

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD HELD AT HIGH HOUSE PRODUCTION PARK, PURFLEET, AT 9:00AM ON 24 JUNE 2016

Present:

Members

Mr Geoff Miles	Chairman
Cllr Paul Carter	Kent County Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Cllr Rodney Chambers	Medway Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex Council
Cllr John Lamb	Thurrock Council
Angela O'Donoghue	FE & Skills (FEDEC)
Myroulla West	HE

Also in attendance:

Chris Brodie	Chairman of the SELEP
Adam Bryan	SELEP
Stephanie Mitchener	Essex County Council
Lorna Norris	Essex County Council
Suzanne Bennett	Essex County Council
Kim Mayo	Essex County Council
Sarah Nurden	Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Steven Bishop	Steer Davies Gleave
Paul Dodson	Essex County Council
Richard Dawson	East Sussex County Council
Lucy Spencer-Lawrence	SELEP
Mike Rayner	SELEP

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Gledhill.

2. Minutes

As an extraordinary meeting, there is no requirement to approve minutes from the previous meeting on 10 June 2016. These will be submitted for approval at the next scheduled Board meeting, on 16 September 2016.

3. Skills Equipment Fund Approval

The Board received a report from Mike Rayner which presented recommendations regarding the recent Skills Equipment bidding round to inform the Board's decisions about whether or not to accept the applications for funding.

The Board were advised that the following bids are all awaiting technical and financial appraisal by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). The SFA have held the bids for the past 5 weeks, but due to staffing they have been unable to process them yet. However, it is understood that there there isn't any issue with their

success through that process, and therefore they are before the Board for formal approval, pending SFA sign off.

Members **AGREED** funding of the following pending SFA assessment and sign off:

- Hadlow College, Court Lane Horticultural Nurseries – Enhancing Specialist Facilities for further and Higher Education, £447,000
- Hadlow College, Princess Christian Centre – Enhancing Specialist Facilities for learners with a range of learning disabilities or difficulties, aged 14 through to adulthood, £385,000

Cllr Carter stipulated that there should be a requirement within the Funding Agreement that the Princess Christian Centre remain open and operational for at least 4 yrs following receipt of the funding in order to ensure that they do not close a year later.

- South Essex College, Development of Construction facilities in Basildon to support economic growth and address local and regional skills shortages in construction skills, £366,705
- North Kent College, Thameside Jetty refurbishment, £64,500
- Chelmsford College, Industry Standard Surveying Equipment and Soil Laboratory for Technical Construction, £57,490.50
- Plumpton College, Science and Engineering for Tree Management, £140,000
- Midkent College - Transport and logistics skills hub, £82,000.

The Board discussed the impact of declining the two bids from Canterbury College and Creative Skills, and that to do so would give the wrong message, particularly as the lep holds itself as a leader in creative skills.

It appeared that both bids were worthwhile projects, and that it was accepted that it was difficult to quantify outcomes in a creative arena. Therefore the Members **DEFERRED** the following bids to enable a full and detailed bid to be considered in due course.

- Canterbury College, Constructing Futures, £223,798
- Creative Skills, Touring Technical Theatre Masterclasses, £112,159

Members **DECLINED** North Kent College, Technology Advanced Learning Project, £52,510, noting that the Bid guidance required there to be an economic benefit to the bid, and that this bid was solely about upgrading IT, and therefore did not meet the requirements.

In light of the decision to defer the above two bids, there was no need for the Board to consider options for unallocated funding as once the revised bids are assessed this would hopefully see the full fund allocated.

4. Business case Approvals, Including Independent Technical Evaluation

The Board received a report from Adam Bryan, to the value for money assessment of the Sturry Link Road Business Case, having been through the ITE process.

The Board received a presentation from Steven Bishop, highlighting that the project was considered high value for money but identified that there was a high level of risk around network rail.

The ITE recommendation is to defer a formal decision on this project until such time as Network rail have approved the project and confirmed that there are no additional cost implications.

The Chairman confirmed that Network Rail are clear they have agreements in place to make these projects take place. Therefore proposed that approval is given for the project on the basis that Network Rail come forward as expected and proposed.

If there are major blockages to the project in the next few weeks then it must come back to the Board for consideration.

Members **AGREED** to the funding of Sturry Link Road (£5.9m).

5. Capital Programme Management Update

The Board received a report from Adam Bryan which outlined amendments to the capital programme.

Members **AGREED**:

- the re-allocation of £3m Local Growth Fund project from Westenhanger Lorry Park project to fund Ashford International Rail Connectivity (Ashford Spurs) Project;
- removal of Westenhanger Lorry Park project from the SELEP LGF programme;
- the proposed change of scope to the A26 London Road/Speldhurst Road/ Yew Tree Road Junction LGF scheme to become Tunbridge Wells Junction Improvements Project; and
- subsequently recommend the proposed variation to Government.

These recommendations are made on the condition that a value for money assessment is undertaken for the following schemes by the ITE and are assessed as presenting high value for money and demonstrate medium to high certainty of achieving this:

- Ashford International Rail Connectivity (Ashford Spurs) Project
- Tunbridge Wells Junction Improvements project

6. Any Other Business

The Board were asked to consider an urgent report by Mike Rayner regarding MidKent College Skills Funding previously allocated by the Board at its 10 June meeting.

The Board expressed its disappointment that after 3 attempts to secure funding the partnership with Swale College has fallen apart, and hope in the long term that Swale Council works with the college to see if a future facility can be provided in Swale.

Cllr Carter commented that this was a dreadful example of an academy, and that it is disappointing to note that it was an excellent school when it was set up 8 yrs ago.

Members **AGREED** the variation to the previous bid by Midkent College following Swale Trust withdrawal from the project, subject to formal financial consideration by the Skills Funding Agency.

But agreed that members would provide assistance to the College in order to facilitate ongoing discussions to see if the facility could be provided in the area, either through the original partners or to see if an alternative could be found so as to allow for intake in September.

Date of Next Meeting

Note that the next meetings of the Board will take place on Friday 16 September 2016 and Friday 18 November 2016 at 10.00am at High House Production Park

The Chairman thanked Adam Bryan for his support and the meeting closed at 9:45am