

## Subsistence and Hospitality Policy

### 1. Scope of this policy

- 1.1. The policy is designed to safeguard the use of public funds, and to protect and enhance the reputation of South East LEP Ltd (SELEP) and the South East region. All claims, gifts or hospitality must uphold the SELEP integrity and meet the highest standards of public life.
- 1.2. This Policy shall apply to all Strategic and Accountability Board members (The Board members) and any subsequent committee or panel established by the Strategic Board from time to time.
- 1.3. Other than the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Strategic Board, no SELEP Board member is entitled to claim expenses, unless they are substituting for the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Strategic Board on an approved duty set out under paragraph 4 of this Policy. Under these circumstances, any expenses claimed must be in accordance with this Policy. The Council shall be responsible for any expenses which any Board member, or officer appointed by them as their representative, is entitled to as a result of their attendance at SELEP meetings.
- 1.4. This policy is not applicable to officers employed on behalf of the SELEP; they are required to comply with the respective policies of their employing organisation.
- 1.5. The Board members may engage in hospitality or may receive gifts as a result of their role within the SELEP, provided it is in accordance with 6 below.

### 2. Travel and Subsistence

- 2.1. Claims for travel and subsistence should be submitted monthly using the template form set out in Appendix A. Payment will be made direct to a bank or building society account via BACS in accordance with the payment dates which will be notified from time to time.
- 2.2. All claim forms must be submitted with valid receipts and submitted within 2 months of expenses being incurred.
- 2.3. The claimant must be satisfied that the amounts claimed are correct, fair and reasonable, and that they have been incurred in the course of an "approved duty".
- 2.4. Failure to supply receipts and appropriate detail will result in non-payment of claims. If in exceptional circumstances the necessary receipts or documentation could not be retained, a written explanation to that effect should be included in the claim form.
- 2.5. Claims must be submitted to and approved by the SELEP Accountable Body, Essex County Council.
- 2.6. All approved claims will be published on the SELEP website.

### 3. Approved duties

- 3.1. An "approved duty" is:
  - a) attendance by, or on behalf of, the Chair/Deputy Chair at any of the following meetings;
    - i) SELEP committees or sub-committees as may be established from time to time;
    - ii) Federated Boards;
    - iii) Federated committees or sub-committees as may be established from time to time;
    - iv) any working group within the SELEP area;
    - v) any spatial groups (including Coastal, Rural and Thames Gateway);

- vi) any Sector Groups (including U9 (HE) and Creative);
- vii) any Local Authority or Business Partners;
- viii) Central Government and its departments;
- ix) Secretariat;
- x) Accountable Body;
- b) an activity in connection with the discharge of any function of the SELEP; or
- c) any other duty where the reasonable attendance is;
  - i) in pursuance of the role and duties of Chair/Deputy Chair; and
  - ii) to conduct business relevant to the work of, and necessary to further the objectives of the SELEP.

3.2. Attendance at a Strategic Board or Accountability Board meeting does not constitute an approved duty for the purpose of this policy.

## **4. Subsistence claims**

### **4.1. Travel expenses by car, motorcycle, bicycle or rail;**

- a) Travel by personal car will be reimbursed at the rates set for tax allowance purposes by the Inland Revenue for business travel. Currently these are:
  - i) 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter.
  - ii) An additional 5p per mile can be claimed for carrying a fellow SELEP member on a business journey;
  - iii) 24p per mile for use of own motorcycle and
  - iv) 20p per mile for use of own bicycle.
- b) Travel expenses will be reimbursed for relevant journeys between premises as agreed for tax purposes.
- c) When claiming mileage for using a motor vehicle fuel VAT receipts must be provided; the receipt(s) should show that sufficient fuel to undertake the journey(s) was purchased prior to the journey(s) taking place. However, if the Chair/Deputy Chair is registered for VAT and provides a copy of the relevant VAT Certificate to the Secretariat, they can claim mileage without receipts.
- d) Parking fees and public transport fares will be reimbursed at cost, but only on production of a valid ticket or receipt. The cheapest available fare for the time of travel should be purchased.
- e) Rail travel other than within the SELEP area or London should be booked in advanced to enable use of discounting arrangements and to ensure the most economical means of travel has been chosen for the journey. All rail travel must be Standard Class.
- f) Taxi fares will only be reimbursed on production of a valid receipt and only if the use of public transport or the Chair/Deputy Chair's own car is impracticable.

### **4.2. Air travel and travelling abroad**

- a) Air travel and any journey undertaken abroad must be approved by the Strategic Board prior to the journey being undertaken.
- b) The Strategic Board must be advised of the nature and purpose of the journey, the overall costs of the journey and the benefit to be achieved. All air travel must be economy class.

### **4.3. Meals**

- a) Meals may only be claimed where there has been attendance on an Approved Duty for four hours or more. The four-hour period will include time travelling to and from the Chair/Deputy Chair's normal place of residence, and which include the periods of the day specified below:

Breakfast: starting before 7:30am	£5.00
Lunch: 12 noon to 2:30pm	£10.00
Dinner: ending after 8:30pm	£20.00

- b) Expenditure on alcohol will never be reimbursed and must not be claimed.

#### 4.4. Hotels

- a) Where hotel stays are necessary, hotel accommodation will be paid up to a maximum of the following rates:

Main Cities in UK £150.00  
*(Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London (including Gatwick and Heathrow), Manchester, Newcastle, Plymouth and Reading)*  
 Elsewhere in UK £100.00  
 Foreign hotels **3 quotes required**  
*(reasonable, but not luxury class)*

#### 4.5. Telephone / Email

- a) No claims can be made for the cost of Broadband connection, or telephone bills whether they are land line, mobile or both.

#### 4.6. Stationery

- a) No claims can be made for the cost of printer cartridges, printer paper, envelopes, stamps, pens, files etc. or for any of these to be provided free of charge for use at home.

### 5. Non-Claimable expenses

- 5.1. Public funds should not be used to purchase gifts of any kind. For example, the following must not be claimed:

- a) Christmas or other greetings cards;
- b) staff or Member entertaining, including Christmas lunches and other parties;
- c) gifts to members of staff or other Members or ex-members of staff or ex-Members;
- d) gifts, gratuities or donations of any nature to external bodies or individuals;
- e) prizes to staff members or Members rewarding special work efforts or good business ideas, other than through the approved corporate scheme – the costs of which would not be met through the expenses claim system;
- f) cards for those officers sitting exams, or "get well" cards;
- g) leaving gifts;
- h) long service awards; and
- i) flowers in respect of bereavements.

## 6. Hospitality

- 6.1. Public funds should not be used for offering hospitality to third parties. If it is likely that a ‘typical’ member of the public would think that using public funds to offer hospitality, or the acceptance of a particular offer of hospitality is inappropriate, then it probably is and should therefore not be offered.
- 6.2. In exceptional circumstances the Chair may be in a position where they are required to provide hospitality. The need to incur such expenses must be approved in advance by the Accountable Body of the SELEP, where the value of the hospitality provided is greater than £20.00.
- 6.3. In obtaining approval there must be appropriate supporting information provided which sets out the reasons for the need to offer hospitality, and the names of those involved (both those of the external body offered the hospitality, and any SELEP member or officer present).
- 6.4. It is expected that the subsistence rates set out in paragraph 5.9 would normally apply. However, in exceptional circumstances there may be occasions when a higher level of hospitality is appropriate. In these cases, a maximum of £40 per head, may be paid, and prior approval must be obtained from the Accountable Body.
- 6.5. Catering may be provided for formal meetings with external bodies in certain circumstances, for example, if meetings take place outside of normal office hours.
- 6.6. The SELEP is funded entirely through public funds and everyone’s conduct is expected to be of the highest standard. It is essential that all individuals are seen to be open and honest in any dealings with outside individuals and organisations. These relationships are examined in detail through formal and regular channels, such as auditors. They are also of great interest to the public through Freedom of Information requests and other ad hoc channels.
- 6.7. However, the role of Board Members incorporates an element of networking, which by their very nature will include an expectation of their attendance at formal hospitality events. Such offers of hospitality from third parties may be accepted if:
  - a) the invite is as a direct result of the Board Members role in the SELEP; and
  - b) it will provide a platform within which the Board Member will be able to actively pursue the SELEP’s objective and further networking to the benefit of the SELEP.
- 6.8. In the interest of openness and transparency, all offers of hospitality made over the value of £25 should be declared, indicating whether it has been declined or accepted, using the Declaration form within 28 days of receipt of the offer. The register of hospitality declarations made will be published on the SELEP website.

The declaration form can be found [here](#).