not be heard for a while. The Sparkford to Ilchester scheme is gearing up for delivery on site. The LEP has confirmed its preferred next scheme for the A303 as being the Ilminster by-pass. When that is done then the whole corridor in the HotSW will be dual carriageway. SCC is taking a similar view and it was discussed with the Peninsula board members who are also taking a similar view.</p> <p>Peninsular Transport, the sub national transport body, there have been some changes in the board membership as a consequence of the local elections in May, which has resulted in the timeline for the high level consultation has been put back. The consultation will take place over the summer period through to September. The LEP and other parties may wish to respond to that. The carbon transition strategy is taking longer than expected however the Dept of Transport decarbonisation strategy is overdue and is a key constituent moving forward.</p>	<p>Ian Harrison</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Rural Productivity (See reports)</p> <p>MS – Food Supply chain mapping – almost at point of starting – an excellent partnership of funders, with Exeter University conducting the work . Making this a SW regional, as well as HoTSW, piece of work because of the supply chain, the corridors that move our food around and processing. Draft report and recommendations to be put to the Board in October. Important piece of work due to our economy, impacts of EU exit, Covid, etc. It has helped to bring things together especially in the public procurement area of work. It will aid future investment, planning, lobbying, influencing and decision making in the future.</p>	<p>Anne- Marie Spalding</p>

	<p>Natural Capital Disappointing response to the call for EOIs for the loan fund – only 1 received and that did not fit the fund criteria. After speaking to various groups it was found that it is very early days in terms of Natural Capital projects and also people are awaiting decisions from the EA’s Investment Readiness grant – results due July. We hope to work with people once decisions have been received. Also speaking to Finance Earth and Triodos Bank to see if there is any work to be done with them. The advisory note is being reissued to the Getting Building Fund projects having had input from the Natural Capital Working Group.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Workplan The LEP has an annual workplan - Microsoft Word - 210511 Heart of the SW LEP Work Plan 21-22 (heartofswlep.co.uk)</p> <p>We have covered the Place components of that workplan in the agenda. Other areas of work are Levelling Up and Strategic Agendas.</p> <p>We have covered the Future of Market Towns which was a deliverable for the first quarter. Discussions to be had ‘offline’ and report/recommendations brought back to the next meeting.</p> <p>Levelling Up fund – Round 1 ended on 18th June. High level of interest across the HotSW with a number of submissions made. In Somerset there was a regeneration bid from Somerset West & Taunton and a transport connectivity bid from Somerset County Council for the A38 corridor. In Torbay there was package submitted for the Torbay area for an Electronic and Photonics park. Districts across Devon, with the exception of South Hams and West Devon, made submissions. It is a multi round funding stream so further information is expected in the Autumn. The LEP played a supporting role rather than a bidding agency.</p> <p>Natural Capital – working with Exeter University alongside their SWEEP programme to run a series of webinars in the Autumn around Natural Capital.</p> <p>Employment land and sites for business are areas of work. Think piece – workshop to be arranged. Members of this group will be invited and outputs brought to a future meeting.</p> <p>Continue to work with Enterprise Zones across HotSW. Feedback from advanced zones – Oceansgate and East Devon – is that they have been fairly resilient through Covid. Announcement of Free zone for Plymouth and South West Devon - work for the LEP on mobilisation post that announcement.</p>	<p>Paul Hickson</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>AOB Steve Mewes – Hinkley Point C – there has been a Public Enquiry regarding an acoustic fish deterrent. Somerset Wildlife Trust was involved. EDF wanted to change the planning conditions to remove one of the aspects related to fish kill and the EA opposed it. The Planning Inspector chaired, Severn Estuaries Interest Group took part. Report will go to the Secretary of State, probably in the Autumn, for decision. Wish to ensure that the fish in the Severn Estuary are protected as much as possible – Natural Capital issue.</p>	
<p>Next meeting: 15 September 21 – 11:0 to 12:30 - via Teams (?)</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.	01/07/21	Anne-Marie Spalding		N/A
Information on funding opportunities to be shared	08/05/19	All	Ongoing	Ongoing
Natural Capital Demonstrator fund - next Steps	Ongoing	Anne-Marie Spalding	Next Steps to be developed	
Explore additional resource for Natural Capital task group	Ongoing	Paul Hickson		

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ANNEX – Strategic intervention Ideas for Infrastructure and Place

Foundation – Infrastructure	
Clean Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled distributed generation capacity/capability • Grid distribution capacity • EV infrastructure (roads) • Electrification of rail
Advanced Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution network and connectivity e.g. resilience of A303 • Access to ports and airports e.g. for international connectivity/exports • Supply chain efficiencies... (export region)
Artificial Intelligence and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital connectivity and resilience • (Big) data management e.g. to facilitate/optimize smart transport and grid networks • Data management/ownership etc • Added value from data
General Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility services e.g. to support zero carbon cities • Green infrastructure e.g. cycle routes, pedestrian walkways • Urban green spaces?

Foundation – Place	
Clean Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of regional renewable energy resources e.g. solar, wind, biomass and tidal • Innovative local energy solutions e.g. heat networks, ground source heating, efficient build etc • Grid distribution capacity
Advanced Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionally developed renewable energy technologies/solutions? • Land management/agri-technologies to promote clean productivity gains e.g. monitoring and autonomous systems • Food processing opportunities
Artificial Intelligence and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems and analyses to support land management to facilitate resource use and agri-tech productivity gains • Smart energy management • Food supply chain management • Data analysis opportunities/services – competitive advantages • Better equip businesses about data ownership, management, exploitation, marketing e.g. through cooperation/collaboration
General Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon capture/sequestration opportunities • Land management opportunities e.g. natural flood protection and payment for ecosystem services and for the “public good” • Digital connectivity • Feedback loop with infrastructure piece and natural capital • Carbon balance sheet • Circular economy • Health and well-being benefits

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