

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Role of the Chair

Background

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Ltd has been a company limited by guarantee since January 2019. We are a not-for-profit business, with the private sector at its helm and working in close partnership with Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, the military and education. Our role is to set the over-arching economic priorities for the area and to undertake activities that will drive sustainable economic growth and job creation. Taking advantage of our unique local skills mix, our board currently has 17 members; three from the public sector and 14 from the private sector.

Swindon & Wiltshire is a diverse area comprising the principal urban centres of Swindon, Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury, highly attractive market towns, rural villages and picturesque countryside. It is home to 690,000 people of which around 415,000 are of working age.

Swindon & Wiltshire is strategically located in the South West with connections east to London and Reading, west to Bristol and Bath, north-east to Oxford, north-west to Gloucestershire and the Midlands, and south to Southampton and Portsmouth. It is a cost competitive location where house prices and prime commercial rents are lower than many parts of the Greater South East within reach of London.










Work on the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy (SWLIS) is nearing completion and it will replace the Swindon & Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which SWLEP adopted in 2016. The SWLIS sets out a bold vision to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth for Swindon and Wiltshire:

‘By 2036, our vision is to ensure all of our communities benefit from inclusive and sustainable growth, making the Swindon and Wiltshire area world-renowned for its convergence of innovation, entrepreneurialism and great quality of life.’

Our SWLIS Plan has been developed over the last year and builds on a considerable evidence base which is published on our website¹. We have engaged with over 1,000 local businesses to test our approach and to develop our strategy which is structured around the five foundations of productivity:

¹ <https://swlep.co.uk/about/our-strategies/lis>

SWLIS Aims by the Five Foundations of Productivity

 	<p>Ideas: grow R&D and innovation activity, building on our strengths (advanced engineering, energy / sustainability, agritech, life sciences) and emerging opportunities (cyber resilience and digital technologies)</p>
 	<p>People: address the skills supply / demand imbalance and ensure there is inclusive growth across socio-economic groups</p>
	<p>Infrastructure: further improve digital, road and rail connectivity and tackle capacity constraints in energy, water and waste</p>
 	<p>Business Environment: attract investment and enable businesses to reach their potential, building on the Growth Hub successes</p>
 	<p>Places: develop resilient, agile and inclusive settlements through a more diversified economy, improved cultural and retail offer while conserving and enhancing our natural capital</p>

Candidate

We are looking for someone with significant experience in a senior managerial capacity within the private sector, at Chief Executive or Board level within a corporate environment and with a proven

track record of providing strategic leadership and achieving business objectives. The new Chair will provide leadership in the delivery of the partnership's Vision for its Local Industrial Strategy and champion the SWLEP at national, regional and local level, representing the partnership at high profile events. We are looking to appoint an individual with previous experience of partnership working and, ideally, some established links with central government and key decision makers. He or she will display strong political acumen to promote SWLEP at the highest level.

Commitment

It is anticipated that the role will require a time commitment of around four days per month, on average, including approximately six Board meetings per annum. However, the exact time required each month will vary depending on external and internal factors and likely to be more during the early months of tenure. There is an honorarium of £10,000 per annum to reflect the level of commitment expected by the Chair, plus reasonable expenses.

Tenure

This will be a three-year appointment, subject to a review after six months to ensure that all parties are satisfied that the role set out above is being fulfilled and that appropriate progress is being made on the SWLEP's aims and objectives.

Chair Role and Responsibilities:

- provide visible, strategic leadership and vision in driving the work of the SWLEP and the sustainable growth of the economy in the SWLEP area;
- actively and effectively promote the interests of the SWLEP and the SWLEP area with central and local government, business and investors, operating at a high profile and senior level. This includes:
 - representing the SWLEP in discussions and negotiations with key influencers;
 - representing the SWLEP in a wide range of engagement activities PR opportunities; and
 - developing and maintaining relationships with all key influencers and stakeholders.
- chair effective regular SWLEP Board meetings (approximately six times per annum), fostering a collaborative and productive atmosphere underpinned by a shared understanding of the SWLEP's vision. This should enable Board Directors to express their range of public and private sector perspectives while working towards consensus and making effective decisions which further the SWLEP's aims;
- lead the Board in overseeing and driving forward the activities of the SWLEP, including the continuing development and achievement of the SWLEP's strategy, governance framework and work plans. This includes supporting the SWLEP Chief Executive and operational staff in their implementation of actions agreed by the Board;
- champion and promote the work of the Board, including its objectives and achievements, to stakeholders, partners and other relevant organisations and to the media;
- lead the development of collaborative relationships, both within the SWLEP and between the SWLEP and other organisations, which will enable the SWLEP to fulfil its vision and achieve its objectives; and
- adhere at all times to the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan standards).

Person specification

Experience and skills:

- significant experience in a senior managerial capacity within the private sector, at Chief Executive or Board level, with a proven track record of providing strategic leadership and achieving business objectives and of operating effectively at Board level;
- a developed and informed understanding of the SWLEP area, its economy and the factors affecting its economic development;



- an understanding of public sector working and the role of the public sector in supporting economic growth;
- experience of working directly with the public sector, in particular local and national government, is desirable;
- strong political acumen, with a developed and informed understanding of the relevant political landscape but no strongly-held or expressed political affiliations;
- excellent analytical skills, able to bring logical, intelligent and creative thinking to bear on the complex factors relevant to the SWLEP's work and to manage competing priorities effectively; and
- a record of effective partnership working, in which you have quickly built credibility with both public and private sector partners.

Personal attributes

- an effective natural leader who brings energy and enthusiasm to the role, inspiring others and securing their commitment to the SWLEP's vision and activities;
- a high level of organisational and chairmanship skills which equip you to lead the further development of the SWLEP and manage the complex and evolving relationships within and around the SWLEP;
- a strong communicator. You must be a confident and effective public speaker in a variety of contexts. You must also be an excellent active listener, able to demonstrate responsiveness to a range of perspectives and opinions;
- a demonstrable connection to, or affinity with, the SWLEP area. You will have an established reputation and public profile within the SWLEP area;
- a credible and effective ambassador for the SWLEP. You will have established local and national networks of senior contacts in business, government and other relevant organisations. You will have a genuine commitment to the success of the SWLEP; and
- a persuasive and effective influencer, able to develop existing relationships and networks, build new collaborative partnerships and work effectively across boundaries.

How to apply:

Please send your CV plus a covering letter to administration@swlep.co.uk by 12 noon on Monday, 2 March.