



Background

The East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP) adopted the partnership Environment Strategy for East Sussex in July 2011. The strategy brings together the high level aims, objectives and actions of a wide range of organisations into one shared, long-term strategic environmental plan for the county.

In April 2018 the ESSP agreed to change the governance process, to ensure that the economic development and environmental agendas are brought together more effectively, by setting up the East Sussex Environment Sub-board (EES) of Team East Sussex. This will:

- enable Team East Sussex to integrate key new challenges and opportunities, including those set out in the Clean Growth Strategy, where Clean Growth is one of the four Grand Challenges of the national Industrial Strategy, and the 25 Year Environment Plan;
- assist Team East Sussex to access national and Local Enterprise Partnership funding streams to help deliver improvements in local environmental assets, which will assist in unlocking additional economic growth (e.g. in the fast-growing environmental goods and services sector and the local tourism sector).

The East Sussex Environment Sub-board

The membership of EES includes the County Council, which will provide the secretariat to the new board, and representatives from local businesses, business organisations, the environmental regulatory bodies and local universities. The EES Board will report to the Team East Sussex Board.

The main tasks of the EES Board will be to:

1. review the evidence base to identify the key areas in need of improvement over the next 2-3 years;
2. update the East Sussex Environment Strategy in light of the evidence and recent changes in national environmental policy, including the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Clean Growth Strategy, the Clean Air Strategy and the South2East Energy Strategy;
3. set out an activity plan for the next 2-3 years, in a similar manner to the activity plans developed by the other TES sub boards;
4. steer the delivery of the activity plan, including through identifying and accessing additional resources.

The Terms of Reference for the EES sub-board are included as Appendix 1.

Conclusion and recommendations

The TES Board is recommended to note the Terms of Reference for the East Sussex Environment Sub-board.

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1. Aim of the Environment East Sussex Board (EES)

- 1.1. It is a board of Team East Sussex, which is the federal East Sussex sub-board of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). These Terms of Reference are aligned to the overall SELEP Terms of Reference and the SELEP Assurance Framework, both of which can be viewed on the SELEP website.
- 1.2. The aim of the EES Board is to drive an improvement in environmental quality in East Sussex, as this will unlock the potential for further economic growth, for instance by increasing demand from the key growth sector of environmental goods and services and growing the local tourism sector. The 'environment' includes: natural capital, climate change, air quality, water, transport and waste.
- 1.3. The EES Board will be the county's recognised strategic body for the environment. Using a firm evidence base it will agree and set priorities and provide direction for the county's approach to improving the environment, ensuring that resources and expertise are deployed efficiently and effectively to achieve maximum impact in line with priorities.

2. Main responsibilities

- 2.1. To provide an oversight and enable the joining up of key stakeholders, strategies and local spending to agree a clear, long-term vision for the environment in East Sussex and provide ongoing review, so that it continues to accord with changing circumstances. This will include working closely with the other sub-boards of Team East Sussex to ensure an integrated approach across all relevant areas of work.
- 2.2. To advocate for East Sussex.
- 2.3. Develop a sustained dialogue with environmental regulators and key organisations in the public, private and community sectors to identify priorities and develop effective strategies to address them.
- 2.4. Commission and/or influence activities and interventions to make a tangible, positive and sustainable impact on the environment of the county.
- 2.5. Ensure effective links with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), through Team East Sussex, and other relevant organisations, in order to:
 - Influence relevant national and LEP policies and resource allocations decisions so that they support East Sussex priorities; and
 - Share intelligence about the effectiveness of different interventions and approaches.
- 2.6. Ensure that information and delivery programmes are based on robust and up to date evidence, presented in formats that are relevant and accessible to different audiences.
- 2.7. Where appropriate develop a coordinated approach to maximising funding opportunities to support environmental enhancement interventions across the county.
- 2.8. Develop and maintain a clear understanding of the key activities undertaken by organisations and networks within the county, and seek to eliminate duplication and inefficiencies where they exist.
- 2.9. Provide a forum that enables key organisations to develop a common understanding of the main threats and opportunities to the environment of East Sussex and deliver joint actions to address them.

3. How the Board will work

The Board will be the strategic body for the environment in East Sussex. It will:

- 3.1. Meet quarterly.
 - Agendas and papers will be sent to members at least five working days prior to meetings.
 - Minutes of actions and decisions will be circulated to members for approval within ten working days following each meeting and actions will be monitored as a standing item at subsequent meetings.
 - Minutes and decisions will be circulated widely, once they have been approved by the Board members.

- 3.2. Report to Team East Sussex and other forums on progress in achieving the county's environmental priorities.
- 3.3. As required, establish Ad Hoc 'Task and Finish' groups to address specific issues identified by the Board.
- 3.4. Test ideas and proposals with relevant bodies, sector organisations and invite business participation in Board Meetings and in Task and Finish Groups, as appropriate.
- 3.5. Work closely with the regulatory environmental bodies to ensure that the Board's decisions inform and are informed by actions and priorities at a local level.
- 3.6. Ensure that appropriate current and future work of the voluntary and community sector in contributing to the environment is fully supported.
- 3.7. Communicate the Board actions and decisions clearly and transparently to interested organisations and individuals within and outside East Sussex.

4. Membership, decision-making and secretariat

Membership

- 4.1. Members of the Board will be individuals who are of sufficient seniority to make decisions on behalf of their organisations and to influence the actions and decisions of other organisations. They will also have sufficient expertise and knowledge to ensure informed and beneficial input to the Board.
- 4.2. Membership will be reviewed on an annual self-evaluation basis, drawing on external support where necessary. Members are expected to attend all the Board meetings. In exceptional circumstances, with the written consent of the Chair, Members may send a substitute. Requests to send substitutes should be made to the Secretariat at least three days before the meeting. Failure to attend at least 4/6 of the meetings in a 12-month period may result in a removal from the Board.
- 4.3. Applications to invite new members should be made in writing to the Secretariat and should be provided with a clear rationale by a Proposer and a Secunder from The Board. Applications will be subject to discussion and decision at the subsequent Board meeting.
- 4.4. New members will be selected through a competitive procedure: the Chair will initially invite nominations through existing TES and relevant environmental networks. The Chair will then review all applicants and make a recommendation based on the balance of representation. The Chair will propose their recommended candidate for electronic approval (providing full disclosure of all applicants), whereby the quorum and decision-making conditions shall apply. The Chair may choose at her/his discretion to invite candidates to a Board meeting before calling for a decision.
- 4.5. Members of the Board will:
 - Make decisions that will lead to improvements in the environment in East Sussex;
 - Promote the East Sussex Environment Strategy vision and priorities within their organisations, communities and partnerships;
 - Be the main link between the Board and those that they represent, including:
 - Bringing forward issues and ideas for debate and decision at the Board;
 - Ensuring that best practice is widely communicated;
 - Feeding out and in from the sector or organisational groups represented to ensure comprehensive sector or organisational group input to the Board;
 - Identifying potential members of and, where appropriate, participating in Ad Hoc Task and Finish Groups; and
 - Ensuring that the Board decisions and Task and Finish Group actions are actioned and communicated widely.
 - Act as East Sussex environment champions both within and beyond the county;
 - Contribute to and advise on joint funding applications to support the environment;

- Recognise and disclose any activities that might give rise to conflicts of interest.

4.6. Members of the Board are:

- (a) East Sussex County Council
- (b) Environment Agency
- (c) Natural England
- (d) Southern or South East Water
- (e) County Land and Business Association
- (f) National Farmers Union
- (g) East Sussex District and Borough representative
- (h) Sussex Chamber of Commerce
- (i) FSB
- (j) University of Brighton
- (k) Plumpton College
- (l) Sussex Local Nature Partnership
- (m) Sussex University

Other expert attendees will be invited to present and to report on specific agenda items.

Decision-making

4.7. Half of the members of the Board will constitute a quorum. Decisions will be made by a majority of the number of members present and voting at meetings. In the event of a drawn vote, the Chair will make the casting vote. Where decisions are required outside meetings, these can be made via written procedure (email) with the agreement of the Chair, coordinated by the Board Secretariat (ESCC's Environment Team manager). Five working days will be allowed for a response; a nil response will be taken as an abstention.

4.8. The Chair will be elected by the Board members on an annual basis to run from the date of the first Board meeting. The existing Chair will be eligible for re-election at the end of their term. The Board Chair will:

- Chair the quarterly Board meetings, and provide the casting vote where necessary.
- Ensure that all representatives have a fair and equal opportunity to contribute to debate without censor.
- Formally sign newly proposed members onto the Board and manage Board attendance.
- Act as the key spokesperson for the Board, where necessary.
- Agree all Board papers and Minutes before circulation.
- Make sure that conflicts of interest are properly managed or avoided.

Secretariat

4.9. The Secretariat for the Board will be provided by ESCC. Its main responsibilities will be to:

- Organise Board Meetings, including agreeing dates and venues, and providing agendas and background papers and gaining prior agreement to dates, venues and papers by the Board Chair before circulation.
- Produce the minutes of meetings and ensure that these are circulated in accordance with these Terms of Reference.
- Convene Sector Task and Finish Groups and support the implementation of other actions, in accordance with decisions made by the Board.
- Liaise with the Board Chair and Members on other matters as required.

5. Review and monitoring

5.1. Review and monitoring will include:

- Regular reporting to and feedback from Team East Sussex and other strategic groups.
- Wide and transparent circulation of Board minutes.
- Periodic review of the evidence base.
- Review of the delivery programme of strategic environmental activities.

5.2. In addition, the Board may undertake or commission a review of specific areas of activity, as agreed by The Board members, which may include the effectiveness of the evolving Board model in ensuring that county's environmental priorities are being addressed.

6. Conflicts of interest

6.1. A Register of Interests shall be held by the Secretariat. All Board members are required to complete a Declaration of Interest form, recording details of any relationship or other financial or personal interest which might conflict with their duties to the Board and SELEP. This includes recording memberships of external bodies or undertaking outside work (voluntary or paid) with anyone who has, or may seek to have, dealings with the Board or SELEP. They are further required to identify close family members who are also a Board or SELEP representative, or has the ability to exercise significant influence over the Board / SELEP's agenda or activity. Copies of all declarations are retained by the Secretariats of both the Board and SELEP. The Register will be available for public scrutiny.

6.2. All declarations are reviewed annually in accordance with the Register of Interest Policy; however each Board member is required to ensure their declarations are up to date and must notify the Secretariat of any changes immediately.

6.3. Board members are required to declare interests in any matter being considered by the Board, direct or indirect, at the outset of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. Such declarations will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. After an interest is declared, the Chair may choose to ask the individual Board member to withdraw from the meeting; if permitted to remain, the individual Board member may not participate in any discussion of the matter, or vote in any questions relating to it.

6.4. These rules apply whether or not the interest concerned is already set out in the Register of Interests. The rules do not apply where the interest concerned relates primarily to the general interest of any public sector member in her/his area of geographical responsibility, or to the interests of East Sussex as a whole.

6.5. The rules also apply to any substitute member or Non-Voting Participant.

7. Equality and Diversity

7.1. SELEP and its federal boards are covered by the general equality duty as set out within the Equality Act 2010. Accordingly all decisions taken by the Board will pay due regard to:

- (a) Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act;
- (b) Advancing equality of opportunity between people from different equality groups;
- (c) Fostering good relations between people from different equality groups.

7.2. Members of all SELEP boards, including the Environment Board, are required to maintain high standards in the way they undertake their duties. All members of the Board are de-facto representatives of SELEP, and therefore their actions impact on the way in which the SELEP is viewed by the public. All members are therefore required to have regard to the 'Principles of Public Life', known as the Nolan Principles, contained within the provisions of S.29(1) of the Localism Act 2011, and set out below:

- (a) SELFLESSNESS – to serve only the public interest and never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person;

- (b) INTEGRITY – not to place themselves in situations where their integrity may be questioned, not behave improperly and on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour;
- (c) OBJECTIVITY – make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits;
- (d) ACCOUNTABILITY – to be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their office;
- (e) OPENNESS – to be as open as possible about their actions and those of TES/SELEP and be prepared to give reasons for those actions;
- (f) HONESTY – not to place themselves in situations where their honesty may be questioned, not behave improperly and, on all occasions, avoid the appearance of such behaviour;
- (g) LEADERSHIP – promote and support these principles by leadership and by example and always act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

8. Transparency

- 8.1. Board meetings are not public meetings, however the Board shall seek to operate in an open and transparent manner at all times.
- 8.2. Following approval by the Board, minutes shall be made publicly available via the ESCC website (and the websites of partner organisations if appropriate).
- 8.3. Other relevant operational documentation for the board shall also be made publically available on the ESCC website (and via partners' websites if appropriate), including Board membership, contact details, meeting schedule, annual reports, the Register of Interests and this Terms of Reference document.
- 8.4. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 shall apply to Board papers and to records of Board decisions.

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