



Section A: Role and Governance Principles

March 2019



ROLE AND GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Role and governance principles

1. Purpose

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) was established in 2011 with the aim of stimulating growth in the economy across the Swindon and Wiltshire area. In part it aims to do this by playing a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It is a primary partnership between the business community and the two local authorities; Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council. In response to the Government's Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships report (July 2018), SWLEP became incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 14 January 2019 with a view to becoming operational from 1 April 2019.

The role of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership is to 'provide the clear vision and strategic leadership to drive sustainable private sector-led growth and make a significant contribution to economic growth and job creation'¹ in the area by:

- Ensuring that strategies for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth within the area reflect the needs of business; and
- Driving the successful implementation of those strategies through engagement with local and central government, business, potential investors and others.

2. Strategic Objectives

The SWLEP has five strategic objectives (January 2016):

1. Skills and talent - we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions;
2. Transport infrastructure improvements - we need a well-connected, reliable and resilient transport system to support economic and planned development growth at key locations;
3. Digital capability - we need to deliver excellence in digital connectivity and cyber transformation to achieve business growth, innovative public services and influence societal change;
4. Place-shaping - we need to build the infrastructure required to deliver our planned growth and regenerate our city and town centres, and improve our visitor and cultural offer; and

¹ Local growth: realising every place's potential, HM Government 28 October 2010, page 12

5. Business development - we need to strengthen the competitiveness of small and medium sized businesses and attract a greater share of foreign and domestic investment into the area.

3. Performance

The SWLEP's performance measures are set out in its Strategic Economic Plan which is regularly reviewed. Key drivers are to:

- Increase the GVA of the area as a whole and in each of the local authority areas covered by the SWLEP;
- Create new high value and highly skilled jobs within the area and in each of the local authority areas covered by the LEP; and
- Identify housing needs.

In this context 'GVA' refers both to productivity and the size of the economy.

4. Activities

The activities which the SWLEP will undertake, in respect of the Swindon and Wiltshire area and in pursuance of the overall aims and priorities, will include:

- Investigating and reporting on the following through research, analysis and engagement with business, the unitary authorities and others:
 - the type and profile of business activity;
 - training, education and skill levels amongst the workforce and potential workforce;
 - the type and profile of skills provision;
 - the needs of business, i.e. conditions or actions which are likely to encourage growth in existing areas or development of new areas
 - the likely impact on business of particular policies, strategies or events
- Developing strategy itself and providing input into and monitoring strategy and policy developed by others, e.g. local and central government;
- Identifying and securing sources of funding which are aligned with the SWLEP's aims and activities as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan;
- Administering and/or providing grants or other funding for activities likely to contribute to economic growth and job creation;
- Promoting the benefits of the SWLEP area as a location for the expansion and creation of businesses and inward investment through engagement and provision of information;

- Providing information about strategies for economic growth and job creation, skills provision, funding and other support available for businesses and investors, and other activities aimed at achieving economic growth and creating jobs;
- Identifying additional opportunities for the UAs and other bodies to provide support for economic growth and job creation, including identifying land or other resources which may be made available to support business growth or inward investment; and
- Participating in regional and national LEP networks and activity including peer review and sharing best practice.

5. Governance principles

The LEP should be governed so as to ensure that it:

1. Operates in accordance with its Assurance Procedures (Section F).
2. Pursues activities which add value, and in particular activities which do not unnecessarily duplicate the work of the members of the partnership or the roles of other organisations with similar aims.
3. Effectively identifies, and appropriately represents the views and needs of business in the SWLEP area.
4. Effectively identifies and appropriately takes into account the views of other stakeholders (Section B, paragraph 2b).
5. Makes effective use of the resources available to it and accounts appropriately for that use as set out in the SWLEP Accountable Body Agreement (Section G).
6. Is accountable for its performance, through:
 - a. Clear decision-making by the Board;
 - b. Self-assessment by the Board of its own performance, including regular monitoring of progress, annual performance review through the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy's Annual Conversation, and relevant benchmarking against other LEPs; and
 - c. Appropriate transparency through public reporting of:
 - i. Governance arrangements and the Assurance Procedures
 - ii. Decisions
 - iii. Planned and completed activities
 - iv. Engagement with business and stakeholders
 - v. Progress against the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan.
 - vi. Scrutiny of its operation by the Joint Scrutiny Task Group.

Is able to meet or respond quickly to any requirements or pre-conditions set by central government with regard to transparency, accountability and robust governance.