

Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group

17 November 2021

VIA TEAMS

Attendees

Mel Squires - NFU (Chair and Board Member)
Andy Wood – East Devon Council
David Lewis – SW Energy Hub Project Manager
Doug Bamsey – Somerset Local Authorities
Joanne Lee – Plymouth City Council
Julian Gray – South West Coastpath
Lisa Roberts – Exeter University
Mark Rice – Environment Agency
Mike Deaton - Devon County Council
Paul Hickson - Somerset County Council/HotSW LEP
Richard Gibson - Cross Country
Ruth Lambert – Federation of Small Businesses
Sally Bell – Openreach
Steve Mewes – Somerset LNP
Tim Jones - Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Tom Dauben – Environment Agency

Supporting Officers - Anne-Marie Spalding - HotSW LEP Place Operational Lead
Carl Benneyworth – HotSW Operational Lead

Apologies

Andrew Ardley – South Western Railway
Caroline Ayre – Confor
Chris Garnsworthy - WPD
Claire Gibson – HotSW LEP Lead
David Edmondson – Torbay Council
David Northey – Network Rail
Derek Phillips - Exeter Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Ian Harrison – HotSW Transport Board
Hazel Williams - Regen
Helen Dobby – Environment Agency
Judith Gannon – Abbey Manor Developments
Mark Worsfold - South West Water
Matt Loble – Exeter University
Mike O’Dowd Jones - Somerset County Council
Sarah Jennings – Devon LNP

	Agenda item	Lead
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies are noted above.	MS
2.	Declarations of Interest None recorded	MS
3.	Minutes of the Last Meeting MS went through page by page. No actions to update. Minutes of the last meeting - approved	MS AMS – To <i>forward minutes to publish</i>
4.	Flood Risk Management Plan Presentation shared Flood Risk Management Plan is out for consultation and people were invited to provide responses – consultation period is 3 months. Key aim of the Erosion Risk Strategy is looking at the resilience to the year 2100. This is setting out the longer term goal – other work being undertaken to address short term objectives. National strategy has three main aims – Climate resilience for places; Growth and Infrastructure resilience; Respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change. Strategy is moving away from protecting against flooding and more towards resilience/adaptation for climate change. Resilience means living with flooding and communities being more prepared. Increasing protection where possible but not feasible everywhere. If it is not feasible then there are complementary actions that can be undertaken. Communities will need to take responsibility for actions where appropriate. Looking at the responses to the National Strategy – there has already been one local flood risk management plan (these cover a period of 6 years). Just entered the second cycle – 2021 – 2027. Flood Risk Regulations (2009) are statutory regulations and sit alongside the coastal management plans and regulations. Plan Format – the country is split into River Basin Districts – the slide covers the South West Area as a whole. The Regional FRMP is much more locally focused – what should be done in certain areas. Some activities will be undertaken across the whole of the SW area, there is one Strategic area (Somerset Levels & Moors) plus there are 17 Flood Risk areas (listed on the slide). Example measures (actions) – see slide for examples. Data becoming much more accessible – Flood Plan Explorer. Currently working on another plan – River Basin Management Plan which focuses on all other environmental activities that help to delivery the 25 year plan. This is also out for consultation until 22 nd April 2022. The Environment Agency is hoping to get a wide range of views around the work of both plans.	Tom Dauben Environme nt Agency

Useful links

FRMP information page

[Introducing Second Cycle Flood Risk Management Plans Information page.](#)

The FRMP and RBMP consultations will be available here:

[Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](#)

Here are the FRMPs published in 2016:

[Flood risk management plans \(FRMPs\): 2015 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Here are the RBMPs published in 2016:

[River basin management plans: 2015 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Here is the national flood and coastal risk management strategy for England published in 2020:

[National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



Questions

Q - Somerset Levels & Moors – flood risk strategy to be developed between 2021 and 2027 – do we know what date this will be?

A – unfortunately not at this time – this is being handled by the EA Wessex Area – question will be taken away

Somerset Rivers Authority are starting to review the Flood Action Plan – dovetailing with the EA work would seem to make sense. The word ‘flood’ is often misused as the eco systems need to be able to work which means that sometimes some areas are wetter than others. It is challenging to get the ecology working alongside the water management issues.

Q – how do these come together as they are from opposing end?

A - Things like dredging and keeping water off the land will need to change, this is obviously more challenging in an area such as the Somerset Levels & Moors. It is not always detrimental to have water on the land, it is better to have that than water running into the towns. There is a need to look at how this can be done so that it is not there for weeks or months and reduce productivity. It is about using the natural processes to hold the water in and slow the flow to other areas at risk. The plans aim to show how ecology and the management of water come together. EA have been working with local authorities and other partners to see how this can be done.

Q – around economic resilience given the fragility of our coastal communities – how do we build pragmatism into this and transitional management so that the economic activities can be sustained.

A – quite difficult to unpick the higher level aspirations however they are underpinned by evidence and funding – it will probably come back to what natural processes are we combatting. The decision will need to be made at some stage as to whether or not it is feasible to keep something. EA intend to carry out modelling to try to ascertain when that pinch point is and this will be different in each situation. Decisions need to consider the ‘fight’ against natural processes. EA has a lot of information that could be used to look at economic impacts and it does warrant delving into in more detail to get a picture. It needs to be a key part of decision making.

5.	<p>Future of Workspace Discussion Findings</p> <p>The workshop was set to become the start of discussions around the future of workspace – looking 10 years or more ahead and what the drivers of change will be. A wide range of issues were covered and attendees brought their own expertise/knowledge. There a few points worth highlighting – there are 4 things mainly brought to the discussion :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of workspace in the future – are they going to be large centres or are they going to be smaller and more local? • Locations – will there be more opportunities around smaller towns? • Nature of buildings – what will they be used for, how will they be designed? (eg Clean and Passiv to encourage well-being) • Building and construction – how might this change given the climate emergency, types of materials, more flexible buildings (perhaps constructed off site in a modular way), retrofitting, different technologies coming forward. <div data-bbox="204 896 1334 1505"> <p>Final thoughts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses to the climate crisis will drive a whole range of changes - from building design to construction methods; from location to planning; and from key sectors to key skills. • Can HotSW capitalise on the trends and drivers around the green agenda? • The changing nature of the retail sector and office space means a fundamental rethink about the role and purpose of city centres and smaller towns. • Changes in the nature of manufacturing and distribution may allow a much more flexible response to where workspace is located. • Given the changing nature of work, where work will happen and the role of towns and cities, it may be useful to create an a regional spatial strategy to guide/inform land-use planning within HotSW? • New technologies will enable new ways of working, building, shopping and travel. Any unintended consequences of embracing new technologies need to be thought through early - especially as regards inclusion and the environment. • Keeping abreast of the rapidly changing expectations around work and workplaces could allow HotSW to shape the agenda and create new opportunities. A clear need to keep in mind those that have little say about where and how they work. • It is always cheaper to get things right at the outset on new build, rather than have to retrofit afterwards. • Flexible designs and modular construction should enable change of use over time - extending the life of buildings. </div> <p>There is still work to be done on this. A point was raised around the rural/urban split as the HotSW is predominantly rural – plus there needs to be a focus on people moving around. The discussions around the smaller towns had focused on this and office workers were discussed however there are many other people who are unable to work from home so they needed consideration.</p> <p>Wellbeing was highlighted as an important area for consideration. Also the current stock and the issues around retrofit – especially in listed buildings.</p> <p>The HotSW’s aspirations around Clean Growth need to be considered – Clean Growth can be big construction, eg Gravity in Sedgemoor. Also how do we provide workspace that will allow people to be embraced by the economy rather than being a victim – large percentage of working poor in the HotSW.</p>	Simon Hooton – Ash Futures
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	<p>Interesting to see the advances made by Amazon on delivery vans having taken their fleet back in house. Also the repurposing of Winslade Park into smaller, more agile workspace and the strength of the health and well-being offer that has come with that.</p> <p>Exeter University expressed an interest in working on this in the future.</p> <p>Skills and Advisory Panel for HotSW are undertaking work as part of their programme around the future of work – this could be share with the group alongside this piece of work. There is a need to look at how to keep this work progressing with ongoing input.</p>	
6.	<p>Food Mapping</p> <p>Press releases went out – still seeking more interviewees, if anyone knows of someone that would like to take part then please get in touch. It is good opportunity to scope this work.</p> <p>Another piece of work is to replicate the Gloucestershire LEP/LNP work around BPS reduction and the impact on farming, land management, food production in the future. This will have an economic impact with CAP receipts being reduced from now over the next 4 years which will impact farms around the amount of income they receive. Across the Great South West that equates to around £330m last year to farmers alone. This will have an impact on both the local economy and also food supply chains. We feel we need to understand this better across the counties – that piece of research is being worked up now and we will be looking to deliver that report in the Spring.</p> <p>Alongside that, we are putting forward a proposal to the MPs at the APPG with the Chairs of Dorset, Cornwall and HotSW to highlight that the result of this and future trade, the need to build resilience and to respond to climate change, the issues for farming and the food supply chain. Inflation and costs are going up, packaging and plastic costs in food production has gone up a minimum of 25%, challenges around labour costs, logistics. Inflation costs on farm have recently risen to 22% and profitability is reasonably low. We therefore want to put forward a proposal that can build in resilience into our farming and food supply chain. We are concerned around the uncertainty of funding and the viability of future ELMS scheme – concerned whether farms will be able to engage and run alongside their current businesses and also whether they will pay enough. There is a need to highlight that these schemes and associated funding is only held to the end of this Parliament (two years). This country currently has the highest welfare and environmental standards but they look set to be undermined over the next 10/15 years. There are huge opportunities to become engaged in Net Zero. Future Trade Deals could have a significant effect on our rural economy.</p> <p>Funds will be competitive and it is not a ‘given’ that we will get it.</p>	Mel Squires
7.	<p>Comprehensive Review and LEP Update</p> <p>LEP review – no additional information. Working assumption is that the LEP review will be published at the same time as the Levelling Up White Paper. This is obviously a longer time than anticipated and due to the shuffle in ministers, Michael Gove is taking a thorough look at the review and the Levelling Up process. The LEP Network is pushing for further information on the role of LEPS.</p>	Paul Hickson

	<p>CSR also contained Levelling Up announcements – more detail in the Transport report. Two successful bids – one in Somerset relating to the A38 corridor and also one in Plymouth. Some disappointment around the bids submitted for Round 1. There were also two announcements for rail station restoration – Wellington and Cullompton – in our patch.</p> <p>In terms of the CSR itself there was a ‘marker set’ for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund but no more detail at the moment. The announcement of a national top slice from the fund for a numeracy programme to be handled centrally by the Government may set the scene for the future.</p> <p>Post CSR we have also seen announcements around the Community Renewal Fund the HotSW received around £15m in awards with successes across Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay although there were some disappointments around submissions across the area.</p>	
8.	<p>Energy Update</p> <p>Apologies that there has not been a written report.</p> <p>Two active projects out with consultants at the moment :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine heat pump project, Plymouth City Council – that is coming to the end of Stage 1 – this is looking at the constraints on developing up to 5 sites for large scale heat pumps to fit into their expanding district heating system or for individual clusters of buildings (eg Marine Aquarium). This is a pre-feasibility piece of work looking at constraints within tidal reaches, the Environment Agency extraction etc before going to full feasibility on a smaller number of those sites. WSP are leading on that. Few contractual issues to sort out but otherwise everyone is happy with the progress. • Devon County Council looking at the rural archetypes around the able to pay markets. This is being carried out by Regen and Parity – within the data market. This is progressing well and Stage 1 is nearly completed – looking at what needs to be done with the majority of the houses to make them heat pump ready and to get them up to a level C on their EPC rating. Should have some conclusions to share by January. <p>Skills Project – this is a regional skills project started by the Hub. Currently trying to get a consensus of opinion. Those that have shown interest have been HotSW, Cornwall and Gloucester. Opinion of the Hub is that this is still pertinent and that they will work with those LEPs who are interested – each LEP has a different requirement in terms of skills and their energy projects. Update to come in the New Year but hope to have a project for the HotSW.</p> <p>Busy few weeks with COP26. Heat and Building Strategy has come through with many other strategies coming forward from Government. Document seemed light around commercial properties – need to see what the impact will be around SMEs and commercial market. CSR – no news from BEIS until around February once business planning is completed. Assurance that the Hub work will continue – likely that the name will change to Net Zero Hubs. One link that has been missing is work with the private sector – currently signposted to most relevant advice. Should be in a position to write a report in the New Year to set out work.</p> <p>Currently recruiting to build Public Sector Decarbonisation Team to assist local authorities with investment level energy surveys to help authorities with bidding for Decarbonisation funds. Getting the right skills in place is proving difficult but hopefully team will be up and</p>	David Lewis

	<p>running by February. HotSW and Cornwall are already engaged and have around 50 properties waiting to be surveyed.</p> <p>Also currently recruiting for a Project Manager for Dorset so DL will be covering just HotSW.</p> <p>Closing date for next round of RCEF funding is January. Full update to be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>Question – if new role is around Net Zero will the hub also be dealing with sequestration issues? A – waiting for things to settle down and also see what Treasury has to say.</p> <p>Comment made around the skills project – some very high figures coming out of research – eg 32000 workers needed just to keep pace with the targets that we now have around Net Zero and also stats around new job creation. Some challenging situations and a need to build these into early actions in the project. Consensus still needed with all the LEPs – BEIS would like to see a regional piece of work. Discussions with HotSW will be around what is needed for the specific area, what is important for the area and also co-ordination of colleges. There is a massive skills gap to fill.</p>	
8.	<p>Updates</p> <p>Transport Report provided – taken as read. No questions posted.</p> <p>Natural Capital Notes on White Paper provided Options paper being prepared to look at how to move things forward and also to look at legacy. Discussions taking place with organisations across the area who are considering natural capital projects. The Environment Agency has just launched the second round of the Investment Readiness fund.</p> <p>Rural Productivity Report provided – update will be circulated as CB experienced connectivity issues.</p>	<p>IH</p> <p>AMS</p> <p>CB</p>
8.	<p>OKRs PH to circulate the Place Group documentation which went to the Board in October. Reported quarterly.</p>	PH
10	<p>AOB Question raised around the urban and rural balance – is the work now balanced and being reflected in LEP priorities? It is now all integral to the work of the LEP and the focus is around funding. Point being raised that ‘Levelling Up’ is not just an urban issue or a North/South. Pushing this as the Great South West with our neighbours. Coastal Productivity plan should also help. A number of different aspects are affecting the work that we need to take into consideration.</p>	
	Next meeting: 12 January 2022 - 12:30 to 14:00 - via Teams	

Actions Log Summary	Meeting Date	Owner	Status Update	Next Steps
To forward previous Place Leadership Group meeting minutes for publication on HotSW LEP website.	15/09/21	Anne-Marie Spalding	Completed	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	Under revision	Draw up options paper
Explore additional resource for Natural Capital task group	Ongoing	Paul Hickson		

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