

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

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 – 9.30am – 12pm**  
**Castle Boardroom, STEAM Museum, Swindon**

**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)  
**Hugo Brooke (HB)** – Trustee, Butterfly Conservation  
**Philippa Read (PR)** – Chief Executive, Community First  
**Roderick Bluh (RB)** – Leader of Swindon Borough Council  
**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

<b>Abbreviations used within this document:</b>		
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	
EU	European Union	
<b>Minutes:</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b>		
<p>GM welcomed the Board and individual introductions were made by each Board member.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Gerry Hamersley (Area Manager for Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, Natural England), Hayley Bamborough (Voice &amp; Influence Team, Wiltshire Council) and Maggie Rae (Director of Public Health &amp; Public Protection); Frances Chinemana attended on her behalf. James Sheppard (Vice Chair of Wiltshire NFU) was unable to attend the Board meeting due to urgent operations on his farm and sent belated apologies.</p>		

<b>2. Minutes</b>	
FdRP requested two amendments to the minutes that were accepted. The Minutes were then approved.	
<b>3. Matters Arising</b>	
<p><b>3.1</b> GM informed the Board that he attended the South West Environment Network (SWEN) meeting in Exeter on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012 as the WSLNP Chair. GM provided an update on the WWT's projects with Wiltshire NHS and progress on the State of the Environment Report to the SWEN Group. ZP also attended this meeting representing the WSLNP. At this meeting GM secured funding from Natural England towards the re-casting of the State of the Environment Report to incorporate an ecosystems services approach. The Report will be finalised in March 2013 and will help to identify the data gaps and more specific needs for a fuller ecosystems services assessment in the future for Wiltshire and Swindon.</p> <p>GM commended the recently published book 'What has nature ever done for us' by Tony Juniper. The book describes the importance of valuing nature and provides some excellent examples of the costs and consequences of failing to take full account of the value of ecosystem functions. HB confirmed that he has recently ordered the book and suggested this as compulsory reading for the Board.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> GM reported that there has been no development on the establishment of a Fundraising Working Group. PR offered to contribute time to progress this Group and suggested that GM and PR begin by identifying the right people to engage with this task. GM supported this proposal and emphasised the importance, for example, of the WSLNP being able to access the next round of EU funding. HB commented that a retired fundraising colleague from Butterfly Conservation may be able to provide some advice, HB will find out if this is a realistic opportunity. RB commented that Swindon is lacking any expertise in accessing EU funding at present however it may be worth contacting Forward Swindon to discuss fundraising for the WSLNP. FdRP commented that there may be a close connection with the Local Action Groups and this would be worth investigating with regards to securing funding. FdRP also updated the Board regarding the recent progress of the SWLEP confirming that the majority of efforts have more recently been directed towards securing the 'City Deal' bid which was submitted on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January. Steve Richards, Secretariat to the SWLEP would now have more time to focus on other tasks such as allocating the Growing Places Fund. PR reiterated that the RDPE is coming to the end of its fund and the WSLNP needs to be planning for the next round imminently.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> GM reminded the Board that the Ecosystem Marketing Task Force (EMTF) and National Capital Committee are carrying out on-going research regarding how we implement the ecosystems services approach with our current economic system and suggested that the WSLNP could use their interim reports as guidance. GM reminded the Board that there are positive examples of how new developments are incorporating more sustainable planning within Wiltshire. For example, the developers for Tadpole Farm in Swindon have been working with Albion Water and propose to implement a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) to filter clean and dirty water and recycle water within the development. RB agreed this was a positive step forward and vital on new developments where drainage was already an issue; RB reminded the group that Wiltshire Council will also be proposing to build on areas with a history of bad drainage so working collaboratively with</p>	<p><b>PR, GM, HB, ZP</b></p>

<p>developers will be crucial to build good quality houses for the future. HB suggested that the WSLNP should be looking at positive examples of how other counties are tackling wider landscape challenges, especially with regards to all of the new development proposed across Wiltshire. GM confirmed that other counties were adopting successful Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes; South West Water is currently working on a project called “Upstream Thinking” with farmers to restore Culm grassland (natural filtration system) in the water catchments of Devon. The scheme pays farmers to undertake actions to reduce the costs of further downstream water treatments.</p>	
<p><b>4. Discuss and Approve Terms of Reference for the WSLNP</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b> GM invited the Board to comment on the (LNP/1/2013/1) paper. FdRP proposed that ‘Section 5. Structure and Roles’ should incorporate an ‘Executive Group’ to support the Board and oversee what actions go forward for the WSLNP, stating that the majority of partnership commissioned a small Executive Group to support the running of partnerships. HB asked for an example of such a group and explanation as to how the Executive Group would support the WSLNP Board. FdRP suggested that the Executive Group would look at the proposed work, in particular the Work Programme (LNP/1/2013/3) and use their more detailed understanding and knowledge to prioritise actions to be put forward for approval by the Board. RB, SW and BD agreed with this proposal. FdRP suggested that one of the first tasks for the Executive Group could be to identify individuals for a Fundraising Working Group to support the WSLNP. ZP asked for clarification with regards to the membership of the Executive Group. FdRP suggested that people from a few core partner organisations should nominate the person with the best expertise to populate the Group. For example, this could be Richard Broadbent from Wiltshire Council and Russell Weymouth from Swindon Borough Council. FdRP suggested that the remit of the current Governance Group could be broadened to fulfil this role and there was general agreement from the Board to support this action. GM requested if anybody had a Terms of Reference for a specific Executive Group. FdRP agreed to forward on a copy of a relevant ToR to ZP.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> It was agreed that ‘Section 6.5. Resources’ should be supplemented by a separate schedule outlining how the WSLNP budget would be compliant and accountable. It was proposed that the Executive Group produce a Schedule that outlines how the WSLNP will manage its funds. For example when applying for a grant, will the WSLNP identify an accountable organisation to manage a specific grant and sign the contract? The Schedule needs to outline which constituted bodies will be recognised by the WSLNP. The Schedule also needs to consider the correct procedures to follow when the WSLNP wants to apply for a fund that Local Authorities are not allowed to hold.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> The Board requested that the above amendments are to be made and a final draft of the ToR to be circulated to the Board before the Draft Terms of Reference are sent for consultation with the wider partnership</p>	<p><b>FdRP, ZP</b></p> <p><b>ZP</b></p> <p><b>ZP</b></p>
<p><b>5. Discuss the content for the WSLNP Strategic Plan and Work Programme</b></p>	
<p><b>5.1</b> The Group considered the (LNP/1/2013/2) Strategic Plan and the (LNP/1/2013/3) Work Programme. TS questioned if there was a need for a formal resolution that detailed what the WSLNP was achieving through its ‘Duty to Cooperate’ role. GM commented that the recent amendment to the Duty to Cooperate was an opportunity to enable LNPs to have a voice and positive</p>	

<p>influence, and suggested that the WSLNP should be looking for opportunities to influence local planning and development decisions for the benefit of the local environment. FdRP commented that the WSLNP should consider the many changes occurring at present that may influence local developments including the establishment of a Local Transport Board and the Waste and Mineral Strategies that are going to Cabinet. FC also commented that the links to the H&amp;WB Board should be considered and recognised as part of the Strategic Plan as there is a lot of cross over benefits for the environment and improving local health issues. ZP will incorporate the suggestions made by FC and amend the Strategic Plan to identify more direct opportunities to link up the Health and Environment priorities. The Board agreed that there needs to be consideration as to how the WSLNP will operationally respond to its Duty to Cooperate role, for example should the WSLNP adopt a more strategic influence, assessing priorities or should the WSLNP be looking to influence Development Control as well. The Board supported a proposal to discuss the actions being delivered by the Local Authorities under their Duty to Cooperate with the LNPs on a quarterly basis at the WSLNP Board meetings. This would allow the ongoing monitoring of Core Strategy developments and provide a more detailed understanding of what measures are actually being supported and delivered to incorporate sustainable measures across Wiltshire and Swindon.</p>	ZP
<p><b>5.2</b> GM put forward a proposal to the Board that ZP had received that morning from the 'Campaign for Better Transport'. ZP updated the Board summarising the key points which included a proposal for the WSLNP to support a focussed group of experts. This 'Planning Group' would provide input in to local decision making and concentrate on delivering high quality developments on new strategic sites and urban extensions across the county. The proposal highlighted four main areas for a Planning Group to focus on: 1) Better Design of buildings 2) Green Infrastructure, 3) More sustainable travel and 4) Healthier Lifestyles. The Board agreed that the Executive Group should consider this proposal and the challenges ahead and report back with a suggestion to the Board at the next meeting.</p>	ZP
<p><b>5.3</b> The Board considered 'Section 5, Review' of the Strategic Plan and FC questioned how the WSLNP would measure success. It was agreed that the Executive Group should review how it will monitor the success of the WSLNP and agreed clear outcomes would be needed for each objective outlined in the Work Programme. RB suggested that a timeline was required and this would help to prioritise and deliver the objectives outlined in the Work Programme.</p>	ZP
<p><b>5.4</b> The Board discussed how the WSLNP could align its Work Programme more coherently with the Local Enterprise Partnership Business Plan. ZP suggested inviting a speaker from the New Anglia (LEP for East Anglia) and Wild Anglia (LNP for East Anglia) to come and speak to the SWLEP about how they have aligned their Businesses Plans and are successfully working together. The Board agreed with this suggestion and suggested that GM should write to Paul Johnson (Chair of the SWLEP) to propose this idea. FdRP suggested that ZP should contact Steve Richards and obtain a list of LEP partners to invite to the WSLNP Launch and Business Breakfast.</p>	ZP
<p><b>6. Discuss the WSLNP's role in Local Plans and proposed developments across Wiltshire and Swindon</b></p>	
<p><b>6.1</b> Due to James Sheppard and Gerry Hamersley being unable to attend the meeting, this item was postponed for discussion at the next Board meeting in March. GM reminded the Board that there had already been discussion about the proposal for a Planning Working Group during Agenda Item 5.2. RB commented</p>	

<p>that one of the main challenges to consider would be; how do we successfully incorporate sustainable measures in every development in the future. The Board agreed that it would be important to build high quality, environmentally sound developments to attract in new investment in the future and ensure that Wilshire and Swindon remains an attractive and healthy place to live and work. The Board will need to consider how this can be achieved and work for the whole planning and development system and not just individual developments. FC commented that Wiltshire NHS is currently working with planners to develop a Health Impact Assessment and this should be incorporated as part of any proposals to improve the sustainability of developments as well.</p>	
<p><b>7. Brief Updates</b></p>	
<p><b>7.1</b> HB reported that the WSLNP have received a grant from Natural England to deliver a series of events that would raise the profile of the WSLNP and enable communities and businesses to incorporate the environment in to their decision making. The Grant supports the delivery of the WSLNP Launch, three community Workshops and a Business Breakfast. A small proportion of the grant would be used to support the development of a WSLNP website. The Launch was provisionally booked for Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March, to be confirmed next week. All of the events would be delivered before the end of March 2013 to enable the grant money to be claimed. The Board agreed that the WSLNP would benefit from adopting a new brand/logo that gave the WSLNP a clear identity. RB suggested a similar approach to Wild Anglia and proposed keeping WSLNP as a strap line for the partnership. The Board agreed that the website would need to be kept updated and provide links to all of the partner organisations. The Board would be asked to provide suggestions for a new brand name over the week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> January. Due to time restrictions a new Brand name would need to be decided by 25<sup>th</sup> January.</p> <p><b>7.2 Biodiversity Working Group:</b> HB reported that an initial Stakeholder Event was organised on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at Langford Lakes Reserve, near Salisbury. The event was well attended by 20 people from over 15 organisations. The event gave the wider partnership an opportunity to identify the biodiversity priorities that they wanted the WSLNP to support. These priorities have been used by ZP to inform the Work Programme. The wider group agreed it needed to focus on achieving a few things well and once a list of priorities has been agreed by the wider forum, individuals with the appropriate skills sets will come together and form a focussed Biodiversity Working Group to deliver a specific task. The general feedback from the event was encouraging, generally the wider partners wanted the WSLNP to support a coordinated approach to landscape scale conservation and promote skills sharing, networking and facilitating partnership led projects. The minutes and feedback from the events would be circulated to the Board members and the Board would be kept updated on the progress of the Group.</p> <p><b>7.3 Green Infrastructure Working Group:</b> An initial Stakeholder Event was organised by WSLNP, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at Monkton Park, Chippenham. The event was well attended by over 20 organisations. The event gave the wider partnership an opportunity to identify the green infrastructure priorities that they wanted the WSLNP to support. These priorities have been used by ZP to inform the Work Programme. Two clear priorities came out of the event, the first being a</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>ZP</b></p>

working group should form to enable local communities to adopt GI in their local plans, by enabling local groups to map green space and take ownership of their community areas. The other supported priority was to develop project proposals to help translate the Swindon GI strategy into CIL compliant projects. The minutes and feedback from the events would be circulated to the Board members and the Board would be kept updated on the progress of the Group.

#### **7.4. Education and Involvement Working Group:**

A meeting has been arranged for 4<sup>th</sup> February with PR to discuss how to take forward the Working Group. One of the first tasks would be organising the three community workshops that will be delivered during March/April 2013. FC and HB expressed a wish to attend this initial meeting.

#### **7.5 Wiltshire H&WB Boards**

FC confirmed that their Strategic Plan has been published for consultation. ZP confirmed that the WSLNP would be responding on behalf of the wider partnership. FC confirmed that the H&WB Board are now moving into the formal stage of confirming the partnership.

#### **7.6 WSLEP Update:**

FdRP updated the Board regarding the SWLEP 'City Deal', clarifying that the SWLEP bid was different to the rest of the bids being submitted across the country due to its focus on military involvement. In particular the bid focussed on utilising the highly skilled labour resources that would be coming out of the military and supporting this transition into the general workforce. The Bid would also be focussing on improving infrastructure and have been working with the Highways Agencies to develop the bid.

### **8. Any other business**

GM invited Board members to put forward any items that had not been previously covered.

**8.1** BD confirmed that £950 million pounds will now be invested in to the new Military Training Base in Wiltshire; this is an increased amount than previously expected.

**8.2** GM informed the Board that he would be attending the first Ministerial LNP event for the Chair's of the LNP Boards on 11<sup>th</sup> February and will report back to the Board on the day's events.

**8.3** GM reported on a meeting with a senior member of staff from Natural England regarding the expectation that LNPs will play a role in the designation of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) in the future. GM explained that NIAs were introduced at the same time as LNPs in the Natural Environment White Paper in 2011. NIA are landscape scale areas that coordinate partnership working to tackle the fragmentation and decline of biodiversity on a landscape scale. There is currently one pilot NIA running in Wiltshire: Marlborough Downs NIA, which is a farmer led project that is looking to restore biodiversity across a largely farmed area stretching from south of Swindon to the north- west corner of Marlborough. The 'Big Chalk NIA' proposal failed to be designated as one of the 12 successful pilots but subsequently has received some grant funding. GM proposed that the Board should consider the role of the WSLNP with regards to designating NIAs at the next Board meeting, this proposal was accepted.