

DRAFT Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group

12 January 2022

VIA TEAMS

Attendees

Mel Squires - NFU (Chair and Board Member)

Claire Gibson – HotSW LEP Lead

David Lewis – SW Energy Hub Project Manager

David Northey – Network Rail

Doug Bamsey – Somerset Local Authorities

Ian Harrison – HotSW Transport Board

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

Presenter

Patricia Rice – Natural England

Supporting Officers - Anne-Marie Spalding - HotSW LEP Place Operational Lead

Carl Benneyworth – HotSW Rural Productivity Operational Lead

Apologies

Andrew Ardley – South Western Railway

Andy Wood – East Devon Council

Caroline Ayre – Confor

Chris Garnsworthy - WPD

David Edmondson – Torbay Council

Derek Phillips - Exeter Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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.	Natural Capital in Decision Making See Presentation Natural England has produced this resource to enable partnerships to work strategically with Natural Capital evidence in decision making. Natural Capital has grown from a need to bring the value of the environment into our decision making, not only monetary values but also valuing the benefits. This provides a useful framework and lens for approaching Green Finance. Natural Capital is about the benefits we get and how it benefits people. A stock of natural resources and include things like species, habitats, soils and the air that we breathe. These are classed as eco-systems – these can be classified in lots of different ways but generally speaking things like crops and food. These benefits help to regulate possible problems in the environment – water quality, clean air and climate regulation. Cultural services are those non material benefits that we get – the feeling of being with nature, physical activity etc. We are able to value some of the benefits but not all of them. Natural England uses this logic chain to try and help to frame natural capital evidence as this allows a links between ecosystem assets. There are some key things to consider in terms of ecosystem assets and these are really important for the sustainable provision of those benefits for the future. Condition and also location are important – eg woodland would be more useful for regulating air quality if it is between a busy road and housing. The evidence handbook is effectively a distillation of the work that Natural England has been doing for the last decade – pulling together and trying to make natural capital evidence easy to access. This is free to access and is accessible to anyone who is working in place based planning and place based decision making.	Patricia Rice – Natural England

	<p>The handbook provides real situations and it brings together a lot of the tools and resources that Natural England has assembled. There are lots of approaches and resources – the handbook provides an introduction to natural capital and how different types of natural capital evidence can be used and how they fit together.</p> <p>The handbook is meant to be adaptive not prescriptive taking the user through a suite of stages in terms of developing a co-created and collaborative plan from visioning through to maximising the opportunities for it to be reflected in delivery and also how to evaluate and improve a plan. Rather than seeing Natural Capital as something else it helps to include it in the whole process of creating places with a healthy natural environment for a healthy and happy population or community.</p> <p>The approach set out in the handbook helps to create community engagement and buy in. It enables a holistic view of a place.</p> <p>Q - nature will always come second to jobs and growth – how can the economic model be progressed? A – Down to policy and how governments might decide to try to balance this. NE trying to work on ways to incorporate nature as well as people’s health and sustainability into the way decisions are made. To shift the balance away from economics. It is a challenge.</p> <p>It is difficult to map and value the mental wellbeing benefits of say just going for a walk. Approach should be to always include the value of the things that cannot be monetized. Challenge is to make sure that wellbeing is always part of the value and part of the evaluation metrics.</p> <p>Open invitation from Exeter University for anyone to find out more about the work done with Natural England, They have lots of case studies and models on real life examples of how these things can be linked. The South West has got the best natural assets and academic assets in this space making it the South West natural Capital.</p> <p>HotSW LEP are trying to embed a commitment to clean and inclusive growth into the decision making framework and Nat Cap is a key component.</p> <p>Linkages do not seem to have yet occurred – they have been recognised but that is as far as it seems to have gone.</p> <p>Natural England’s approach to natural capital as represented in the handbook is a relection of the ecological underpinning and absolutely about solving climate emergency. The challenge is moving natural capital from a purely economic space and keeping the natural environment and the healthy condition of those assets integrated into the decision making processes.</p>	
5.	<p>LEP Review</p> <p>There is not much to say on the LEP Review other than to remind you that it is under review nationally. Michael Gove is reviewing the whole thing and we are waiting for announcements. We don’t know what is happening yet and so the board will be discussing what interim</p>	Mel Squires

	<p>measures need to be put in place. We will keep you apprised of any changes that might come.</p> <p>The Levelling Up White paper may have more detail in it when it is published.</p> <p>Request made that any discussions re a possible response to be done by email.</p>	
6.	<p>Food Mapping</p> <p>Report re public procurement has been conducted with partners via Exeter University, Prof Matt Lobley who has led that will be presenting to the board on the 22nd. It has probably not given us all the answers we wanted but it has certainly helped us to understand the dynamics a bit better. This will be shared as soon as we are able to publish.</p> <p>Whole Farm Advisory Service</p> <p>We are looking to try and champion the proposal of a whole farm business advisory service, Not just because of ELMS, which is not looking too attractive or easy for our small family farms to access in the future. It is a massive amount of change, but the programme will be about the whole health of the business. We need farmers to do more in the future so that piece of work is ongoing.</p> <p>Alongside this we are doing a piece of research, modelled on the work done in Gloucestershire around BPS which I believe will be commissioned shortly.</p> <p>Great South West has this on the agenda as well. Agriculture has wide ranging consequences when we talk about natural capital and future land management – this is quite critical.</p> <p>Point raised – the food and farming agenda seems to be a political battleground that we are in grave danger of losing ground on. We need to highlight the importance of food and drink production to the South West. How do we manage inflation with the trajectory around energy price increases . Also the international food and drink production market is just going to happen. A senior minister commented that we should rebase ourselves – sustainability in terms of the ability to provide our own food stock from 60% to 50% would be acceptable. Perhaps the LEP could become the voice of the business community as the dependencies seem to be poorly understood about how integral this is to a healthy SW economy.</p> <p>The assumption of importing even more food into the country, given all the challenges in the future with net zero is why we are doing the public procurement work as we should be looking at being more self-sustaining and addressing our environmental issues. We need to equip our land managers or land users to be able to respond to the future. If consumers decide they don't want local British food it would be a great shame and particularly in this part of the world. Inflation on all inputs however has gone up between 22 and 25% with some rising even further.</p>	Mel Squires
7.	<p>Working Group Updates</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>David Lewis sent apologies – written report requested</p> <p>Point raised that energy is a key piece at the moment due to increasing costs – noted.</p>	

<p>Deep Dive on Energy scheduled for the Board on 11th March</p> <p>Transport</p> <p><u>Highways</u> - A303/A358 strategic second route the to South West. Sparkford to Ilchester scheme on site and under construction.</p> <p>A358 dualling – pre-development consent order consultation in the Autumn – LEP responded positively. Quite a lot of negative comments from some of the local councils along the route – concerns about the relatively small number of accesses. Two major junctions on the route between Taunton and Southfields. Communities will have to accommodate change and this could be an issue. Development consent order application to be submitted later this year.</p> <p>The Stonehenge development consent order was quashed in the summer following judicial review. The Secretary of State has now indicated that he will redetermine the application. National Highways were invited to make a submission to the Planning Inspectorate. Deadline for this was 11 January. There will be a short consultation period where stakeholders such as the LEP will be able to both comment on the submission and also make any other comments about strengthening the case. It has been strengthened as the other A303 improvements are in train and the business case previously just looked at the Stonehenge scheme on its own individual merits as a standalone scheme.</p> <p>The Secretary of State has also announced the next improvement on the A303, The LEP was supporting the dualling of the Ilminster bypass. Assuming that happens then that is the final parts of the A303/A358 corridor within the HotSW.</p> <p>Comment – We are not going to see a lot more money invested in our networks and the relationship between new development and Section 106 contributions is critical. There is a challenge in North Devon about the quality of the junctions on the Roundwell section and whether they need to be enhanced,</p> <p><u>Public Transport</u> – Significant move in the rail field – Government is gearing up following the rail White Paper which envisaged the setting up of a Great British railway bringing together track and train operation.</p> <p>The preparation of a whole industry plan has been started although it can't be implemented until legislation has gone through Parliament and there is a question about the timescale for this.</p> <p>Buses – all local authorities have submitted their bus service improvement plan (late Autumn) and decisions on allocations are expected in the budget at the end of October. £1.2 allocation however this is probably 2 or 3 time oversubscribed. There are challenging times ahead about what will be prioritised in terms of public support for bus services.</p> <p>Extreme pressures on both bus and rail industry through Covid 19 impact. Drastic reduction in public transport patronage.</p> <p>Support for the rail industry increased by £9 billion in 2020/21 because the rail industry was being asked to run. Pretty much the same quantum of services but with a massive reduction in patronage, therefore a massive reduction in fares income. Patronage returned pretty well in the South West in places like Exeter and Taunton which were back up to 100% of the pre-</p>	<p>Ian Harrison</p>
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pandemic patronage in September. However commuting into London and cross country routes were down at the 50% mark.

It is therefore going to be quite challenging in terms of the LEP's blueprint for clean growth. Need to make the point that we need to maintain and increase services in our area.

Question – does this offer a bigger opportunity for Rail Freight given the reducing passenger use and the increased challenges with heavy goods vehicles and decarbonisation.

IN the next 6/12 months there needs to be a refocus on Bridgwater. Transferring from road to rail must be discussed as an option both in terms of multimodal freight but also express logistics.

Peninsula transport is a local transport authority body. The five local transport authorities But the LEP's National highways and Networkrail are co opted onto the board. They've been doing a range of thematic studies which are drawing to their conclusion on things like.

Economic corridors, carbon impact, electric vehicles and technology and then rail rural mobility things like that. This year is the year that they've got to pull that together into a strategy, a transport strategy, and so they're just coming to grips with the questions of of. What the purpose of the strategy is? Who it's who it's for, who will influence, coordination of transport policies across local authorities.. There's also a question about who it's influencing. There is a role for the LEP in this, In trying to make sure that it's influencing not just government but also private sector investment and that it links with things that like energy policy that has been discussed.

Point raised – The Gravity site has at least two enquiries which seem very serious and both state where all access to be essential and that Government seems to be committing to spend the money to achieve that. It will make a big difference to the business that is attracted and it is key to push to Government to provide the commitment they seem to have provided.

Emphasis made about the link between the transport and the energy agenda, a Meeting was organized between the three great SW LEP'S and Western Power which was really useful. Sort of an introductory meeting because we haven't really been as engaged with them as some local authorities clearly are, but we're correcting that now. But one thing that they mentioned is that some of these motorway service applications for fast chargers. are potentially asking for about 20 megawatts for these sites, which in their words was a like planning for a small town. This is a massive shift that we are moving towards both with electric vehicles. But obviously even touched on electrification of the rail lines as well. HGV's mean it is a massive shift, so it's good that Peninsula Transport have done some work on this. It would be good to see the report just to help us understand what it might mean on the on the energy side too.

	Rural Productivity – CB				
	<p>Terms of reference have been agreed for the Rural Productivity Group.</p> <p>Group discussed what its main areas of work were. It was agreed that a refresh of the work done last year, alongside the Rural Productivity Commission Report and in light of the emerging SPF and Levelling Up work to enable us to provide an up to date view.</p> <p>MS had already updated on food mapping and farm support.</p> <p>Glover Landscapes Review due to be published – lack of financial support alongside this</p>				
8.	Digital <p>The Board has approved a further £8 million investment in various digital activities. We have agreed a £1.5 million programme on digital skills so will be able to provide more information on that shortly. Devon County Council or leading on that on our behalf.</p> <p>And also half a million pounds of capacity going into the growth hub to provide some additional digital capacity to advise SMES. Again, more information on that soon, but the reason main reason to mention this now is because we also announced a £2 million capital call for applications, so this is particularly trying to deliver one of the build back better transformational programmes which is looking to tackle key Economic and societal challenges through data analytics and digital innovation. WE have particularly asked for projects that might help deliver a number of outcomes. One is around growing the environmental intelligence market. Given the excellent data and research capabilities we've got in the patch, and the secondary is around maximizing clean growth applications in marine geospatial innovation, you'll know we've got UK.</p> <p>We have a number of really good businesses off the back of that so the third area is around reducing emissions from agriculture, particularly looking at accelerating at the game, data analytics and AI technologies, and then the 4th area is around increasing innovation through 5G with a particular interest in projects that might help us deliver on our net zero ambitions. So a really strong clean growth flavour throughout and it is all capital we've not been able to access an additional revenue funds in.</p> <p>Expressions of interest, initially by the 9th of Feb and will ensure list and then invite for all business cases from those applicants with a decision early June. So we're looking for one or more projects that we're being as flexible as we can be and just want to make sure that we use that funding in a way that's going to make a really make some transformation or change.</p>				CG
	Next meeting date: to be advised				
Actions Log Summary		Meeting Date	Owner	Status Update	Next Steps
To forward previous Place Leadership Group meeting minutes for publication on HotSW LEP website.		12/01/2022	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