

Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership (WSLNP)Board Meeting Minutes

Friday 16th November 2012 – 9.30am – 12pm
Longleat Room, County Hall, Trowbridge

1. Present:

Bill Dowling (BD) – Military Civilian Integration Officer, 43 Wessex Brigade
Fleur de Rhe-Philipe (FdRP) – Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning
 Wiltshire Council (WC) [Representing the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP]
Frances Chinemana (FC) – Consultant in Public Health, Wiltshire NHS-[Representing Maggie Rae]
Gary Mantle (GM) – Director, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT)
Hayley Bamborough (HyB) – Voice & Influence Team, Wiltshire Council [Supporting WAY representative]
Hugo Brooke (HB) – Trustee, Butterfly Conservation
James Sheppard (JS) – Deputy Chair, Wiltshire National Farmers Union (NFU)
Matthew Roberts (MR) – Rural Estates Manager, Landmarc Support Services Ltd
Philippa Read (PR) – Chief Executive, Community First
Roderick Bluh (RB) – Leader of Swindon Borough Council
Sabrina Morice-Broom (SMB) – Youth Representative for Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY)
Steve Waygood (SW) – Head of Environment & Chemistry, RWE NPower
Toby Sturgis (TS) – Cabinet Member for Waste, Property, Environment and Development Control
 Services, Wiltshire Council
Zoe Pittaway (ZP) – WSLNP Coordinator

Abbreviations used within this document:		
LNP	Local Nature Partnership	
WSLNP	Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership	
SWLEP	Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership	
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
NE	Natural England	
WWT	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper	
H&WB	Health and Wellbeing Board	
ToR	Terms of Reference	
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	
NIA	Nature Improvement Area	
JSA	Joint Strategic Assessment	
LEDE	Local Economic Development and Environment Project	
GI	Green Infrastructure	
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	
USP	Unique Selling Point	
Minutes:		Action
1. Welcome and Apologies		
GM welcomed the Board and guest speaker Matthew Roberts to the second WSLNP Board meeting; individual introductions were made by each Board member GM also welcomed Steve Waygood to the Board. Apologies had been received from Gerry Hamersley (Area Manager for Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, Natural England) and Maggie Rae (Director of Public Health & Public Protection); Frances Chinemana attended on her behalf.		

2. Minutes	
The minutes were approved; no amendments were requested.	
3. Matters Arising	
<p>3.1 GM updated the Board that the Governance Working Group has reviewed the Terms of Reference and will aim to present a final draft to the Board at the next Board meeting in January 2013 for approval. Efforts have been made to condense the content in to a short document; including three or four higher level aims, vision, structure and scope. The Governance Group next meet on 28th November 2012 and discussions will focus on the draft Strategic Plan.</p> <p>3.2 ZP provided an update to the Board on the progress of the three Working Groups. Initial stakeholder events for both the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Working Groups are being organised with support from the Local Authorities and key partner organisations. Both events will be held during the beginning of December 2012; the main purpose will be to engage the wider partnership regarding these specific issues and seek feedback on the key priorities and scope for the WSLNP to support positive action. Due to a busy schedule ZP has not had time to progress the Education & Involvement Working Group yet. ZP will be in contact with PR, FC, HyB and RB with regards to the coordination and focus of this Working Group.</p> <p>3.3 GM updated the Board that the LEDE application submitted by the SWLEP and supported by the WSLNP in September 2012 was unfortunately unsuccessful; feedback from NE suggested that our bid was shortlisted to the last three. NE/Defra has only funded one LEDE Pilot in the East Anglia region.</p> <p>3.4 HB provided a brief update with regards to the progress of the Communications Strategy. HB has met with ZP and Kelly Barnett (Senior Communications Officer, WWT) and work is underway to develop a WSLNP website over the coming months. A draft events schedule has also been prepared (see Agenda Item 5). Funding is being sought for the website and events and this will hopefully be confirmed by 30th November 2012.</p>	<p>ZP</p> <p>ZP, HB</p>
4. Valuing of Ecosystem Services at a local level	
<p>4.1 Matthew Roberts, Rural Estates Manager, Landmarc Support Services Ltd, was invited to give a presentation on the valuing of the goods and services that are provided by ecosystems. He explained that Landmarc were using an Ecosystem Services Assessment for the MOD estate in South East England. His presentation covered an explanation of the accepted framework for analysing ecosystem services, the international and national background policy framework and how Landmarc had undertaken their assessment. He was not aware of any assessments yet carried out at a county level.</p> <p>4.2 GM thanked MR for coming to speak to the WSLNP Board and invited the Board to consider some of the challenges that MR raised in the Briefing Paper and during the presentation.</p> <p>SW agreed with many of the issues that MR raised and informed the Group that Npower have carried out similar work to understand the cost and impact of</p>	

Ecosystem Services on their business, for example thinking about air quality impact and water as a key resource to the business. SW commented that there is a strong need to bring Ecosystem Services into a useable framework. For example, there may be a need to focus on the cost of the environment to the individual, such as how much are people willing to pay for electricity in the future? Ultimately further work is required to help find the balance between development and retaining a nice environment to live in.

FdRP commented that the SWLEP is strongly focussed on achieving economic growth. She noted also that there is a considerable gap between the funding that might be made available through CIL and what needs to be paid for including green infrastructure.

TS reported that there is a pilot scheme being carried out on the Bristol Avon Catchment and that this might be a help. He noted the importance of an approach that did not stop at administrative boundaries.

PR suggested that it is the role of the WSLNP to address these wider issues and champion this type of research to ensure we make a positive difference for local people, the environment and the economy, especially in the current climate. HB agreed with PR that the WSLNP should be supporting work that builds on our understanding of the links between the environment and the economy.

RB commented that the Core Strategies for both Swindon and Wiltshire are at final stages; therefore we have a good understanding of where the developments are going to be, the WSLNP should be planning for the future impacts- the question is how do we achieve this?

GM suggested that it would be helpful if the WSLNP could support research to provide to provide a better understanding of the real value of the environmental assets we have got across the county. He reflected on the famous speech by Robert Kennedy in 1968 on the inadequacy of GDP to measure the things that matter to the quality of life. Similarly, the current focus on economic growth fails to adequately value the goods and services provided by the environment.

RB agreed on the importance of being able to take the environment more fully into account, for example when looking at the details of any development proposal. He noted the similarities with getting art and culture valued.

4.3 FdRP commented that a key objective for the SWLEP is growth; with the first priority to secure jobs for young people, the second priority is keeping those jobs and the third priority is encouraging businesses to expand. SW suggested that the SWLEP also needs to consider the value of the environment in these priorities and MR proposed that the Ecosystem Services Review is one framework that enables the links between the environment and economy to be understood and factored in to solution focussed outcomes.

MR advised that we need to steer away from simple economic valuations of the environment; a financial figure is a great headline but has little use. Collectively we could identify the risks and opportunities to use this information to bring more investment to Wiltshire. We could identify what Wiltshire is 'selling' - what are the strong assets and how are they linked to the Ecosystem Services and Goods.

FdRP commented that over 40% of Wiltshire and Swindon is already in an AONB and questioned if part of this work has already been done? MR noted the

importance of using known data and applying it in a new ecosystems framework that factors in the links between the economy and the environment and that will deliver solution focused benefits to growth.

PR agreed that the WSLNP should be supporting the SWLEP to develop sustainable growth; its role is not to stop the SWLEP agenda but should be focussed on working with them. RB agreed that we shouldn't be defeatist; the role of the WSLNP is to make the links between the economy and the environment, it is very important to do this. SW agreed that it is important to understand the value of the strategic links between the economy and the environment at a high level so that they can be applied proportionally in delivery efforts. HB suggested that the WSLNP Board needs to discuss the strategic priorities for the WSLNP and identify how we can interlock these with the SWLEP priorities.

GM reflected on the lack of recognition of the growth of the green economy and its scale and importance. He suggested that by thinking about the full range of ecosystem services it might be possible to identify new opportunities for 'green growth'.

JS commented that the landscape/environment is priceless; developments that are replacing the countryside are not green as we are never going to get back what has been taken by the developments. Farmers realise that growth is necessary; they are not opposed to growth but would welcome more efforts to integrate development with the surrounding landscape and deliver forward thinking developments. FdRP commented that although new developments are being built, for example on wet farmland they are now incorporating new lakes and restored canals in to the developments and the environmental features add value to new sites.

4.4 GM asked how the Board wished to take forward the challenge of quantifying the value of Wiltshire's ecosystems and the goods and services provided. FC asked for clarification of the purpose of this research. GM suggested that conducting such research was vital to support better recognition of the importance of the environment in decision making processes. He was concerned that without understanding how the environment is supporting the local economy and society we are not able to make sound decisions and the ecosystem services that we all rely on will continue to diminish. He suggested as an example that it would be helpful to quantify the social and economic benefits of improved physical and mental health and wellbeing that can be achieved by providing easy access to high quality green space.

TS suggested that the WSLNP needs to agree on the Strategic Plan and key priorities before we ask for funding for specific projects/research. GM agreed on the importance of the Strategic Plan, but noted the importance of a sound evidence base that recognises and incorporates an assessment of the value of ecosystem services. This will enable the WSLNP to make more informed decisions and build a sound Strategic Plan.

GM suggested that the next State of the Environment Report may be re-cast to reflect an ecosystems approach. MR agreed that existing information could be pulled together to start compiling a more ecosystems focussed evidence base that would help to eventually inform a county wide ecosystem services assessment.

HB commented that the WSLNP must be able to respond with environmental input to the priorities of the SWLEP. FdRP reiterated that the SWLEP was focussed on

<p>growth and their USP was centred on the Military. ZP recognised the SWLEPs priorities and understood that growth was necessary. However, she suggested that the WSLNP could be seeking to find ways to achieve better partnership working across the different sectors. For example, by considering how new developments can be built in a more sustainable way, ensuring that innovative and forward thinking Green Infrastructure is considered at the planning stage and implemented in all new developments. RB commented that local residents generally do not see any development as good; it would be helpful to consider how plans and developments can incorporate GI and show the benefits that developments bring to encourage a more positive footing for the future.</p> <p>GM recognised that at present the WSLNP is constrained by time and resources, although this would be discussed further under Agenda Item 6. However, he believed there is scope for the Board to influence and promote positive environmental outcomes. GM would take in to consideration the Board's comments and work with ZP to produce a plan as to how the WSLNP can take this forward.</p>	<p>GM, ZP</p>
<p>5. Delivery of Events Programme</p>	
<p>5.1 The Group considered the (LNP/2/2012/2) paper, it was generally agreed that the WSLNP events should join up with existing events and piggy back where possible with partnerships and organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Community Events, etc. BD suggested that a more realistic timeframe should be considered, it will be very important that all of the events are a success and aimed at the right audiences. TS suggested that we avoid holding too many events between March and May due to the elections. There was general agreement that community focussed events should be prioritised, local plans are very relevant issue and this would be a good opportunity to engage and raise awareness of the environmental related issues.</p> <p>ZP will communicate individually with Board members to progress the prioritised events.</p>	<p>ZP</p>
<p>6. Accessing funding for the environment</p>	
<p>6.1 The Group considered the (LNP/2/2012/3) paper and agreed in general that establishing a focussed Funding Working Group would be an effective way to utilise the existing knowledge that partners have within their teams. GM highlighted the rise in employment in the Green Sector and emphasised that there are increasing opportunities for employment/projects in this area. The WSLNP should be supporting this growing sector in Wiltshire and Swindon more effectively.</p> <p>It was recognised that staff time and resources are already stretched however Board members agreed to research their capacity for offering staff time towards this Funding Group.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>7. Brief Updates</p>	
<p>7.1 TS provided an update confirming that the Wiltshire Core Strategy has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The public examination will take place over the coming months with approval expected in Spring 2013. FdRP confirmed that</p>	

this has proved to be a very challenging task in part due to the many changes being introduced by central Government.

7.2 RB confirmed that the Swindon Core Strategy and Economic Strategy have been put through Cabinet and there will be further public consultation before final submissions go to the Planning Inspectorate over the coming 12 months. A great deal of work has been undertaken to get support from the Business Sector, this is now moving in a positive direction. RB is also keen for the Core Strategy to find a balance between the demand for employment land and the rising demand for residential housing in Swindon. RB expressed his concern at the recent decisions that have been made by central government, promoting economic growth and this may have a consequence on the planning decisions in the future.

RB also provided an update on the Swindon H&WB Board; the Board are writing a draft strategy focussing on keeping the messages clear and simple with emphasis on the Wellbeing aspects. The Board will be officially convened in April 2013 and a consultation draft will be circulated soon.

7.3 FdRP confirmed that the SWLEP has received more money through Government to support the core running costs of the SWLEP. The first lot of money has been allocated from the Regional Growth Fund, with £10 million being rewarded to the Porton Science Park securing 2000 new high value jobs. This investment should attract in the region of £70 million of inward investment. The Rural Growth Network is also continuing to encourage local businesses to establish across the county.

7.4. BD updated the Group that another Brigade will be coming to Salisbury Plain and this will secure an extra 3000 new jobs for service personal. This will include £650 million investment for accommodation, technical and living costs. However the British Army is due to make 20,000 jobs redundant over the coming years; it is expected that one tenth of the jobs in Wiltshire and Swindon will be lost through these wider cuts. BD explained that there is an expectation that the Territorial Army will grow in the future and more businesses will be asked to allow employees to dedicate 1 in 5 years to Army duties.

7.5 FC provided a brief update on the Wiltshire H&WB Board, confirming that the draft strategy had recently gone out for consultation, with a strong focus also being placed on Wellbeing. FC also reported that she chairs the Wiltshire Health and Environment Group, which looks at the threats to public health and wellbeing from environmental issues, and seeks to develop ways to respond to these, for example looking at specific health threats such as air pollution across the county.

8. PWC Report on Climate Change

GM provided a brief introduction to the PWC Report on Climate Change (*LNP/2/2012/4*) and invited the Group to comment on the failures to decarbonise the economy quickly enough to avoid significant global warming.

SW commented that recent reports and scientific understanding are forcing businesses to re-focus their business plans for a different future. In Germany there has been a rapid increase in solar power generation as a direct consequence of the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster; Germany has now shut down all of their Nuclear Power Stations. In general companies are struggling to understand what the consequences of these predications are for their business; it is growing harder to find the balance for growth and protecting the environment.

GM asked how the WSLNP wished to respond to these findings; suggesting the

<p>Board might consider what adaptation strategies are being deployed and champion these?</p> <p>There was general agreement on the value of circulating such reports and that the Board should be discussing these matters and considering how the Partnership can support adaptation measures in the future.</p> <p>It was agreed that the first step was to develop a clear Strategic Plan that accommodated wider strategic issues such as climate change. It was also agreed that the WSLNP should address the growing concerns over climate change. HB suggested that a specific role for the WSLNP Board could be to raise awareness of the local issues; FC suggested that we should invite the Climate Change Team's based at the Local Authorities to engage with the WSLNP, this would enable the Strategic Plan to be based on more informed decisions.</p> <p>It was agreed to circulate a draft agenda to the Board members in advance of the next Board meeting, Board members will be encouraged to contribute agenda items.</p>	
<p>9. Any other Business</p> <p>SMB updated the Group that this would be her last meeting as she was re-locating to the Outer Hebrides to continue her studies. GM thanked SMB for her participation and wishes her well.</p> <p>ZP confirmed that the following dates for the WSLNP Board meetings in 2013 and requested that Board members send suggestions for venues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 17th January 2013, 9.30am-12 noon • Thursday 14th March 2013, 9.30am- 12 noon • Wednesday 15th May 2013, 9.30am- 12 noon • Monday 22nd July 2013, 2pm- 4.30pm 	<p>ALL</p>