

Strategic Board Meeting

Friday 9th December 2016 10:00–11:30

High House Production Park, Purfleet, Essex, RM19 1RJ

Attending	
Chris Brodie	Chairman
George Kieffer	Essex Southend and Thurrock Vice Chair
Geoff Miles	Kent Vice Chair
Graham Peters	East Sussex Vice Chair
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Cllr Chris Whitbread	Epping Forest District Council
Cllr Rob Gledhill	Thurrock Council
Julian Drury	C2C National Express
Perry Glading	Forth Ports Limited
Cllr Rodney Chambers	Medway Council
Cllr Paul Watkins	Dover District Council
Stephen Waite	Writtle University College
Clive Soper	East Sussex FSB
Sarah Dance <i>for Jo James</i>	Sarah Dance Associates and Cultural Transformation Board
David Burch	Essex Chamber of Commerce
Vince Lucas <i>for Nick Sandford</i>	V A Consultancy Ltd
Paul Thomas	Kent Developers Group & Orbit Homes
Cllr Mark Dance <i>for Cllr Paul Carter</i>	Kent County Council
Derek Godfrey	Ellis Building Contractors Ltd & Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Peter Chowney	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr John Lamb	Southend on Sea Borough Council
David Rayner	Birkett Long

Also in Attendance:

Cath Goodall and Iain McNab, BEIS; Jan Challis and Silvia To, Highways England.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Adam Bryan, Cllr Paul Carter, Cllr David Tutt, Cllr Bob Standley, Jo James, Cllr Peter Fleming, Nick Sandford and Graham Pendlebury.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. Chris welcomed the board members and observers to the meeting.
- 1.2. Chris asked for declarations of interests; none were made.

2. Minutes and Actions from 23rd September 2016 Meeting, Matters Arising and Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. Mark Dance commented at the previous meeting Paul Carter had expressed the need for the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) refresh to be light touch and respect the federated model, as each area has knowledge of their local needs. This is noted; Chris advised the group that all work undertaken will be at a pan-LEP level.
- 2.2. Amendment to the minutes to record Cllr Pauk Watkins as Leader, Dover District Council and Cllr Rodney Chambers as Portfolio holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships at, Medway Council.
- 2.3. Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

3. General Update

3.1. Growth Deal Round Three

- 3.1.1. The South East LEP Local Growth Fund Round Three submission asked for in excess of £200 million; however initial indications on potential allocations from central government for many LEPs, including the South East LEP had been disappointing.
- 3.1.2. With thanks to strong lobbying from the South East LEP Strategic Board Members, local MP's and stakeholders, further indications from central government have suggested a significantly improved funding offer can be expected. News should be announced late December 2016 or early January 2017.

3.2. Autumn Statement – SELEP impact

- 3.2.1. The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, BEIS, is currently working on the Industrial Strategy Green Paper; it is planned to be released in the New Year.
- 3.2.2. Lord Heseltine's Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission is progressing with their mandate, developing a vision for the Thames Estuary.
- 3.2.3. The commission recently met with partners from all areas; Cllr Paul Carter, Chris Brodie and Kate Willard presented on behalf of businesses and Local Authorities within SELEP; these were well received by the commission.
- 3.2.4. The commission also met with representatives from each university in the Thames Estuary area; the meeting was well received by both the commission and the universities and conversations will further develop in the New Year.
- 3.2.5. Chris advised the board that they should take up any opportunities to engage with the commissioners in a positive way; to date the work carried out by the commission has been encouraging.
- 3.2.6. The commission will be producing an interim report; this is anticipated to be available April 2017.

3.3. Report on Annual Conversation

- 3.3.1. The South East LEP had their Annual Conversation with Central Government Thursday 1st December 2016; in this the LEP gave an update on the previous year, which was well received.
- 3.3.2. During the Annual Conversation Government recognised the steps SELEP has taken this year to project one voice.
- 3.3.3. SELEP are currently awaiting confirmation of programme level flexibility; once this has been received the board will be updated.
- 3.3.4. A copy of the presentation from the meeting was circulated with the Board pack and is available on the SELEP website
http://www.southeastlep.com/images/uploads/resources/Annual_Conversation_2016.pdf

4. Refreshing our Working Arrangements

- 4.1. Chris advised the board that by refreshing the working arrangements the LEP will be formalising the working groups.
- 4.2. A number of changes suggested to the Assurance Framework are as a result of changes made to the National Assurance Framework; these changes are sought to be implemented by March 2017.
- 4.3. Alongside this, agreement on a majority private sector of the board and an agreement on funding approvals also requires approval from the board.
- 4.4. Cllr Mark Dance commented that it would be beneficial for upper tier local authorities to be in attendance at coastal community meetings.
- 4.5. Cllr Rodney Chambers queried if membership of the Senior Officer Group was flexible as it would be useful for the Thames Gateway Partnership to attend.
- 4.6. Julian Drury commented the LEP has an opportunity to further strengthen its transparency, in particular declarations of interest during board meetings. Chris Brodie confirmed this is the direction the board would be moving towards; SELEP are fortunate that the Accountable Body has a robust system in place.
- 4.7. It was confirmed that the Urban Growth working group would be made up of all areas of the LEP; to date membership is not yet defined. The arrangements of this group will be available at the next board meeting, 3rd March 2017, for approval.
- 4.8. It was confirmed that declarations of interest are in line with those of a local authority and that all declarations of interest will be published on the SELEP website. Board members were reminded to return completed declarations of interest to the secretariat as soon as possible.
- 4.9. There will be confirmation from BEIS that a Social Enterprise is classed as a private company; pending confirmation of this, an additional private sector board member will be chosen.
- 4.10. It was confirmed any urgent matters that require a decision from the Strategic Board must give at least two working days' notice to the LEP secretariat.
- 4.11. **Agreed the working arrangements paper.**

5. Lower Thames Crossing

- 5.1. Since the previous board meeting the SELEP secretariat has been actively lobbying ministers and local MPs to progress a decision on a new Lower Thames Crossing; in addition to this the secretariat has been collating information for the transport prospectus, identifying the overall transport infrastructure need for the area to support the Lower Thames Crossing.

- 5.2. Jan Challis, Highways England, advised the board he is now covering the South East area for the foreseeable future. They are currently working closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) and are awaiting an announcement from DfT Ministers on the decision, which will be based on the recommendations made by Highways England. When this is announced they will advise us.
- 5.3. Zoe advised the board it is unlikely the announcement will be this year, therefore delaying this work. It was confirmed that SELEP has received support from surrounding LEPs; they have identified the Crossing as a barrier for growth to businesses in their own regions, in addition to ours.
- 5.4. Highways England confirmed they plan in five year blocks, it was highlighted the Lower Thames Crossing may not be announced in sufficient time to be in Highways England Road Investment Strategy 2. George Kieffer requested planning is future proofed as the current proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing alleviate current congestion and will not accommodate traffic; beyond the immediate future.
- 5.5. A number of board members expressed their frustration at the delay in progress; in particular the need for a business case when the issues are clear; the implications to local businesses with the current delay times; the hold up to Local Plans with no clear direction; the lack of input from potential private investment and the lack of clarity as to why progress is not being made from government departments.
- 5.6. The Board commented on the need for SELEP to start planning for the road infrastructure requirement over a 20 to 30 year time period, including the case for a fourth Lower Thames Crossing. The work should be supported by experts from across SELEP.
- 5.7. Chris commented on the positive potential for foreign investment in capital assets in the UK during the current financial climate
- 5.8. A number of actions were agreed:
 - 5.8.1. **An urgent letter requesting a meeting with Roads Minister John Hayes MP**
 - 5.8.2. **For the LEP to take a lead role in progressing this agenda with Government, to continue lobbying local MPs, stakeholders and relevant Ministers to push this up Government agenda**
 - 5.8.3. **For the Secretariat to lead a piece of work looking at longer timescale, a 20-30 year strategic view**
 - 5.8.4. **For the secretariat to lead a piece of work looking at financial packages that could be available to fund the third Thames Crossing.**

6. Skills and Employability Strategy

- 6.1. Louise Aitken advised the board that the Skills and Employability Strategy will be a cohesive document that will be employer led and concise to support the LEP to lobby government and to drive economic growth.
- 6.2. The strategy will be supported by the excellent local skills evidence bases which will be complemented by further SELEP wide research in the new year.
- 6.3. Partners such as the Construction and Industry Training Board are working alongside SELEP to input and respond to the skills strategy.
- 6.4. Further information will be produced for local areas on some of the headlines shared, such as numbers of people without qualifications, the age ranges and to identify concentrations in deprived areas.
- 6.5. Within the discussion it was identified an area that requires support is re-training in the older population; funding available for this is minimal. A piece of work to raise awareness on current material available should be carried out.

6.6. Chris advised the board when talking to Ministers two issues he continually highlights are: the need for further infrastructure investment and support for skills in the area.

6.7. Click [here](#) to see the Skills and Employability Presentation

7. Capital Programme Update

7.1. Rhiannon Mort presented a brief update to the board. Full update reports are presented to SELEP Accountability Board (most recent meeting held on the 18th November), who make all funding decisions. A copy of the full SELEP Accountability Board Agenda Pack can be found [here](#).

7.2. Fifteen Local Growth Fund (LGF) projects are due to be completed by the end of this financial year.

7.3. There is currently a forecast slippage of £6.34m LGF between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

7.4. Opportunities to mitigate this LGF slippage are being explored and discussed with project leads.

7.5. Growing Places Fund (GPF) has been allocated to thirteen projects to date; with the majority of these projects having been completed and making repayments. Local Authorities now give regular updates to advise the secretariat on spend and outcomes delivered to date. This reporting is identified as a requirement under the draft SELEP Assurance Framework.

7.6. It was confirmed that once SELEP has received full programme level flexibility, money returned to SELEP will be available for use, in line with the Investment Strategy.

7.7. Board members recognised the strength of SELEP's governance arrangements, in particular our transparent ways of working.

7.8. Geoff Miles thanked all officers and board members to date who have help to develop and strengthen SELEP's partnership; furthermore Geoff thanked both Iain McNab and Cath Goodall from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for championing the LEP.

7.9. Click [here](#) to see the Capital Programme update presentation

8. Working Group Highlights

8.1. A brief update was given on the working groups; full information can be found in the board papers.

9. Any Other Business

9.1. No points raised.

10. Close and Thanks

10.1. Thanks were given to both Perry Glading and Stephen Waite; this was their last board meeting as both are stepping down as board members.