

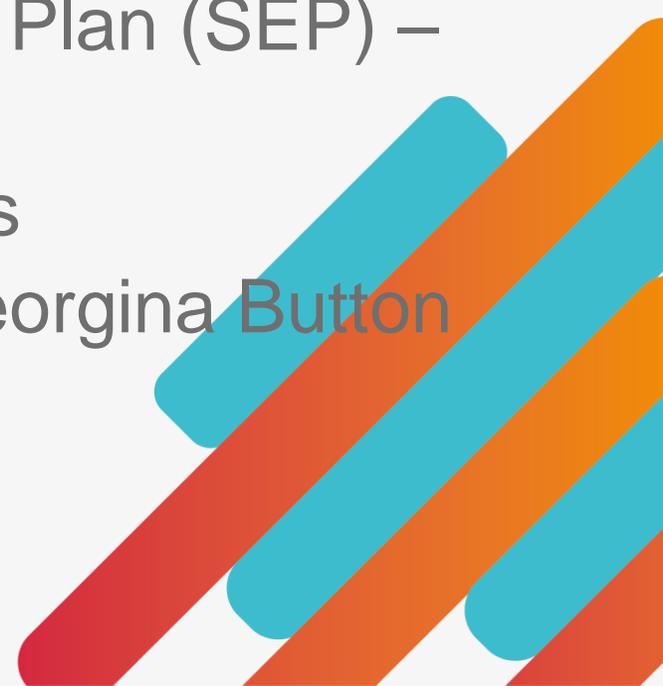


SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

Rural Sector Working Group

Welcome



1. Welcome and introductions – Chair, Graham Peters
 2. TOR and Declarations of interest, Graham Peters
 3. Overview of outcomes from previous meeting – Key Themes and Priorities – Stuart Gibbons
 4. Update: Refresh of the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) – Georgina Button
 5. Update: Current position on Brexit – Stuart Gibbons
 6. Action planning discussion: three suggestions – Georgina Button
 7. A.O.B
 8. Date and venue for next meeting
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Strategic Economic Plan Refresh Update

Georgina Button
Strategy Manager



Additionality – Action – Productivity

- Maximising benefit of **LTC**
 - **Thames Estuary** as area for investment
 - Supporting growth in **coastal** areas
 - **Innovation** agenda and universities
 - Iteration of the business support offer through the **Growth Hub**
 - **Creative** freelance hotspot
 - Conditions to help our **ports** thrive
 - Accelerate **housing**
 - **Rural / natural capital**
 - **Digital** infrastructure
 - Principal economic **assets**
 - Role of **Visitor Economy** in supporting growth
 - Capital of **social enterprise**
 - **Tools** afforded by Government – Enterprise Zones
 - **Energy**
- 



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The SEP's Five Strategic Ambitions

A digital DNA connecting and energising communities

Increased productivity driven by innovative businesses and people skilled for the future

A business infrastructure fit to drive UK plc

An influential collective voice leading change

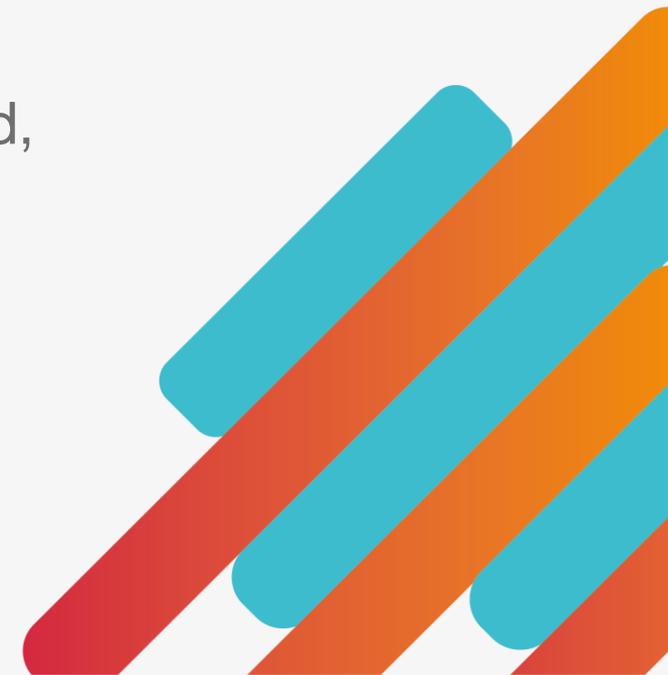
Resilient places embracing inclusive growth

The importance of the Rural Economy

Enable equity of engagement with the economy across all rural areas

Actions include:

- Lobby provision of fibre, superfast BB and mobile connectivity in rural areas
- Support for rural businesses
- Optimise the growth and development of the agri-tech, agri-food, forestry-tech sectors
- Support the development of sustainable rural tourism
- Develop skills of rural workforce
- Attract investment in heritage, natural assets and quality of life
- Support and engage with Rural Communities.





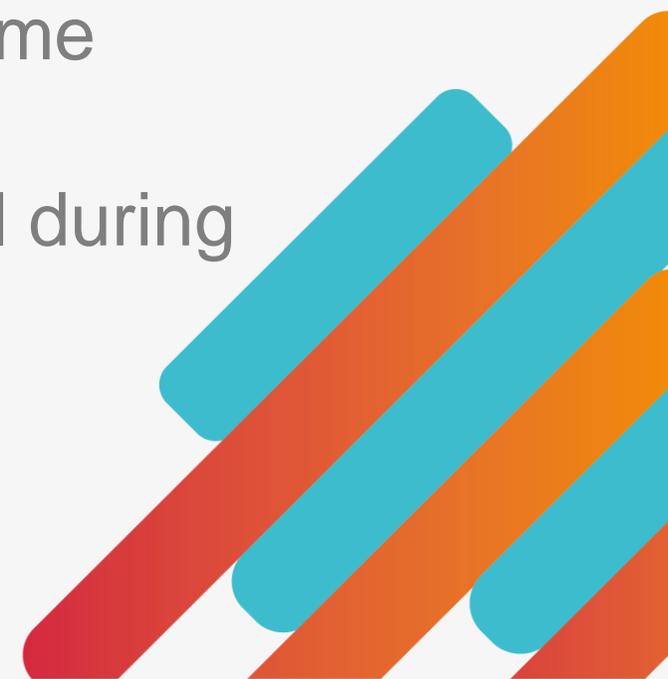
Brexit - current position

- To develop a coherent policy on food
- To give farmers and land managers time to adapt to the future
- To develop a new method of financial support
- To build natural capital into future approach to land management.



Transition period

- Farming support to continue until 2024
- 5 year transition period begins at point we leave the EU
- Reduction in largest BPS payments during this time
- Consultation to take place on new Agriculture Bill during 2018





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Let's take some action

- 1. Issues paper** – commission piece of work mapping out post-Brexit issues/challenges that sets out a set of recommended SELEP centric actions
- 2. Skills action** – identify how best to support development/delivery of agri-tech and skills generation
- 3. Good food growth campaign** - Ethical, bounce back foods and new market produce, all home grown mixed with innovative techniques and sustainability. Change perceptions, champion quality, gain public support and supply chain commitment. Work with partners such as Produced In Kent and seek endorsement from Jamie Oliver and equivalent in Kent and East Sussex.



Notes and actions

1. Welcome and Introductions

Graham welcomed the Rural Working Group.

2. Terms of Reference and Declarations of Interest

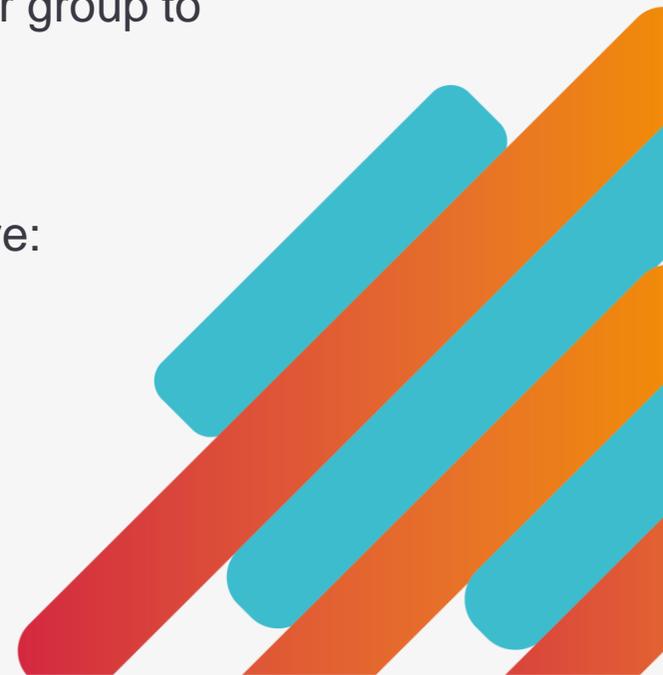
The Terms of Reference were accepted as read, these will be uploaded to the South East LEP website.

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

An action for the group to maintain a record of all interests once – action for group to complete Dol form once shared.

3. Overview of outcomes from previous meeting

- The five emerging priorities which were agreed at the previous meeting are:
- Agri Tech research and development
- Skills and Training
- Food Production / Manufacturing
- Natural Capital
- Social Capital.





Notes and actions

Georgina reiterated the Rural strategy is still a live document.

Action for all: to read through the [Rural Strategy](#), noting where actions have been completed and what actions are still required.

Action for all: Rural Strategy comments to be returned to [Stuart Gibbons](#) by 1st May.

Louise Aitken advised the group there is European Social Funding available; travel in rural areas was highlighted as an area for support and a rural based bid to future funding rounds will take place this year.

Action for all: to consider larger food and drink companies who could be invited to attend meetings. All suggestions to be returned to Stuart Gibbons by 1st May.

Discussion took place around the SELEP Sector Support Funding, the group confirmed this was a route they would consider, David Stokes volunteered to lead on this. **Action for David Stokes and Stuart Gibbons.**

Notes and actions

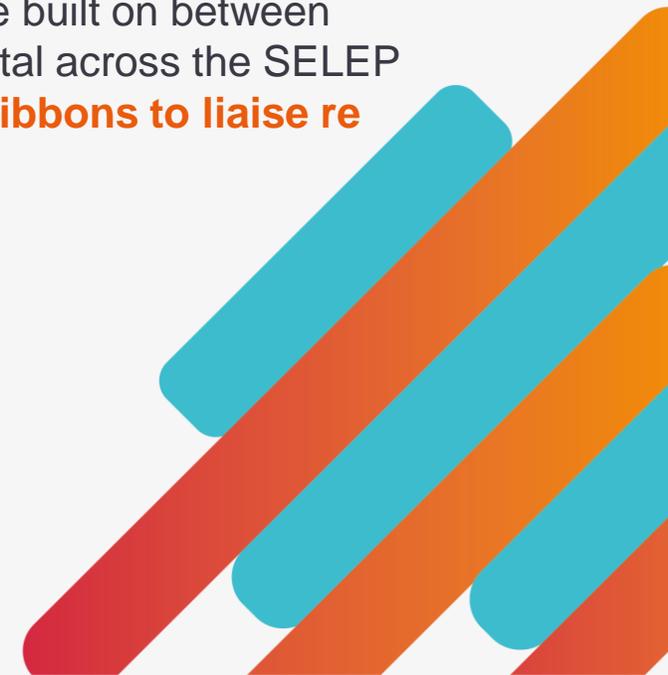
The meeting separated groups to discuss the three discussion points, the groups raised the following points:

- Colleges across the LEP with a Rural and farming focus could collaborate and offer a commitment to the group. HR needs to attract staff to education and skills, particular issues with lecturers and trainers of industry.
Action for Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, David Stokes, Tim Middleton & Louise Aitken. Stuart Gibbons to co-ordinate/support : Task and Finish group to consider actions on this.
- Rural sector needs to utilise new technology, online resources and industry content, Virtual Reality for teaching.
- Autonomous machinery will need to support the staffing shortages that are anticipated.
- The RSWG could develop a good growth campaign aimed at attracting new start-ups and growers, providing them with the place and opportunity to understand how to get set up, help to drive awareness of a food/natural product growth career ; attract innovative and entrepreneurial ideas - **Action for Stuart Gibbons to follow up with Stephanie Durling**
- Resilience in rural businesses, support with increasing capacity – Environment Agency offer a resilience service, we could partner with them as New Anglia LEP has. Georgina Button has shared case studies and details of BERT service to SELEP Growth Hub colleagues.



Notes and Actions

- Social Capital is a major element of the rural agenda. A piece of work should be produced to consider the main social capital issues within SELEPs rural areas, the part they play in rural life and how these are best responded to in the future – **Action for Keith Harrison and Nick Shuttleworth. Stuart Gibbons to liaise re timescale.**
- Natural capital is the underpinning resource for the SELEP area, can a relationship be built on between LMP and the LEP? Produce a paper/proposal outlining the key issues re natural capital across the SELEP area and the role they have to play in the future – **Action Nick Johannsen. Stuart Gibbons to liaise re timescale.**



Summary of actions and next steps

1. Sector Support Fund application

For the following areas of work to be included in a SELEP Sector Support Fund application. Stuart Gibbons and David Stokes to fulfil application once project details are agreed. Currently the project comprises of the following 3 work packages:

2. SELEP area specific rural-Brexit recommendations

SELEP Secretariat to write a brief for a potential consultant to gather existing rural-Brexit related policy and research documents with the aim of producing a SELEP area specific set of recommendations. Proposals from the Social Enterprise and Natural Capital papers to feed into this report as potential actions.

3. A Good Growth rural campaign

Set up a task and finish group to lead and deliver a 'Good Growth' campaign to attract new start-ups, growers and processors into the sector, champion innovation and sustainability and drive awareness of the food sector as an attractive career option. Stuart Gibbons to liaise in the first instance with Stephanie Durling (Produced in Kent) to scope initial proposal and share with key colleagues in the food sector in Essex/East Sussex for comment. Proposal to be agreed at the June meeting.

4. A collaborative skills effort to support rural skills generation.

Set up a task and finish group to create a proposal for raising awareness of the skills and training opportunities within the rural sector and to roll out a programme of initiatives to achieve this. Group made up of Mark Lumsdon-Taylor (Hadlow), David Stokes (Plumpton), Tim Middleton (Writtle) and Louise Aitken (SELEP). Stuart Gibbons to liaise/support. Proposal to be agreed at the June meeting.

Nest steps:

- All RSWG members to follow-up on highlighted actions and respond by 1st May.
- Stuart Gibbons to liaise with work package leads
- Work package leads to have inception meetings and agree a date for a mid-June meeting
- Work package leads to provide updates at next RSWG.