

Attendees	
Graham Peters	Rural working group chair / SELEP Vice Chair
Georgina Button	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Paul Dodson	Essex County Council
Katy Thomas	East Sussex County Council
Don Cranfield	Plumpton College
Suzanne Harris	Rural Community Council of Essex
Kristina Boulden	Romney March Wools
Jill Sargent	Produced in Kent
Amanda Corp	NFLL
Hilary Newport	CPRE Kent
Huw Jarvis	Kent County Council / LEADER
Nick Johannsen	Kent Downs AONB
Georgia Searle	BEST Growth Hub
Amy Beckett	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
John Bennett	Kent Wildlife Trust
Nick Sandford	Kent CLA / Godinton House & Estate
Robin Edwards	CLA
Stuart Gibbons	South East LEP consultant
Mark Lumsdon - Taylor	Hadlow College

1. Introductions

Graham welcomed the group.

2. Update: Refresh of the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan

Georgina advised the group that each working group is being met with to enable the Strategic Economic Plan to be fully joined up.

The presentation can be found [here](#).

3. Discussion: Rural Sector – Key themes and priorities for refresh of the SEP

FEEDBACK from Groups:

The delegates arranged themselves into three groups and were asked to organise the key themes and priorities into the following three categories: **lobby [L], action [A] and issues [I]** to help organise and determine a call to action:

Lobby [L]: an item which is seen as an opportunity or responsibility of the SELEP to lobby government and collaborative partners.

Action [A]: The SELEP can act as a catalyst for change or carry out as an action.

Issues [I]: Items which will not necessarily be represented in the SEP but could form part of a future coastal communities issue paper.

Group 1

- [L&I] Brexit – develop a shared vision with partners – payments linked to the public good.
- [I] Communities – organic growth of housing in villages.



- [A] The following should be considered when making decisions regarding transport and planning: Environmental assets – flood prevention and soils. There should be a place based approach
- [A] Can the LEP deliver both resources and money to support the rural sector
- [A&I] Horticulture - value or food manufacturing
- [A&I] Forestry – supporting woodland and CO2 outputs of an area etc
- [A&I] Rural Tourism (A&I)
- What is the timescale of the SEP and will there be realistic priorities?
- [A&I] Broadband – we need to focus on more than this, it must be about rural digital connectivity
- Research and Development – important; however is there a role for the LEP? Set up a cross area research fund / pool
- [I&L] Business department – high value / low impact rather than low value / high impact
- [L] Brexit, planning, strategic needs of area. Direct funds to where needed not politically mediated.
- [A] Funding architecture, level playing field. Must be holistic – not just focussing on the economy. Mentoring / skills / training. Understand rural planning issues
- [I] Planning / Brexit. Focus on the rural economy. Urbanisation of countryside / housing / connectivity

Group 2

- [L] To be truly strategic planning, even if it offends.
- [A] Undervalued rural sector – political complacency
- [A] Funding architecture
 - Central point for access
 - Greater accessibility – easier process post RPA
- [L] Post Brexit, the LEP must support, identify threats and opportunities. The LEP should link with like-minded organisations.
- [I&A] Rural workforce – both skills and transport.
- [L] Renewable energy for communities.

Group 3

- [A] Ensure growth hubs include tailor rural business support as part of ongoing growth hub support.
- [A] Further develop agri-tech big data opportunities.
- [A&I] Renewable energy – wood supply chain.
- [A&L&I] Natural Capital needs to underpin the SEP (is there a need for an issue paper?)
- [L] LEADER approach and rural support needs to be considered and protected.
- [L&I] Sustainable buildings, local materials and vernacular
- [A] Food and drink production – supply chain, branding, export, and food waste. Can the LEP play a catalyst role?
- Sustainable – inclusive rural communities
- Broadband and 5G connectivity
- Business growth and sites
- Full use of tech
- Design guides for development
- Social capital
- Social enterprise



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

Rural Working Group Meeting
30/11/2017
Kent Conference Centre

- Community capacity and re-skilling
- The above is an issue paper

Georgina thanked the group for their feedback, advising that the work will enable the SEP to bring forward additionality.