



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC BOARD AGENDA PACK

Friday 17th April 2020
Zoom Video Conference



Agenda

| | | | | |
|---------------|-------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Item 1 | 10:30 | Welcome , introduction for new Board Members and 'rules' for the virtual meeting | Chris Brodie | |
| Item 2 | 10:40 | Minutes from 31 January meeting Declarations of Interest Matters arising | Chris Brodie | Pg. 3 |
| Item 3 | 10:50 | Update on Agenda following postponement of original meeting • For information | Adam Bryan | Pg. 10 |
| Item 4 | 10:55 | Appointment of Directors • Resolution to appoint Co-opted Directors | Chris Brodie | Pg. 13 |
| Item 5 | 11:00 | Terms of Reference, Framework Agreement and other policies • Decision to adopt eight policies • Decision to enter into the Framework • Resolution to enter into a Power of Attorney • To note that the Assurance Framework remains in force | Chris Brodie and Suzanne Bennett | Pg. 15 |
| Item 6 | 11:10 | Covid-19 Update and Response – Three Reports • Report 1 – SELEP's Immediate response to Covid-19 For Information • Report 2 – Offering Flexibility on Investments For Decision • Report 3 – Re-purposing Funding and Support for Recovery For Decision | Chris Brodie and Secretariat | Pg. 19 Pg. 24 Pg. 31 |
| Item 7 | 12:30 | Covid-19 Crisis Sub Committee • Establishment of a sub-committee | Suzanne Bennett | Pg. 40 |
| Item 8 | 12:45 | Coastal Prospectus • Decision to endorse the Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus | Adam Bryan | Pg. 44 |
| | 12:55 | AOB and Close | | |

Information Items

Growth Hub Update

Sector Support Fund Update

Future Strategic Board meeting dates:

12th June; 2nd October; 11th December; 19th March 2021.

Item 1: Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1. Chris Brodie opened the meeting.

Item 2: Minutes of last meeting, Declarations of Interest and Matters Arising

- 2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were **agreed**.
- 2.2. There were no interests declared in relation to this agenda.
- 2.3. The Board was updated regarding the Annual Performance Review that was conducted on the 27th of January; it went well, and final marks will be good, provided that all the LEP review requirements are met as previously agreed.
- 2.4. George Kieffer updated the Board regarding the ESIF meeting mentioned at 11.9 in the previous minutes. This meeting was unfortunately cancelled but resulted in the SELEP area receiving more money than originally allocated.
- 2.5. Adam Bryan informed the Board that the Lower Thames Crossing Supplementary Consultation is now open, and a response to this will be considered at the March Strategic Board meeting.
- 2.6. Adam Bryan also explained to the Board that there will be an induction session scheduled on the 20th of March before the Board meeting for all Board members, with more details to follow.

Item 3: Local Industrial Strategy

- 3.1. Carole Barron commented regarding the Government timetable delays slipping from March to the Summer that the political landscape has changed since December, and that an even bigger case for investment given the focus on investment in the north and that our area will be at the sharp point of Brexit.
- 3.2. Adam Bryan responded that the LISs remain part of Government plans, although possibility re-packaged. He continued that feedback has suggested the SELEP's LIS is stronger than many others and this may facilitate faster working with the Government, and emphasised that this meeting presents another chance to give feedback and comments to be taken into consideration in the final drafting of the LIS.
- 3.3. Helen Russell and Sharon Spicer presented to the Board.



3 310120 LEP Board
Meeting LIS PP_FINA

- 3.4.
- 3.5. Jo James expressed concern around adding more outcomes to the evidence base that this would add too much length to the document. She added her thanks to Helen and Sharon for the work they have done.
- 3.6. Jo James continued by suggesting that there needs to be a greater mention of the benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing, and that any opportunity where investing in the SELEP actually also helps the north will be important.

- 3.7. Peter Fleming expressed thanks regarding the engagement and attendance with KMEP. He added that he wished to emphasise to the new Board the scale of the challenge of covering the whole SELEP area, and that he doesn't think there is clear single message in the LIS, but he does not think this is possible given this challenge.
- 3.8. Ana Christie commented that Government will be focusing on net-zero carbon economy and that she thinks this needs to come out more. She asked whether a task group could be formed regarding engagement with utility companies.
- 3.9. Miranda Chapman suggested that the LIS needs a couple of sentences as an "elevator pitch".
- 3.10. Perry Glading stated that he would like a better understanding of the calculation of the figure of 28 billion. He also asked how this document could work alongside a good communications strategy throughout all the federated areas, adding that there is a need for a concise "front end" that can be promoted locally.
- 3.11. Graham Peters commented that he thinks the document needs to be more impactful for ministers.
- 3.12. Carole Barron commented that there needs to be more emphasis, regarding ageing society/new communities, around helping people to stay in their homes longer. She added that momentum needs to be maintained around Clean Growth, and that the U9 group may be able to add to the evidence base.
- 3.13. Carole Barron continued, adding that the word "security" is key in the section around the ports.
- 3.14. Andrew Metcalf stated that the detail of the document will be less important for ministers, and that a short pithy narrative would be useful for this.
- 3.15. Adrian Gulvin suggested encouraging utility companies to invest in infrastructure, as infrastructure needs to be green going forward to align with Government aims.
- 3.16. It was also suggested that the references to the coastal prospectus could be made clearer.
- 3.17. Graham Peters commented that the feedback from the rural group working group was positive, however most information relating to rural is found under the Coastal Catalyst strategic opportunity, and he asked whether this could be changed.
- 3.18. Jo James stated that the executive summary is too repetitive of content already in the document, and that it needs to be something more enticing to the reader.
- 3.19. Helen Russell clarified that there is a three-page summary produced which was not circulated as it will be finalised during the next stage.
- 3.20. Colette Bailey commented that she likes how the document describes what unites the area. The Skills Advisory Panel asked whether there could also be acknowledgement of the challenge of close proximity to London, rather than just the opportunities. More information and detail around the creative sector would also improve the document, particularly around the attraction strategy. She emphasised the available resources of copywriters available within this sector while finalising the document.

- 3.21. Graham Peters emphasised that some areas of the SELEP themselves require levelling with the rest of the South East, as there is some deprivation and particular issues within our own areas.
- 3.22. Carole Barron added that within Research and Development the language needs strengthening, that there is not a lack of spending but a disproportionately low amount of funding allocated to the area.
- 3.23. Chris Brodie concluded the item by summarising that these comments will be taken into consideration, a further update will be provided at the next meeting and that hopefully Government timetables will be clearer by this time.
- 3.24. The Board **noted** the progress made in drafting the LIS following feedback from the Board meeting on 6 December.

Item 4: Communication Strategy and Protocols

- 4.1. Zoe Gordon presented to the Board.



4 Board Meeting -
CommsStrategy_Pre:

- 4.2.
- 4.3. Peter Fleming commented that he does not understand what the “brand” of the SELEP is, and that the tag line is too generic. He added that there are other bodies with “South East” in the title which risk confusion.
- 4.4. Zoe Gordon clarified that the LIS will provide more detail around the brand identity of the SELEP.
- 4.5. Clive Soper added that the LIS contains the “Global Gateway” branding, which is an important strength for the country and differentiates the SELEP from other regions.
- 4.6. Peter Chowney said that the target audience ought to include the utility companies. He also commented that the word “coalition” is not as strong as partnership .
- 4.7. Andrew Metcalf emphasised that putting this strategy into practice will require many other people, including local authorities and other communications teams for example, and that partnership working will be crucial.
- 4.8. Miranda Chapman clarified that this item was asking to sign off the broad premise of the strategy. She reemphasised the need for more impactful language, and that there is talent available to assist.
- 4.9. Ana Christie reiterated Peter Chowney’s point around the word “coalition” and suggested “partnership” instead. She raised the question of how SELEP sees their role in connecting the federated areas.
- 4.10. Colette Bailey commented that she likes how the strategy includes behaviours and values, and that this would be helpful to include in the induction of the new Board. She continued by agreeing with Miranda Chapman’s point about increasing the impact of the document, and suggested a series of pictures or a 30 second film.
- 4.11. Martin Bracken added that the strategy should build-in the strategic opportunities from the LIS.

- 4.12. Carole Barron suggested looking at Medway as an example of good practice.
- 4.13. The Board **agreed**, subject to comments being considered, the Communication Strategy and Protocols.
- 4.14. The Board **noted** the communications narrative and key messages set out in the Communication Strategy and Protocols.
- 4.15. The Board **noted** the responsibilities of SELEP Members and partners when communication the work of SELEP and its projects.

Item 5: Local Growth Fund Spend Beyond 31 March 2021

- 5.1. Rhiannon Mort presented to the Board.



5 LGF spend
beyond 31 March 20

- 5.2.
- 5.3. The Board considered each project in turn. It was agreed that all endorsements would be subject to review if there were any significant changes regarding planning approval, project deliverability or the availability of other funding towards the project.
- 5.4. A127 Fairglen Interchange Junction Improvements and New Link Road project:
 - a) Geoff Miles explained that the Accountability Board considered this project as a priority;
 - b) the Board **endorsed** this project.
- 5.5. Thanet Parkway project:
 - a) David Rayner commented on the positive news that Kent County Council will be putting money into this project to bridge the funding gap. He asked whether the work on this project will have started before the deadline;
 - b) Mike Whiting responded that he is confident that there will be good headway by March 2021 with an expected opening of Spring 2022;
 - c) the Board **endorsed** this project.
- 5.6. A28 Sturry Link Road project:
 - a) Jo James explained that she considers this project to be a priority and would like to see some flexibility;
 - b) Geoff Miles explained that this project would be following a similar approvals timeline as the Thanet Parkway project;
 - c) The Board **endorsed** this project.
- 5.7. George Kieffer expressed the need to prove that the LEP can deliver in order to retain future funding for our area;

- 5.8. There was a discussion regarding project pipelines, and the importance of using any money that may become available towards these projects, taking available time into consideration.
- 5.9. Exceat Bridge project:
- a) the Board **endorsed** this project.
- 5.10. Innovation Park Medway project:
- a) Tony Ball requested more information around the delay with the Local Development Order (LDO);
 - b) Rhiannon Mort explained that in order to approve the LDO, Medway needs to understand the impact on the Highways England network. This could then raise the need for mitigating works which will need to be addressed. The project is dependent on this timeline;
 - c) Adrian Gulvin added that Medway is committed to this project and is working with Highways England, and that they have invested in the project and are sponsoring one of the buildings. He emphasised that work is ongoing with the LDO and archaeological works and that the project is ready to start as soon as the LDO is received;
 - d) David Rayner stated that Success Essex considered at their meeting that time has run out for this project;
 - e) Jo James asked if Dawn Hudd, Assistance Director- Physical and Cultural Regeneration at Medway Council, could address the Board;
 - f) Dawn Hudd explained that Geoff Miles wrote to Highways England regarding this project, which was useful and demonstrates the influence of the SELEP. She added that Medway is engaged with Highways England and is committed to finding solutions, and that this project has been decoupled from the Local Plan which was causing a delay, to be re-linked if timescales around traffic modelling match up. She continued that Highways England will be writing to the Accountability Board to state that they are working with Medway and are confident in finding solutions. She summarised that traffic modelling will be finalised, and Highways England will inform Medway of the required mitigations by July 2020, there will then be further discussions regarding funding and it is possible that the project could start before October 2020, but a Cabinet meeting date has been identified in October 2020 for the potential approval of the Local Development Order;
 - g) the Board **did not endorse** this project. This project will be reviewed by the Accountability Board in February 2020, to return to the March 2020 Strategic Board meeting.
- 5.11. David Rayner emphasised the importance of providing the Secretariat with up-to-date information.
- 5.12. Rhiannon Mort commented that relevant projects on the pipeline will be contacted to prepare business cases in advance after the February Accountability Board meeting.
- 5.13. Rhiannon Mort commented that there are a further ten LGF projects with a risk of LGF spend beyond 31 March 2021.
- 5.14. Geoff Miles comments that Kent County Council has handed back around £15m LGF from certain LGF projects which could not progress. The question around deliverability should be put to other local

authorities to ensure that the high-risk projects and those projects at risk of spending LGF beyond 31 March 2021 are deliverable and where they are not, this funding should be handed back.

- 5.15. Graham Peters suggested that the SELEP Secretariat should formally write to local areas on the point raised by Geoff above.
- 5.16. Ron Woodley commented that it would be useful to understand the threshold of success according to Government.
- 5.17. Adam Bryan reassured the Board that the SELEP maintains good delivery, and that a sensible approach will help to keep this trajectory.

Item 6: SELEP Local Assurance Framework 2020/21

- 6.1. Suzanne Bennett presented to the Board.



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- 6.2.
- 6.3. The Board **agreed** the SELEP Assurance Framework 2020/21, to be formally adopted on incorporation of the South East LEP Ltd.
- 6.4. The Board **agreed** the revised Board Recruitment Policy, to be formally adopted on incorporation of the South East LEP Ltd.
- 6.5. The Board **noted** the revised Terms of Reference, to be reconsidered at the March Strategic Board meeting.

Item 7: Chair Term Extension

- 7.1. Chris Brodie left the room for this item; Adam Bryan chaired this item.
- 7.2. It was agreed that the allowance for this position will be given further consideration at the appropriate moment.
- 7.3. The Board **agreed** to extend the term of the current Chair by a further two years.
- 7.4. The Board **noted** that this extension would take the term served to a full six years which is the maximum term for the position, after which an open and transparent recruitment in line with the agreed process as set out in the Board Recruitment Policy would be required.
- 7.5. Chris Brodie returned to the room, and added that he has been nominated to be the representative for the Southern LEPs on the LEP network board.

Item 8: Deputy Chair Recruitment

- 8.1. George Kieffer, Chair of the Selection Panel, provided the Board with background information.
- 8.2. The Board **agreed** to appoint Sarah Dance as the Deputy Chair.

Item 9: Board Membership

9.1. Chris Brodie expressed a series of messages of thanks on behalf of the rest of the board and the SELEP Secretariat to the Board members who have recently left or for whom this will definitely be their last meeting. These members were:

- a) David Burch
- b) David Tutt
- c) Douglas Horner
- d) George Kieffer
- e) Paul Thomas
- f) Peter Chowney
- g) Peter Fleming

Item 10: AOB

10.1. Success Essex will be reconsidering their representatives in order to achieve the gender balance necessary to meet the requirements of the LEP Review.

10.2. George Kieffer added that the LEP was invited to the hearing before the Stansted Airport planning application but was unfortunately not called, about which George Kieffer has expressed disappointment to Uttlesford District Council.

Chris Brodie closed the meeting.



Item 3: Update on Board Agenda

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Following the postponement of the planned meeting of the Strategic Board (the Board) on 20 March 2020 due to the Covid-19 Crisis, this report provides an update to Board Members on how each item of business that was on the original agenda is now being considered.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to note the update.

3. Background

- 3.1. Following the incorporation of SELEP Ltd on 28 February 2020, the Board was due to meet in its new form for the first time on 20 March 2020. As it was the first meeting of the Board there was a large order of business to be discussed (the original agenda is available at Appendix A). However, by Tuesday 17 March it was clear that there were increasing risks to public health from the Covid-19 virus and to hold a meeting that brought together many people from across the region would be irresponsible and place Board Members and other supporting officers at an unacceptable level of risk, therefore the Board meeting was postponed.
- 3.2. Since that time the restrictions around social distancing have increased and the Board will not be able to meet in person for a significant period of time. Given the devastating impact that the social distancing requirements are having on the economy of the South East it was clear that the Board would need to meet to discuss a response and continue with business that cannot be delayed, and arrangements were made for the meeting to be held remotely.
- 3.3. To ensure that the remote meeting could run effectually and that sufficient time and consideration could be given the crisis situation and its impact on the economy it has been necessary to take a novel approach to the original order of business. This report provides the Board an update on each item of business.

4. Board Member Induction

- 4.1. The induction of Board members before their first Board meeting is a requirement of the National Assurance Framework and good governance practice. It was agreed as part of the LEP Review workstream that ALL board members would go through an induction process before the new Board met for the first time and the intention had been for that induction to be provided ahead of the first meeting.
- 4.2. Now that the Board meeting is to be held via video-conference and Board members are managing pressured workloads due to the impact of Covid-19 on their primary business, it was decided that a different approach would be taken.
- 4.3. The revised approach was to issue a virtual training pack, including a You Tube video and supporting learning materials. This was issued to all Board members who needed to provide a statement to confirm the training had been completed.
- 4.4. Whilst this provided a minimal level of induction, further workshops will be offered later in the year once social distancing requirements are relaxed.

5. Appointment of Directors

- 5.1. The permanent Directors have been added via written resolution. One Board Member resignation was received between the original publication of the agenda and the written



resolution being circulated. The Federated Board proposed their replacement for that Board Member and therefore the written resolution included the appointment of that director. The following persons were approved to be added as Directors of the Board:

- Keith Glazier
- Aideen Sadler

5.2. The appointment of the Co-opted Board Directors will be considered at the meeting of 17 April 2020. Following a decision by the permanent Directors, the Co-opted members will be taken through the induction process and will join the June 2020 Board meeting as originally planned.

6. Terms of Reference, Framework Agreement and other Policies

6.1. This item of business has been carried forward to the agenda for 17 April 2020 with no changes.

7. SME Board Champion

7.1. This item has been postponed and will be considered once the social distancing period is completed. The Chair will continue to be the SME Board Champion as per current arrangements until the item is considered.

8. Delivery Plan 2020/21

8.1. The Delivery Plan requires large-scale revisions as a response to the impact of Covid-19 on the economy. The revised plan will be brought to the June 2020 meeting of the Board. This will include any impact on the operating budget of the SELEP Secretariat. An update is being provided to the Accountability Board at their planned meeting in May 2020. The recent changes in interest rates present a challenge to future years' operating budgets as the income earned on capital balances is much reduced.

9. Coastal Prospectus

9.1. This item of business has been carried forward to the agenda for 17 April 2020 with very minimal changes.

10. Local Growth Fund Capital Programme Update

10.1. The impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on the capital programme is complex and wide-ranging. The Capital Programme Manager is working with local partners to identify all impacts and potential risks to the programme. An extension to the Growth Deal period is covered in the Covid-19 Response report and a full report detailing the impact on the programme will be brought to the June meeting of the Board.

11. Consultation Responses

11.1. A written resolution to delegate responsibility to approve the responses to the three consultations has been circulated.

12. LIS Update

12.1. Given the significant impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on the UK and the Global economy there will be large scale shifts in national policy for economic growth and resilience. Likewise, our own local priorities will need to be reconsidered. Much of the work done to date will be able to be reconfigured and the robust evidence base will be used as the basis for revised strategies. On that basis the LIS Update is postponed until we move from a crisis response stage to planning for recovery.



13. Chelmsford City Council: HIF Project Update

- 13.1. Chelmsford City Council will join the first meeting of the Board post social distancing to provide an update on this project.

14. Additional Papers

- 14.1. Four additional papers have been added to the agenda: three papers that detail the SELEP Covid-19 Response to date and further potential actions and one detailing the proposed Covid-19 Sub-Committee. These will be considered by the Board at the meeting on 17 April 2020.

15. Accountable Body Comments

- 15.1. The Accountable Body has no comments on this update paper and will include specific comments on each paper as required.

16. Appendices

- 16.1. Appendix A: Original Agenda 20 March 2020

Author: Suzanne Bennett

Position: Chief Operating Officer

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Item 4: Appointment of Co-Opted Directors

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Strategic Board (the Board) with information on five Co-Opted Directors for them to consider whether these persons should be adopted as Directors of South East LEP Ltd.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to resolve:
 - 2.1.1. that Cllr David Monk be appointed as a Director of South East LEP Ltd for the period of 12 months;
 - 2.1.2. that Cllr Graham Butland be appointed as a Director of South East LEP Ltd for the period of 12 months;
 - 2.1.3. that Professor Karen Cox be appointed as a Director of South East LEP Ltd for the period of 12 months;
 - 2.1.4. that Angela O'Donoghue be appointed as a Director of South East LEP Ltd for the period of 12 months; and
 - 2.1.5. that Penny Shimmin be appointed as a Director of South East LEP for the period of 12 months.

3. Background

- 3.1. South East LEP Ltd was registered with Companies House on 28 February 2020 and in line with the Articles of Association adopted at that time, it is necessary for the South East LEP Ltd Board of Directors to take a resolution to appoint new Directors.
- 3.2. It was agreed at the October 2019 meeting of the Board that five Directors would be appointed on an annual basis, for a period of 12 months. These Directors would represent the following sectors:
 - City/Borough/District Local Authority
 - City/Borough/District Local Authority
 - Social Enterprise
 - Further Education
 - Higher Education
- 3.3. It was agreed that the 12-month period served would align with the financial and planning year which runs from April to March. Those parties who are responsible for nominating Co-opted Directors have now submitted their nominations for consideration by the Board.

4. Appointment of Directors

- 4.1. Nominations have been received for the five Co-opted Directors, who will serve for 12 months. The nominations are as follows:
- 4.2. **City/Borough/District Local Authority Co-Opted Director One:** it was agreed that this representative would be from Essex for the 2020/21 period. The Essex authorities have nominated Cllr Graham Butland from Braintree District Council to be the Co-Opted Director.



- 4.3. **City/Borough/District Local Authority Co-Opted Director Two:** it was agreed that this representative would be from Kent for the 2020/21 period. The Kent authorities have nominated Cllr David Monk from Folkestone and Hythe District Council to be the Co-Opted Director.
- 4.4. **Social Enterprise Co-Opted Director:** the Social Enterprise working group has confirmed that they wish Penny Shimmin to continue to be their representative and therefore she is nominated to be the Co-Opted Director.
- 4.5. **Higher Education Co-Opted Director:** the Vice Chancellors of the nine universities have nominated Professor Karen Cox to be their representative and therefore she is nominated to be the Co-Opted Director.
- 4.6. **Further Education Co-Opted Director:** the Skills Advisory Group has confirmed their nomination for the Further Education Co-opted Director is Angela O'Donoghue.
- 4.7. The Board is recommended to appoint these five persons as Co-opted Directors. The Co-opted members will join the Board at their meeting in June.
- 5. Accountable Body Comments**
 - 5.1. The recommendations are appropriate and are in line with the Assurance Framework and the decisions previously agreed by the Board.

Author: Suzanne Bennett

Position: Chief Operating Officer

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Item 5: Terms of Reference, Framework Agreement and other policies

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to propose to adopt updated versions of policies previously agreed by the SELEP Strategic Board. The documentation has been reviewed in light of changes made to legislation as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and all are still valid and appropriate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Terms of Reference;
- 2.2. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Board Recruitment Policy;
- 2.3. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Code of Conduct;
- 2.4. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Complaints Policy;
- 2.5. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Conflicts of Interest Policy;
- 2.6. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Public Questions Policy;
- 2.7. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Subsistence and Hospitality Policy;
- 2.8. The Board is asked to agree to adopt the Whistleblowing Policy;
- 2.9. The Board is asked to agree to enter into the Framework Agreement;
- 2.10. The Board is asked to resolve to enter into a Power of Attorney to appoint Adam Bryan and Suzanne Bennett to act on behalf of the Company by signing, executing, delivering and/or issuing the agreements, documents, certificates and instruments (all whether as a deed or not) as set out in Section 5 below. The Power of Attorney will last for a period of twelve months or when Mr Bryan or Ms Bennett no longer holds the position of Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operating Officer, whichever is soonest; and
- 2.11. The Board is asked to note that the SELEP Assurance Framework continues to be in force.

3. Background

- 3.1. The SELEP has now been registered with Companies House as the South East LEP Limited (SELEP Ltd), and as such it is necessary that the company formally adopts the SELEP policies.
- 3.2. The Assurance Framework remains in force according to the Articles of Association of the South East LEP Ltd, but all other policies require formal re-adoption by the newly incorporated SELEP.
- 3.3. All policies have been updated for accuracy and clarity, but this update is not an instrument to propose any new governance arrangements for the LEP other than those already happening in practice or previously agreed.
- 3.4. Tracked changes versions of these policies are available as background information on request to Amy Ferraro (amy.ferraro@southeastlep.com).
- 3.5. All policies once adopted can be found for reference on the SELEP website under Good Governance.

4. Summary of Policy Changes

- 4.1. The draft Terms of Reference were shared with the previous Board at their meeting on 31 January 2020 and the members who were to become Directors of SELEP Ltd were invited to send comments to the Secretariat. No comments have been received and therefore the Terms of



Reference remains unchanged from the draft previously circulated.

- 4.2. The Board Recruitment Policy remains unchanged from previous approval at the 31 January 2020 meeting.
- 4.3. The Code of Conduct has not been materially changed, but the wording has been made clearer and sections with repeated content have been edited.
- 4.4. The Confidential Reporting of Complaints Policy has been renamed as the Complaints Policy, as this title is more representative of the content within. Some of the wording has been moved within the document but otherwise there has been only small corrections.
- 4.5. The Register of Interests Policy has been renamed as the Conflicts of Interest policy as per National Assurance Framework guidelines, and this is a more representative title of the content in this policy. The wording has been edited for clarity and conciseness, and the procedures made clearer. The key changes are:
 - 4.5.1. the explanation of relevant interests has been updated to reflect the new Register of Interests form;
 - 4.5.2. "Code Interests" has been removed as a keyword, as this is not necessary for understanding of the document. Interests previously under this category are now referred to as "other miscellaneous relevant interests";
 - 4.5.3. the timescale requirement to add any changes to a Register of Interests has been clarified as within 28 days or before taking part in decision-making;
 - 4.5.4. the procedures for the interests of substitutes has been further clarified;
 - 4.5.5. the requirement to declare Strategic/Accountability Board and Investment Panel interests ahead of a meeting has been added, to allow for proper consideration of action needed;
 - 4.5.6. the exception around sensitive interests at 4.4 has been extended to include informing the Federated Board lead officer; the publication exception remains materially unchanged;
 - 4.5.7. the fact that interests will be audio recorded as well as minuted has been added; and
 - 4.5.8. the previous version of the Register of Interests has been removed as an appendix.
- 4.6. The Public Questions Policy now applies to both the Strategic and Accountability Boards. The key update is that the rights of District/City/Borough Councils to join a discussion have been explained.
- 4.7. The Subsistence and Hospitality Policy has been updated to reflect the addition of the Deputy Chair, but otherwise no material changes are proposed.
- 4.8. The Whistleblowing Policy has been updated to reflect the incorporated status but otherwise no significant changes.
- 4.9. At the December 2019, the Board received a draft agreement that creates an overarching framework setting out the duties and obligations, roles and responsibilities of the Councils, the Accountability Board, Accountable Body and the Company in relation to the activities undertaken in relation to SELEP Ltd.
- 4.10. SELEP Ltd and the six County/Unitary Councils will be party this Framework Agreement; each

respective council has approved the agreement through their governance processes; SELEP Ltd is now required to approve the Framework in order that it can be adopted. The Government recently made emergency changes to the regulations for Local Authority committees as part of their response to the public health emergency created by the Covid-19 virus. The Framework Agreement has been reviewed in light of these changes and the provisions of the agreement allow for the Accountability Board to meet remotely now that regulations have been changed.

5. Power of Attorney

- 5.1. The Board is asked to take a resolution to give the Power of Attorney to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Adam Bryan and to the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Suzanne Bennett to cover any period where the CEO may be absent. The powers to act would be limited to those outlined below and would be in place for a period of twelve months only.
- 5.2. Currently the vast majority of legal agreements for the partnership will continue to be contracted by Essex County Council as the Accountable Body on behalf of SELEP Ltd. However, as set out in the Framework Agreement, SELEP Ltd and the Accountable Body will both be party to any new funding agreements with project leads. This was included to ensure that the Accountability Board could not agree to bring forward projects that were not approved by Strategic Board/SELEP Ltd.
- 5.3. It is therefore proposed that the CEO and COO should be granted Power of Attorney to sign/execute funding agreements on behalf of SELEP Ltd. The Board will be asked to take a resolution following Investment Panel meetings to resolve to make investment in the selected projects when the Accountability Board have made their final approval. It will only be after this resolution and the Accountability Board approval that the CEO or COO could act.
- 5.4. In addition, it is proposed that the CEO and COO should be granted Power of Attorney to sign executive letters of support on behalf of SELEP Ltd following an assessment that the project/initiative that is seeking support aligns with extant strategies as approved by the Board.
- 5.5. An increasing number of Government initiatives and funding streams require bidders to seek confirmation of support from their LEP before they submit for funding. In many cases it is not defined exactly what form that 'support' takes beyond a general agreement that the submission broadly aligns with the strategic direction of the LEP. To gain Board approval for all of these requests would be both time-consuming and potentially impact the ability of the submitting authority to submit within time constraints.
- 5.6. It is therefore proposed that where a general letter of support is requested, the CEO/COO would be able to do following an assessment of strategic fit. Should the request for support require any commitment of future resources for SELEP Ltd or potentially require any commitment, support or endorsement will continue to be a decision of the Board.
- 5.7. Power of Attorney is awarded to a person rather than a post; however, should Mr Bryan or Ms Bennett leave their posts with SELEP Ltd, their Power of Attorney will be revoked immediately. The Power of Attorney will be reviewed on a twelve-monthly basis to ensure it is still appropriate or the Board could take a resolution to revoke at any time.

6. Accountable Body Comments

- 6.1. It is proposed that the Power of Attorney is awarded to Mr Bryan, SELEP Ltd CEO and in his absence Ms Bennett, SELEP Ltd COO, to ensure operational continuation for delivery of company decisions.
- 6.2. The Power of Attorney will be executed in line with the SELEP Ltd Assurance Framework.



- 6.3. The Chief Executive Officer Adam Bryan (and in his absence the Chief Operational Officer Suzanne Bennett) are responsible for;
- 6.3.1. publishing as a Chief Officer Action on the SELEP Ltd website, all decisions made under the Chief Executive Officer's delegated responsibilities;
- these must be in line with:
- i. the Accountable Body's scheme of delegation and Financial Regulations;
 - ii. respective decisions made by the Accountability Board and the Strategic Board, including decisions related to the approved budget of the Secretariat;
 - iii. the SELEP Ltd Assurance Framework.
- 6.4. All decisions made by the Chief Executive Officer Adam Bryan (and in his absence the Chief Operational Officer Suzanne Bennett) that are Chief Officer Actions under the Financial Regulations and associated scheme of delegation of the Accountable Body, shall also be published on the SELEP Ltd website.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix A: Articles of Association (for reference)
- 7.2. Appendix B: Assurance Framework (for reference)
- 7.3. Appendix C: Board Recruitment Policy
- 7.4. Appendix D: Code of Conduct
- 7.5. Appendix E: Complaints Policy
- 7.6. Appendix F: Conflicts of Interest Policy
- 7.7. Appendix G: Framework Agreement
- 7.8. Appendix H: Public Questions Policy
- 7.9. Appendix J: Subsistence and Hospitality Policy
- 7.10. Appendix K: Terms of Reference
- 7.11. Appendix L: Whistleblowing Policy

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SELEP's response to COVID -19

Report 1 – SELEP's immediate response to COVID -19 (Report 1 of 3) – for information

1. Purpose

- 1.1. As the impact of COVID - 19 accelerates, the introduction of social-distancing measures is already being felt and will result in a severe shock to our economy.
- 1.2. Clear and decisive action is required by SELEP at this time of economic uncertainty to support businesses across the SELEP area.
- 1.3. Whilst the duration of the social distancing measures is unclear, the communication from Government suggests that these measures are likely to last for several months. The scale of the impact will depend on the period of social distancing measures and any further interventions the Government introduces. As such, it is impossible to quantify the scale of the impact at this time. Every indication suggests a severe negative impact for our economy.
- 1.4. Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) businesses across our area are particularly vulnerable to the economic shock, such as through cash flow issues. The changing consumer behaviour will profoundly impact the way in which our economy operates.
- 1.5. The first sectors to be impacted include retail, aviation, hospitality, tourism and creative/cultural (theatres, concerts etc) but there will be a knock-on effect to many businesses across the diverse sectors within the South East, including sectors with a less coordinated business voice to vocalise the issues and impacts with Central Government.
- 1.6. Central Government has announced an unprecedented level of investment to support businesses at this time. This includes £330bn being made available to support businesses which include grants, loans and furloughing, a guarantee to pay 80% of salary for staff who are kept on by their employer, covering wages of up to £2,500 a month, for three months.
- 1.7. Measures have now also been introduced to support the income of those who are self-employed. The scheme will allow those who are self-employed to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months.
- 1.8. In response to this period of economic uncertainty, this series of reports sets out the action SELEP has already taken in response to COVID-19 and proposals on how SELEP can best apply its resources to support the economy and its business community. The three separate reports, include:
 - 1.8.1. Report 1 – SELEP's immediate response to COVID-19 – for information
 - 1.8.2. Report 2 – Offering flexibility on investments – for decision
 - 1.8.3. Report 3 – Repurposing investment – for decision
- 1.9. This report provides details of the immediate response that has already been enacted by SELEP.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to **note** the immediate response actions which have been taken to support businesses through the current crisis. These activities will be ongoing throughout the period of uncertainty and will adapt based on the direction set by Central Government.



3. Immediate Response - Communications and Growth Hub activity

- 3.1. Communication with our partners and business communities is essential at this time. SELEP is taking a three-fold approach to communications.
 - 3.1.1. Working to ensure businesses are kept up to date with developments and that they are provided with access to advice, funding and training
 - 3.1.2. Gathering intelligence to understand the challenges faced by businesses and using this to influence policy makers
 - 3.1.3. Demonstrating leadership and managing perceptions of the LEP as an organisation during a critical time for business and partners
- 3.2. First and foremost, we want to make sure that businesses have access to the right information. Growth Hubs play an important role in providing advice and support to SME businesses. Over the last year, the Growth Hubs have worked alongside their Cluster partners, the London Growth Hub and the Hertfordshire Growth Hub, in delivering essential support to businesses in the run up to Brexit and now through the transitional period. The current Ready2020 campaign has helped businesses to focus on resilience, open doors to new markets and learn new ways of working. These efforts are now being shifted toward a substantive effort to support SME businesses through this extremely challenging time posed by COVID-19.
- 3.3. Following Government's announcements, we are working with all business support organisations, specifically our Growth Hub, Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, and with local and national government to ensure that businesses in our area are kept up to date with developments.
- 3.4. SELEP's Growth Hub comprises of three hubs;
 - 3.4.1. BEST - Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock
 - 3.4.2. Business East Sussex
 - 3.4.3. Kent and Medway Growth Hub
- 3.5. Together the three Growth Hubs are referred to as the South East Business Hub (SEBH). The three Growth Hubs are funded by SELEP. Whilst the three Growth Hubs are operated locally, they work collaboratively through the SELEP Growth Hub Steering Group.
- 3.6. SELEP has worked swiftly to put information on the SELEP website and SEBH website. This includes:
 - 3.6.1. A page on the SEBH website with comprehensive and timely information <https://southeastbusiness.org.uk/coronavirus-guidance-for-employers/>
 - 3.6.2. [Daily briefings highlighting the latest developments and guidance](#)
 - 3.6.3. A survey has gone out to all businesses in order to establish what support they do and/or will require now and in the near future
<https://www.southeastlep.com/impact-survey-let-us-know-how-coronavirus-covid-19-is-affecting-your-business/>
 - 3.6.4. We are collating a repository of online training and webinars on a range of professional and digital services which can assist businesses through this period of uncertainty and help with business continuity and resilience planning



3.6.5. The carousels on the SELEP and SEBH homepages now direct people to:

- the Coronavirus guidance page on the SEBH website;
- the British Business Bank page for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme; and
- a link to our Covid-19 Business Impact Survey.

3.6.6. The web pages above are also linked through the SELEP site under Business Support

3.6.7. An e-shot has been sent to the whole network to direct businesses to the SEBH and relevant Government

websites: <https://email.pillorybarn.co.uk/campaigns/reports/viewCampaign.aspx?d=r&c=DFD1DCD62616FD44&ID=901337454304D0AE2540EF23F30FEDED&temp=False&tx=0>

3.6.8. All relevant updates are being channeled through SELEP and the individual Growth Hubs' social media

3.6.9. Current workshops delivered as part of Ready2020 campaign are being repurposed and delivered virtually

3.6.10. The Ready 2020 campaign has also been repurposed and will focus on delivery of support to businesses around COVID-19

3.6.11. The Ready2020 platform will continue being used by the Cluster members (SELEP, Hertfordshire LEP and the Greater London Authority) as the main focus for any further campaigns should they be necessary

3.6.12. Providing links to the Department for Work and Pensions, 'Find a Job' website, which seeks to help people who are seeking new employment opportunities, particularly in those sectors which have seen rapid increase in demand for goods and services as a result of COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job>

3.7. To keep businesses informed, SELEP has secured the services of its social media partner, White Label, who are preparing briefings to roundup all essential business information from the Prime Minister's COVID-19 daily press conferences. This helps to provide targeted information and updates on the specific information relevant for business across our area. This is shared with the partnership through the newsletter distribution list and the networks of the SELEP team. <https://www.southeastlep.com/news/newsletter-archive/>

3.8. In recent years, Government has set specific expectations for the use of funding for Growth Hubs to target support at scale up programmes, for business with potential for high growth. Given the current challenges to SME businesses, flexibility will be sought from Government to direct this limited resource in a way that can best meet the needs of the businesses in our area.

3.9. SELEP will also explore how the ERDF Legacy Funding, due to be received by SELEP imminently for growth-hub type business support in the Kent & Medway and East Sussex federated areas, can be allocated to COVID-19 related support activities (see report 3).

3.10. At this time of uncertainty, it is important to ensure that consistent messages are being communicated to local partners, in relation to SELEP's activities and the support/advice available to businesses. SELEP will seek to play a key role in consolidating and sharing information and providing support to struggling businesses.



- 3.11. These activities, together with our regular communications through the daily briefing and regular messages from our Chair, demonstrate our leadership role. We should take all opportunities to engage with our partners in the Southern LEPs, Central Government, and use the LEP Network as an influencer. Our communications extend to business listings, key partners such as business support organisations, Universities, Innovation Centres, board members, MPs and other delivery organisations. We also intend to use the networks of our Federated Boards, Growth Hubs and existing structures within our local areas.
- 3.12. The COVID-19 situation is fast changing and fluid. As a LEP we need to help our businesses, understand evolving issues and help reduce the burden on other partners. The communications response will develop as the situation evolves over the coming weeks and months. It is crucial to keep the partnership and businesses informed throughout.
- 3.13. Positive feedback has been received from partner authorities and local businesses on the communications work which has been undertaken to date in response to COVID-19. Local businesses have been in touch with SELEP to provide thanks for the daily COVID-19 briefings and calls for these briefings to continue as a useful way for SMEs and community organisations to receive information about the business impact of COVID-19.

4. Immediate Response - Assessing the economic impact

- 4.1. It's important at this time that SELEP plays its role in intelligence gathering and using its voice for positive and productive action. Part of SELEP's role is to collate information and ensure a joined-up message to Government about the needs of businesses in our area. This will involve close working with organisations such as local Chambers of Commerce, local branches of the Federation of Small Businesses and other business membership organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Institute of Directors (IoD).
- 4.2. SELEP has launched a business survey, which will be used to gain further insight into business views on how COVID-19, and the government's response to the crisis, has impacted businesses in our area. This business survey is now live on the SELEP website and is being promoted through SELEP's communication channels. To date, there have been over 500 responses. This information will be used for SELEP's purposes but will also be fed into the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to directly help inform Central Government's decision making. A high-level summary of the initial finds from the survey is set out in Appendix A.
- 4.3. There may be specific asks that SELEP can help make the case for to Government, which are identified through the survey results or through local insight gained through SELEP's networks and partner authorities. For example, changes or relaxation of legislation and procedures may be required within specific industries to help mitigate the economic impact and to enable businesses to adapt more quickly.
- 4.4. SELEP will also proactively seek information from federated areas, working groups and specific businesses about the impact, to understand what support SELEP can provide and how this can be channelled back to Central Government.

5. Immediate Response - Digital Skills

- 5.1. As a result of the social distancing measures and the recommendation to work from home, there has been a substantial shift in the way in which companies are working, resulting in a need for improved digital skills to support remote working.
- 5.2. The downturn in economic activity may also provide additional time to invest in the upskilling of



an organisation's workforce. SELEP will seek opportunities to promote all such activities and help develop an online resource library of helpful tools.

- 5.3. SELEP's Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) has a role to play in identifying opportunities for businesses to upskill to adapt to this new way of operating and will be a key part of our response. Engaging with the Skills Advisory Panel (which represents some of the business sectors most impacted) will also be key. This will involve understanding the challenges experienced by businesses represented on the Skills Advisory Panel, but also utilising some of the support that larger businesses on the Panel may be able to offer to other local businesses.
- 5.4. SELEP has pulled together information on the SELEP website about access to a range of online resources such as webinars, training, and tutorials on conference facilities. The Digital Skills Partnership can play a role in mobilising any technical support required. SELEP can also use its social media networks to promote such opportunities to businesses across the South East.
- 5.5. SELEP is currently working to develop a list of online resources that can be signposted to. These potential activities will be worked up in further detail over the coming weeks. It has been agreed that alongside those already planned, a SELEP Digital Skills Partnership working group will be set up specifically to respond to the current challenges. A survey is underway, to assess what support is required locally: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SEDigitalSkillsPartnership/>
- 5.6. Information is being shared via the Growth Hub and updates being posted at <http://www.southeastlep.com/our-delivery/skills/digital-skills-partnership>
- 5.7. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as the funder of the Digital Skills Partnership, are also keen to receive feedback from local Digital Skills Partnerships in order to respond to the evolving situation robustly, linking with relevant teams within DCMS and acting accordingly. Information is also being shared with DCMS on the approaches taken to the current challenges as they look to online platforms for sharing best practice nationally. Existing examples include Microsoft virtual classrooms, Hastings Digital Museum and CompTIA offering a free 30-day licence to IT fundamentals.
- 5.8. SELEP is also exploring, through the Digital Skills Partnership survey and local network, the need for additional kit, equipment and internet access, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

6. Accountable Body Comments

- 6.1. The Accountable Body has no comments to add.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix A: High level summary of the initial findings from the business survey

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Item 6: SELEP's response to COVID-19

Report 2 – Offering flexibility on investments (Report 2 of 3) – for decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This is the second report of a three-part series. Report 1 set out the immediate response which has been developed through the Growth Hubs and SELEP Secretariat, whilst the third report focuses on opportunities to redeploy funding which is either directly administered by SELEP or where SELEP has the opportunity to play a role in influencing how the funding is deployed.
- 1.2. This second report focuses on the flexibilities which SELEP can offer across its Growing Places Fund (GPF) and Local Growth Fund (LGF) investment programmes.
- 1.3. SELEP has a £49.21m GPF allocation which has been invested in 21 projects. The GPF operates as a recyclable pot of funding. The funding is invested by local authorities or private sector companies in capital assets, and repayments are made to SELEP through the revenue generated by the asset.
- 1.4. For some of the ongoing GPF projects, the COVID-19 pandemic will present challenges to the scheme promoter in relation to meeting the agreed repayment schedules. The SELEP team have actively engaged with local partners to understand where there may be challenges in repaying the funding as a result of COVID-19, and will seek to offer maximum flexibility on these repayments.
- 1.5. SELEP has secured a total of £579m of LGF investment in projects aimed at boosting skills, unlocking barriers to development and driving economic growth. This grant funding has been invested in over 100 capital projects across the SELEP area, with most having received funding approval from the Accountability Board allowing project delivery to commence.
- 1.6. Recent discussions between members of the SELEP Secretariat and local partners have highlighted that delays to LGF projects are highly likely as a result of the social distancing measures introduced by Government. Project setbacks are likely to include delayed local processes, such as cancelled Planning Committee meetings, and construction works being put on hold for the duration of the social distancing measures. Local partners have indicated that there is ongoing uncertainty regarding the implications for both delivery programmes and total project costs.
- 1.7. A full risk assessment will be completed for all LGF projects in Q1 2020/21 to understand the updated risk position and the Accountability Board will be provided with a full update in May 2020 and will subsequently be reported to the Strategic Board in June 2020.
- 1.8. This report seeks to identify those flexibilities which SELEP can offer immediately to support scheme promoters as they work to understand the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their LGF and GPF delivery programmes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Agree to recommend to the Accountability Board that flexibility should be granted to delay Growing Places Fund (GPF) repayments for existing GPF projects where justification is provided of the impact of COVID-19. The Accountability Board are responsible for agreeing all changes to GPF repayment schedules.
 - 2.1.2. Note that amended repayment schedules for the Charleston Centenary and Fitted Rigging



House projects will be considered by the Accountability Board at its first meeting in 2020/21, with a recommendation that the changes should be agreed.

- 2.1.3. Agree a 12-month grace period, starting from 1 April 2020, in relation to the charging of interest on GPF loans where repayments are not able to be made in line with the Credit Agreement with the Accountable Body due to the impact of the COVID-19 virus. *There is currently 0% interest charged on all GPF loans for projects which are making GPF repayments in line with their agreed repayment schedule.*
- 2.1.4. Agree to extend the Growth Deal period, due to end on 31 March 2021, by at least, two months plus the duration of the social distancing measures introduced by Government. It is recommended that the conditions for LGF spend beyond the Growth Deal period remain unchanged but are aligned with the new LGF end date. *This position will be reviewed again at the Board meeting on 2 October 2020, considering the latest COVID-19 position and the latest updates provided by local partners on their LGF programmes*

3. Growing Places Fund (GPF) overview

- 3.1. SELEP currently has a £49.21m GPF allocation which has been invested in 21 projects. GPF operates as a recyclable pot of funding. The funding is invested by local authorities or private sector companies in capital assets and repayments are made to SELEP through the revenue generated by the asset. Repayments are made on existing projects to enable further investment in new projects.
- 3.2. A majority of the GPF repayments have been made as per the expected repayment schedules. The SELEP team actively engaged with local partners to determine the status of any GPF repayments due by the end of March 2020 and to understand where there may be challenges in repaying the funding as a result of COVID-19.
- 3.3. In order to support new GPF investments, as set out in Report 3, it is proposed that the GPF should still be repaid on those projects that have not been adversely impacted by COVID-19. However, the SELEP team will work quickly to understand any risks to the GPF repayments due in 2020/21 and will offer maximum flexibility on these repayments where there is compelling justification and where the change is supported by the respective local authority partner.
- 3.4. It is noted that Kent County Council has taken the decision to offer loan recipients a 12-month repayment free period in line with other Government loan announcements. As a result, it is expected that revised repayment schedules for some Kent County Council GPF projects will be brought forward to future Accountability Board meetings.
- 3.5. A total of £14.222m was due to be repaid during 2019/20, with a further £7.432m due in 2020/21. In October 2019 the Board agreed a process for the allocation of a new round of GPF loans, for up to £25.480m. As set out in report 3, there is currently a pause to this GPF Round 3 prioritisation process in light of COVID-19.
- 3.6. In light of the economic impact of COVID-19, the Charleston Centenary Trust has raised a risk in relation to the repayment of £53,000 in 2019/20 for the Charleston Centenary project, and the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust highlighted a risk in relation to the repayment of £200,000 in 2019/20 in relation to the Fitted Rigging House project. The two repayments were due to be made by 31 March 2020. As a result of these two projects identifying repayment risks, total GPF funding repaid in 2019/20 reduced to £13.969m. These two projects are the first to identify GPF repayment risks, but other projects may declare a similar position during 2020/21.
- 3.7. **Charleston Centenary Project** – The project received a loan of £120,000 from SELEP in February

2018 to create a café-restaurant in the Threshing Barn on their farmhouse's estate. This work was carried out as part of a wider £7.6m multi-year scheme, the Centenary Project, which aimed to transform the operations of the Charleston farmhouse museum.

- 3.8. The project achieved practical completion on 8 September 2018. Since which time, the number of visitors has grown from 26,960 to 54,262 per year.
- 3.9. As the outbreak is expected to be most severe as the organisation approaches its high season the Charleston Centenary Trust is looking at ways to manage their cash flow and ensure survival through this period.
- 3.10. GPF repayments were due to start in 2019/20, with the repayment of £53,000; see Table 1. SELEP has received an urgent request to amend the repayment schedule as the COVID-19 situation began to develop. The exact length of the delay has not yet been confirmed as this will depend on the duration of the social distancing measures and the impact on income.

Table 1 - Current GPF repayment profile – Charleston Centenary project

| Year | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | Total |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Repayment amount | £53,000 | £36,000 | £31,000 | £120,000 |

- 3.11. **Fitted Rigging House project** – The project was awarded £800,000 GPF in April 2018, although the allocation was subsequently reduced to £550,000. The loan has been used for the conversion of a Grade 1 former industrial building at the Chatham Historic Dockyard in Medway into 3,473m² of commercial office space. The GPF provided a part contribution to the £8.4m total cost of the project.
- 3.12. The first GPF loan repayment of £200,000 was due to be repaid in 2019/20, as set out in Table 2 below, through the rental income generated by the leasing of the commercial space.
- 3.13. The Chatham Historic Dockyard attraction has temporarily closed as a result of the social distancing measures and, as such, concerns have been raised over the cash flow position of the organisation. An amended repayment schedule will enable the Trust to provide flexibility to their tenants regarding their rental arrangements. It is currently expected that the GPF loan can be repaid through a delayed repayment schedule, but this will depend on the future financial position of Chatham Historic Dockyard and their tenants. As such, the project will be kept under review.

Table 2 - Current GPF repayment profile – Fitted Rigging House project

| Year | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | Total |
|------------------|---------|----------|----------|---------|-----------------|
| Repayment amount | - | £200,000 | £300,000 | £50,000 | £550,000 |

4. Growing Places Fund (GPF) - recommendations for existing loans

- 4.1. Under normal circumstances, any amendments to GPF loan repayment schedules require approval from Accountability Board. As these issues have arisen since the last meeting of the Accountability Board on the 14 February 2020, there has been no opportunity for amendments to repayment schedules to be formally agreed. Given the exceptional circumstances, it is therefore intended that

the amended repayment schedules for the Charleston Centenary and Fitted Rigging House projects are considered at the first meeting of the Accountability Board in 2020/21, with a recommendation that the changes should be agreed.

- 4.2. Any reduction to the amount of GPF repaid by existing projects will impact on the amount of GPF available for reinvestment. The exact amount of GPF available for reinvestment will depend on the updated repayment schedules for the Charleston Centenary and Fitted Rigging House projects, along with any other delays to GPF repayments due to be made in 2020/21.
- 4.3. In 2017, the Board agreed that the GPF loans would carry an interest rate of 2% below the Public Works Loan Board Maturity Rate or zero, whichever is higher. As interest rates have remained low, all GPF loans to date have been awarded with zero percent interest. The Board also agreed that if GPF repayments could not be made in accordance with the schedule agreed by the Accountability Board and as set out within the Credit Agreement, the 2% discount would no longer apply. Instead, interest would be charged on the loan at the full Public Works Loan Board Maturity Rate on the date the legal agreement was signed. For the Charleston Centenary project this rate is 1.91% and for the Fitting Rigging House project the rate is 1.93%.
- 4.4. In the case of the delayed GPF repayments for the Charleston Centenary and Fitted Rigging House projects, a 12-month delay to the GPF repayment would result in a £1,019.53 and £3,817.23 interest charge on the projects respectively.
- 4.5. Due to the exceptional circumstances, as per 2.1.3, it is recommended that SELEP does not automatically charge interest on projects which default on their loan repayments as a result of financial difficulty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that a 12-month grace period is allowed for the repayment of the loan. After the 12-month period, starting on 1 April 2021, interest will either be charged at the Public Works Loan Board Maturity rate, as per the credit agreement, or the Board may wish to agree a further extension of the grace period at the Strategic Board meeting scheduled for 19 March 2021.

5. Local Growth Fund (LGF) - overview

- 5.1. Through three rounds of LGF allocations made by Central Government, SELEP has secured a total of £579m investment in projects across SELEP, aimed at boosting skills, unlocking barriers to development and driving economic growth. LGF is transferred to SELEP as capital funding and must be spent on activities which enable the delivery of a physical asset.
- 5.2. The £579m funding has been fully allocated to projects which have been prioritised by the SELEP Strategic Board or Investment Panel, with the majority of these projects having received funding approval from the SELEP Accountability Board.
- 5.3. Central Government have amended legislation to enable local authority committee meetings to take place virtually. This will enable upcoming Accountability Board meetings to take place remotely, ensuring that SELEP funding decisions are not delayed.
- 5.4. In recent weeks discussions held between members of the SELEP Secretariat and local partners have highlighted that delays to LGF projects are highly likely as a result of the social distancing measures introduced by Central Government.
- 5.5. SELEP is aware that local processes are likely to be delayed and that the social distancing measures will result in different impacts across the programme depending on where the projects are in their lifecycle. Examples of local impacts include cancellation of Planning Committee meetings and postponement of procurement exercises. In addition, construction works have been put on hold



and there is ongoing uncertainty regarding the implications for both delivery programmes and total project costs.

- 5.6. SELEP has previously been seeking opportunities to maximise LGF spend by the end of the Growth Deal period, which concludes on 31 March 2021. To date, LGF spend has only been permitted beyond this period where the criteria agreed by Strategic Board (see 5.9 below) have been satisfied.
- 5.7. To date the Board has agreed LGF spend beyond 31 March 2021 for the following five projects:
 - 5.7.1. Beaulieu Park Railway Station;
 - 5.7.2. A127 Fairglen Interchange;
 - 5.7.3. Thanet Parkway;
 - 5.7.4. A28 Sturry Link Road; and
 - 5.7.5. Exceat Bridge replacement
- 5.8. It is acknowledged that it is no longer realistic to expect all projects to meet the conditions by 31 March 2021 as a vast number of the ongoing LGF projects will experience delays as a result of COVID-19. It is imperative that SELEP continues to support those projects which can have the greatest economic impact across our area through offering flexibility in project delivery schedules.
- 5.9. The five conditions that need to be satisfied for LGF to be spent beyond 31 March 2021 are:
 - 5.9.1. A clear delivery plan with specific delivery milestones and completion date to be agreed by the Accountability Board;
 - 5.9.2. A direct link to the delivery of jobs, houses or improved skills levels within the SELEP area;
 - 5.9.3. All funding sources identified to enable the delivery of the project. Written commitments will be sought from the respective project delivery partner to confirm that the funding sources are in place to deliver the project beyond the Growth Deal;
 - 5.9.4. Endorsement from the SELEP Strategic Board that the funding should be retained against the project beyond 31 March 2021; and
 - 5.9.5. Contractual commitments being in place with the construction contractors by 31 March 2021 for the delivery of the project.
- 5.10. The most challenging conditions for local partners to demonstrate compliance with by 31 March 2021 will likely be conditions 3 and 5.
- 5.11. As a result of the impact of the social distancing measures on working practices, there may be difficulties for projects to complete the necessary approval processes for local funding contributions. In addition, due to the economic impact of COVID-19 private sector funding contributions, such as S106 funding, may no longer be available to the timescales originally anticipated.
- 5.12. Project delays experienced during this time are also likely to have implications for the total project cost, particularly since the social distancing measures will disrupt the timing of construction works which tends to result in significant cost increases to projects. There is also a serious risk to projects which are in the construction phase, if construction contractors or sub contractors collapse as a result of COVID-19.
- 5.13. SELEP provides capped contributions towards the delivery of LGF projects and as such, any cost

overruns sit with local authority partners. Any cost increases will also likely impact the projects value for money, particularly at a time where the expected project benefits may take much longer to materialise than originally anticipated.

- 5.14. Further discussions will be held with local partners over the next few months, to gather more information about the way in which projects are being impacted. A full risk assessment will be completed for all LGF projects in Q1 2020/21 to understand the updated risk position for consideration by the Accountability Board in May 2020 and reported to the next Strategic Board meeting in June 2020.
- 5.15. If as a result of major delivery issues being identified a project is identified as high risk, it will be brought to a future Board meeting for further consideration.

6. Local Growth Fund (LGF) - recommendations for existing projects

- 6.1. In light of the intelligence provided by local partners in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on their LGF delivery programmes, it is recommended that the Board offer flexibility in relation to the duration of the Growth Deal period (subject to MHCLG agreement). It is expected that a significant number of the ongoing LGF projects will no longer be in a position to complete delivery by 31 March 2021, due to the delays encountered as a result of the social distancing measures and the associated change in working practices. Based on current governance processes all of these projects will need to be considered by the Board on an individual basis before LGF spend can continue beyond 31 March 2021.
- 6.2. It is proposed, as per 2.1.4, that the Board **agree to extend the Growth Deal period by two months plus the duration of the social distancing measures introduced by Government.** It is recommended that the conditions for LGF spend beyond the Growth Deal period remain unchanged but are aligned with the new LGF end date.
- 6.3. The proposed extension of two months plus the duration of the social distancing measures introduced by Government reflects the likelihood that progress on the delivery of projects will slow significantly during this period. This approach also allows two months for projects to recommence following the end of the current social distancing measures. It is accepted that in some cases, for example if the construction contractor collapses, that two months may not be sufficient time for projects to recommence delivery and this will continue to be monitored over the coming months.
- 6.4. It is proposed that at the Board meeting on 2 October 2020, this deadline be reviewed in light of the latest COVID-19 position and the latest updates provided by local partners on their LGF programmes.
- 6.5. As indicated at 5.7 above, the Board have agreed that five projects can continue to spend the LGF funding beyond 31 March 2021. If, for any of these projects, the expected completion date (as presented to the Board at the time of their decision) is delayed by more than six months, prior to the construction contract being awarded, the Board will be asked to confirm its continued support for LGF spend beyond 31 March 2021.
- 6.6. Given the impact of COVID-19 on project delivery programmes, it is possible that these projects will experience a delay of more than six months. As a result, it is recommended that increased flexibility is given in relation to expected completion dates for the five projects listed in 5.7.
- 6.7. It is proposed that if the expected completion date for the five projects listed in 5.7 is delayed by more than two months plus the duration of the social distancing measures introduced by Government (relative to the expected completion date previously agreed by the Strategic Board in 2019), or if any substantial risks arise to the delivery of the project, the Board will be asked to confirm its continued support for LGF spend beyond the Growth Deal period.

7. Accountable Body comments

- 7.1. By agreeing to the recommendation of this paper at 2.1.3 that SELEP does not automatically charge interest on projects which default on their loan repayments to the end of financial year 2020/21, this does devalue the Growing Places Fund loan scheme by not charging interest as per the loan agreements in place.
- 7.2. In total the impact on interest earned of this action is not financially material to SELEP but would have a negative reputational impact to charge interest to projects at this time of economic uncertainty.
- 7.3. In the case of the delayed GPF repayments for the Charleston Centenary and Fitted Rigging House projects, a 12-month delay to the GPF repayment would result in a £1,019.53 and £3,817.23 interest charge on the projects respectively. Both projects were due to make repayment on 31st March 2020 and due to the default on these payments are now subject to interest charges. Amended repayment schedules for the Charleston Centenary and Fitted Rigging House projects will be considered by the Accountability Board at its first meeting in 2020/21, with a recommendation that the changes should be agreed.
- 7.4. In totality GPF repayments are estimated to be £8.18m in 2020/21 and therefore, there is a risk to cashflow if projects request that repayments are rescheduled however, SELEP has sufficient funds to meet existing commitments in the coming year if repayments are not made.
- 7.5. The recommendation at 2.1.4 to agree to delay the end of the Growth Deal is acceptable under the terms of the LGF grant agreement's in place which do not state an end date, therefore by extending this there is no risk to the fund itself. However, clarity on Government position regarding the end of the Growth Deal and their guidance does need to be determined by the Secretariat and provided as an update to the Board.

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Item 6: SELEP's response to COVID-19

Report 3 - Repurposing Funding and SELEP Support for Recovery (Report 3 of 3) – for decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This is the final report, of the three-part series on SELEP's response to crisis created by the public health measures introduced as reaction to the COVID-19 virus. This report sets out the next steps for Board to consider whether funds that are current held but haven't been allocated should be re-directed form part of a future response to the impact of the crisis on the South East economy and how the economy can be supported through the recovery period.
- 1.2. Board is also asked to consider endorsing the diversion of some operational funding to scheme that will provide support to businesses in the very short term via Crowd Funder scheme.
- 1.3. The Secretariat is working with those organisations that are delivering ESIF projects to understand how these projects can be reworked and reserve funds directed to support businesses through the crisis including the recovery period. It is proposed a technical response is made to the managing authority of ERDF and that Board delegates the approval of this response to the Chair. The approval of Chair will ensure that any proposals align with the emerging proposals on how SELEP can best drive the economy during recovery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. agree that the latest round of GPF Investments continue to be held until a full assessment on options for supporting Post Covid-19 Economic Recovery can be made
 - 2.1.2. agree to delegate approval of a written technical response on ERDF monies to the Chair
 - 2.1.3. agree to support the CrowdFunder UK Pay It Forward Initiative in principle, with final decision on SELEP support to be made post due diligence being completed
 - 2.1.4. agree to close the Sector Support Fund so that the remaining monies are available to be diverted to the CrowdFunder project
 - 2.1.5. note the proposal to bring a full report to June setting out options for inventions to support the recovery of the economy.

3. Supporting South East Economy to Recover

- 3.1. In the weeks since social distancing was implemented HM Government has put into place a wide-ranging package of support across the UK economy. It is right that this immediate support be put into place by Government as they have access to the funding and resources necessary to roll-out blanket programmes. As detailed in earlier reports, SELEP has had played a key role in passing on communications about this support and how businesses can access the support. This communication and interpretation role should not be minimised; the overload of information in a crisis situation in the digital age is a clear risk. SELEP has acted quickly to push out communications in the language business understands so that our businesses can access the help they need.
- 3.2. A handful of LEPs have taken action in the short-term to plug cashflow gaps in businesses in their

area but this support is limited in scope and value and presents a high risk of misappropriation. They are also likely to have a very minimal impact on the wider economy and won't support the recovery phase.

- 3.3. There are some gaps in this support that SELEP could take action on in the very near future, but there are limits as to how many businesses could be supported in a timely way. However, the short-term cashflow impacts on business are merely the opening battles in the war that is now afflicting the world's economy. The impacts of the shut-down will be long-term and there are likely to be some permanent changes to how we all live and work. These impacts are largely yet to be understood, but as they become clear SELEP can take action to provide the support the economy needs to move into recovery and towards the new normal.
- 3.4. Taking a measured approach and being led by emerging intelligence on the impacts on the economy will lead to better designed interventions and more focussed support. SELEP has access to a large and valuable pool of intelligence via our networks and Growth Hubs that will allow us to understand how our businesses and communities are adapting to the new normal and what support they will need from us to make sure they can make those changes and find the opportunities in this crisis. A summary of responses from business to the SELEP Business Impact Survey can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.5. To understand what the response might be SELEP needs to do three things. Firstly, use the intelligence that is now flowing from businesses to understand the impact of the crisis on the economy, what support businesses need to be able to move to recovery and to identify any structural blockages, including those particular to our economy that will hinder or prevent recovery. Secondly a package of potential options of interventions to support recovery will need to be designed and thirdly funding to support those interventions will need to be identified.
- 3.6. It is proposed that a report setting out all of these points is made to Board in June. This report will include full option appraisal that will allow the Board to make an assessment of how the limited funds available can be best focussed across our economy and sectors.

Potential Funding Available

- 3.7. The LGF pot is currently fully allocated based on the prioritisation of projects by the Investment Panel in June 2019 and the pipeline of LGF projects. LGF funding decisions are required in relation to the following seven projects and are due to be considered by the Accountability Board in either May or July 2020:
 - 3.7.1. Kent and Medway Medical School (additional £4.0m LGF)
 - 3.7.2. Southend Town Centre (£632,292 LGF) - this funding is currently being underwritten by Southend Borough Council
 - 3.7.3. Eastbourne Fisherman, East Sussex (£1.08m LGF)
 - 3.7.4. New Construction Centre, Chelmsford (£1.3m LGF)
 - 3.7.5. A13 widening, Thurrock (additional £8.9m LGF)
 - 3.7.6. Basildon Innovation Warehouse, Essex (£870,000 LGF)
 - 3.7.7. Innovation Park Medway Phase 3 (£1.5m LGF)
 - 3.7.8. Exceat Bridge, East Sussex (£2.1m LGF)
- 3.8. In addition, there remain two projects next in line to receive LGF, if existing LGF are unable to

proceed. These two projects include Colchester Grow-on-Space (£3.7m LGF) and NIAB, Kent (£1.8m LGF).

- 3.9. As set out in report 2, there is a risk of cost escalation for existing LGF projects as a result of project delays which have been caused by COVID-19. There is also a serious risk to projects which are in the construction phase, if construction contractors or sub-contractors cease trading as a result of COVID-19. Additional LGF may therefore need to be invested in projects with an increase in cost as a result of the delays experienced through the COVID-19 crisis.
- 3.10. **It is not recommended that we redirect the use of LGF, at this stage, as the LGF is currently fully allocated, there is a substantial risk of cost escalation on existing projects and LGF can only be applied as a capital grant (rather than revenue).**
- 3.11. Our other capital fund is the Growing Places Fund (GPF). A bidding round for the remaining funding was underway when the Crisis hit. The final decision on funding has not been made as Investment Panel has been postponed. As this funding has not been allocated these funds could be redirected to fund recovery efforts, but an assessment of the opportunity costs of not making the investment in those projects that have been prioritised for funding by Federated Boards for the current round needs to be made.
- 3.12. It is recommended that the current round of GPF allocations continues to be paused so that an assessment of the relative benefits of using these funds in supporting the interventions that will be identified as part of the recovery effort versus the benefits from continuing the current bidding round be made. This will be included in the report detailed above.
- 3.13. It should be noted that should the current round be reinstated Federated Boards should be given the opportunity to reassess for strategic fit given the large-scale changes to the economy from when the original assessment was made.
- 3.14. It is recognised that the pause to the process will be disappointing, particularly as there was a strong level of buy-in to the process for allocating GPF and considerable resource has been committed by local partners and scheme promoters. There is also a risk that projects could lose other funding if it were dependent on GPF allocations as match. However, if these funds are invested now SELEP will have little or no opportunity to take action to support the recovery as funding won't be available.
- 3.15. Additional funds to support the economy via LEPs may be announced by Government as their minds turn from immediate crisis support to the longer-term impact on the economy. Opportunities to scale will also be considered as part of the assessment of interventions.

Crowdfunder UK – Pay it Forward Initiative

- 3.16. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is raising awareness of a specific crowdfunding initiative called the Pay It Forward Crowdfunder UK scheme, launched jointly with Enterprise Nation, to complement Government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). The scheme is designed to help businesses to continue to survive by raising finance quickly and is currently being considered by a number of LEPs following a launch of the scheme in Solent LEP.
- 3.17. The scheme invites businesses to apply to set up a Pay it Forward crowdfunding campaign on the Crowdfunder UK online platform to pre-sell their products and services now, to be redeemed at a later date. The business sets a target to crowdfund from their own supporters and customer networks in exchange for their goods and services in the future.



- 3.18. Pay it Forward is the only rewards-based crowd funder initiative in the UK, which means that the business is promising something in return for contributions. This model provides some mitigation against the risk that the business may ultimately fail, as it maintains their customer base for the stabilisation and recovery phase of the current crisis.
- 3.19. Crowdfunder UK are seeking pledges from LEPs to be held in escrow and used to 'top up' numerous individual crowdfunds, enabling each business to hit their required target more quickly. The scheme recommends a LEP contribution of up to 50% or £5,000 per business (whichever is greater) based on evidence that businesses are setting targets in the region of £4,000 to £10,000.
- 3.20. In recognition of the value of this scheme to the urgent response phase of the crisis, Crowdfunder UK are not charging any platform or transaction fees to either the businesses or to LEPs that agree to make a pledge. More details on the initiative can be found at Appendix B.
- 3.21. If SELEP were to pursue this as an option for investment it will be necessary to allocate internal resource to the initial set-up of the scheme and to raising awareness of the opportunity. There will also be an ongoing role for SELEP in overseeing the investment and to review the list of applications, alongside an allocated Crowdfunder UK Account Manager who will complete due diligence checks on each application. In parallel, Enterprise Nation provides access to free training and support to the business, to help with its application, online sales, marketing, cashflow and diversifying, if necessary.
- 3.22. The recommended eligibility criteria include:
 - 3.22.1. Being located and registered within LEP region (determined by postcode);
 - 3.22.2. Demonstrating they have been adversely affected by COVID-19 e.g. showing evidence of declining cashflow/orderbooks;
 - 3.22.3. Demonstrating community support, through crowdfunding contributions;
 - 3.22.4. Be formally constituted in the UK, and have their own bank account;
 - 3.22.5. Having been in operation for at least one year; and
 - 3.22.6. Must reach 100% of crowdfunding target from at least 10 unique backers
- 3.23. SELEP could also look to introduce additional criteria, to target funding at self-employed and microbusinesses who are particularly vulnerable to the current economic climate and, in the case of self-employed people, will have a longer wait for Government support.
- 3.24. It will be necessary for a more complete due diligence be undertaken on the scheme but that could be completed in fairly short order.
- 3.25. There are details of the process which need to be confirmed, to ensure procurement and State Aid requirements are compliant and lawful. No funding would be committed to the initiative until these concerns are satisfied. It is proposed that the Crisis Sub-Committee (as detailed in Item X on the agenda) is asked to provide formal approval for the Crowdfunder UK initiative once these outstanding clarification and due diligence questions have been addressed. If the Sub-Committee is not established, endorsement will be sought from the Board by written procedure.
- 3.26. **It is recommended that Board agree in principle to support making a contribution to the Crowdfunder UK Initiative pending due diligence being completed and final prioritisation decision being made**



- 3.27. To allow an investment in the initiative to move quickly an assessment of available revenue funding has been made. There is £206,500 of funding remaining within the Sector Support Fund (SSF) pot. This funding could be released from the SSF and invested into the Crowdfunding initiative if Board choses to close the SSF programme.
- 3.28. The Secretariat is aware of some bids for the remaining SSF monies being worked on by working groups including an extension of the successful Tutor Bursary Programme and a programme to support businesses in exporting. If Board choses to close the SSF, these projects will be unable to come forward until other funding is identified.
- 3.29. It is recommended that Board closes the Sector Support Fund to allow the remaining £206,500 to be available to invest in the Crowdfunding Initiative should it progress
- 3.30. If the due diligence cannot be completed to the Board's and/or the Accountable Body's satisfaction, a further recommendation will be brought back to the June Board to reinstate the SSF.

4. Growth Hub Additional Funding

- 4.1. Report 1 sets out the extensive work which is already underway to communicate with businesses and to provide support through the Growth Hub. Government has announced an additional £10m of funding to be passed to Growth Hubs, of which the South East Business Hub will receive £234,000 bringing the total funding in 2020/21 to £890,000.
- 4.2. At time of writing the terms and conditions of that additional funding and when it will be available has not been published. Government has indicated that it expects Growth Hubs to work within their Clusters on their response to the Crisis. The Growth Hub cluster covering the SELEP area includes SELEP, Hertfordshire LEP and the Greater London Authority.
- 4.3. Dependent on the grant conditions and what is agreed with the Cluster, the additional monies could either be passed on to the local sub-hubs using a similar model as the standard funding for the hub and spoke South East Growth Hub model or it could be held centrally. Funds that are held centrally could be more quickly utilised and allow SELEP to be make a more agile response to a dynamic environment, but this would mean that front-line capacity on the ground in the local sub-hubs couldn't be expanded. A hybrid model where some funding is passed to the local sub-hubs and some held centrally could also be used.
- 4.4. ERDF Legacy Funding is also due to be made available imminently for growth hub related activities. In November 2019, SELEP was made aware that £349,913 was found owing to the SELEP area covered by the former South East England Development Authority (SEEDA), specifically Kent, Medway and East Sussex. The stipulation around the spend of this money is that it must be used "for the benefit of urban development projects or of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)".
- 4.5. Whilst the ERDF funding remains relatively low in value, it provides the opportunity for the Kent and Medway and East Sussex Growth Hubs to provide some additional support to businesses impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. According to the conditions from the European Commission, the funding can strictly only be used across the former SEEDA geography. Options could be explored, however, for the funding to be administered by the Kent and Medway, and East Sussex Growth Hubs, but to provide a resource which could benefit the whole SELEP area, such as a virtual resource.
- 4.6. SELEP will work to develop proposals for how this additional Growth Hub and ERDF funding could be put to best use, in providing support to businesses. This may include options to expand the Growth Hub's core offer to provide more specialist advice, based on the needs identified through

the Business Impact Survey and ongoing communication with businesses. A detailed proposal will be developed for consideration by the Board or the Crisis Sub-Committee, once the exact funding conditions for the additional Growth Hub funding have been communicated by HM Government.

5. ESIF (ERDF & ESF)

- 5.1. European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are notionally allocated to LEPs at the beginning of the 7-year programme (currently 2014-2021) and are administered by two Government Managing Authorities. European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) is managed by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and provides for business support activities. The European Social Fund (ESF) is managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and provides for skills development and training.
- 5.2. Negotiations have begun between Government and the European Commission around using remaining unallocated ESIF money for COVID-19 related business support activities, which totals £470 m nationally (c.£80m ERDF and c.£390m ESF). It's likely that a proposal will be developed nationally on how these 'reserve' funds can be repurposed and distributed, and we will continue to seek further information from the Managing Authorities and inform and influence this where it is possible.
- 5.3. ERDF reserve funds: the national ERDF open call scheduled for March 2020 to make these funds available has been cancelled.
- 5.4. ESF reserve funds: SELEP has one call open to access a portion of this money around 'Wheels to Work and Training' for which it has requested an extended deadline. Scheduled open calls for the remaining funds have been deferred and DWP have stated that they 'are working across government and with partners to redesign the Reserve Fund so that it can best support society once the crisis subsides'.
- 5.5. ESF projects support some of the most disadvantaged communities. Therefore, all current projects are being contacted to better understand what a suspension in activities will mean and what short-term support may be required, such as internet access or technical kit. Similar conversations are ongoing with other projects including those working with schools. Conversations are underway with DWP regarding greater flexibility in outputs.
- 5.6. SELEP has 16 ERDF projects at various stages of contracting and delivery; some of these are also in the process of securing further extension. This package of business support projects totals c.£76.5 million ERDF and provide business support facilities, activities and grants to SMEs, most of which are sector specific. These projects are able to provide a certain degree of immediate and bespoke support to affected businesses over and above our Growth Hub provision. However, COVID-19 will impact on most, if not all, of these projects in terms of their ability to deliver on legally agreed outcomes and timescales with the managing authority. Their business support offer may not be fit for purpose over the coming weeks and months, and staff resource allocated to deliver these projects is in some cases already being redirected to urgent covid-19 response work.
- 5.7. MHCLG already recognise the urgent need for flexibility for these projects going forwards and are currently considering the following, whilst being mindful of the regulatory constraints.
 - 5.7.1. Changes to the claim process and evaluation of underspend in 2020/Managing potential underperformance and flexing project approaches to help to respond to businesses in the current climate



- 5.7.2. Costs of salaries of staff due to illness (COVID 19)
- 5.7.3. Potential flexibilities by the EC on current ESIF rules and regulations
- 5.7.4. Additional IT support / software to facilitate remote working and / or virtual business support
- 5.8. Projects are currently feeding their issues directly to MHCLG to help them scope responses to the above. Universal issues relate to the need now for job retention and business resilience over job creation and growth, a review of small business grant intervention rates and eligibility criteria of those grants, and the need to convert scheduled workshops and events to re-purposed online provision where possible.
- 5.9. We are working with our ERDF projects network to cascade new information on this as it becomes available, and to help coordinate any feedback from our projects to MHCLG in terms of adapting current delivery in response to business needs.
- 5.10. The LEP Network is also following up on these issues with MHCLG and DWP following their Regional Board & Cities and Local Growth Unit Covid-19 - LEP Response meeting on 20th March 2020.
- 5.11. A technical representation from SELEP to MHCLG as the Managing Authority for ERDF is proposed, to provide a consolidated perspective on behalf of all contracted projects and technical specialists on how existing projects could be adapted, and how reserve funds might usefully be re-deployed, to respond to the crisis. This would serve to inform the consideration that MHCLG is currently giving to flexing this funding stream.
- 5.12. The Board is asked to agree delegated authority for the SELEP Chair to approve and submit written technical representation to Central Government on the points raised in 5.11, to influence current national policy work.

6. Forward Look

Local Industrial Strategy

- 6.1. Over the last year, considerable effort has been focused on the development of our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). This document has been well received by partners across the SELEP area. However, this document has been prepared based on evidence from an economy, which is expected to drastically change over the coming weeks and months.
- 6.2. The LIS remains a key document in providing strategic direction at this time of uncertainty.
- 6.3. SELEP will need to consider whether to proceed with the LIS in its current format or whether there is a short pause to this work, to gather more data about the impact of this crisis on the South East economy and for this updated economic position to feature at large within the document.
- 6.4. Many of the interventions considered within the LIS will remain relevant to support economic growth post- peak impact.
- 6.5. Part of the work of the SELEP team over the coming months will be to consider the impact of this period of rapid economic volatility and change on the medium – long term economy in the South East and the interventions which will be required to support the growth of our economy going forward.
- 6.6. SELEP will use all existing resources at its disposal to gain insight into the wider economic impact to our area. This includes using tools such as EMSI data which can help to provide information about the local economic impact of the COVID-19 virus through labour market data from employees.

Future LGF allocations from Government

- 6.7. The 2020 Budget gave mention to an additional £387m LGF being made available nationally in 2021/22. Further details are expected to be made available about how government expects this funding to be applied.
- 6.8. Using the information gathered over the next few weeks, SELEP will seek to influence how this funding is allocated by Central Government and will seek maximum flexibility possible, including options to apply future LGF as revenue funding rather than capital.
- 6.9. Once these details become available, SELEP will be required to work at pace to establish the programme of interventions ready to utilise this funding. The nature of the interventions required could be substantially different to those which SELEP has funded to date, given the changing economic priorities.

7. Accountable Body Comments

- 7.1. The Accountable Body will work with the SELEP Secretariat to ensure due diligence is completed for each intervention that is seeking endorsement from the Board.
- 7.2. It is a requirement of the Accountable Body that the SELEP meets the requirements of its own Assurance Framework. This will be a consideration as part of the due diligence.
- 7.3. A factor to consider in providing this additional support work from the Accountable Body will be the availability of resource, which is dependent on the Legal and Financial core demands of Essex County Council at this current time.
- 7.4. Opportunity costs involved in each intervention need to be quantified by the Accountable Body



and managed within the SELEP budget.

- 7.5. The SELEP core funding is yet to be confirmed by Government for 2020/21 and is expected in April 2020. Until this confirmation is received no commitment to the allocation of revenue funding can be made.
- 7.6. An update to the SELEP 2020/21 budget position will be brought to the May 2020 Accountability Board meeting, when core funding will have been confirmed by Government and forthcoming pressures will have been fully assessed, including the impact of the fall in interest rates on interest earned.

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix A: Summary of Business Impact Survey Results
- 8.2. Appendix B: Crowdfunder Proposal



Item 7: Covid-19 Crisis Sub-Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out a request from the Chair for the Directors to establish a sub-committee of the Strategic Board (the Board), known as the Covid-19 Crisis Sub-Committee (the Sub-Committee), and for the Board to powers as set out below to the Sub-Committee for a restricted period of time to allow decisions to be made in a timely manner during the Covid-19 Crisis period.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to agree that a Covid-19 Crisis Sub-Committee be established with the following membership:
 - 2.1.1. Chair of Strategic Board – Christian Brodie
 - 2.1.2. Deputy Chair of Strategic Board – Sarah Dance
 - 2.1.3. Chair of Success Essex – Miles Adcock
 - 2.1.4. Chair of Opportunity South Essex – Perry Glading
 - 2.1.5. Chair of Kent and Medway Economic Partnership – Geoff Miles
 - 2.1.6. Chair of Team East Sussex – Graham Peters
 - 2.1.7. Local Authority representative and Accountable Body representative – Cllr David Finch
- 2.2. The Board is asked to agree to delegate the following decisions to the Sub-Committee for the period 18 April 2020 to 11 June 2020 where it can be demonstrated that the decision cannot wait until the full meeting of the Board on 12 June 2020:
 - 2.2.1. Approve an economic plan which sets out the Company's Strategic Direction and aims and objectives from time to time
 - 2.2.2. Provide an interface with central government
 - 2.2.3. Oversee pan LEP work
 - 2.2.4. Develop an annual Delivery Plan
 - 2.2.5. Develop strategic economic plans and policies
 - 2.2.6. Identify a prioritised list of schemes with the available Project Funding including over/under programming to enable prudent management
- 2.3. The Board is asked to agree the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee as at Appendix A.
- 2.4. The Board is asked to note the following powers that are NOT delegated to the Sub-Committee:
 - 2.4.1. The power to appoint Directors
 - 2.4.2. The power to remove Directors
 - 2.4.3. The power to appoint or remove either the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Strategic Board
 - 2.4.4. The power to appoint an Investment Panel
 - 2.4.5. The power to delegate any powers further to either a sub-committee, person or persons



- 2.5. The Board is asked to note that this delegation will include those decisions that are currently delegated to the Investment Panel including the prioritisation of projects.
- 2.6. The Board is asked to note that decisions accorded to the Accountability Board by the Framework Agreement CANNOT be delegated to the Sub-Committee and therefore final investment decisions will remain as a function of Accountability Board. Regulations have now been passed by HM Government that allow Accountability Board to meet remotely and the possibility of more frequent Accountability Board meetings will be explored if necessary.

3. Background

- 3.1. Members of the Board will be well aware of the ongoing Covid-19 Crisis and the devastating impact that public health measures are having on the global economy. The UK Government has moved quickly to respond to the crisis by putting in short term interventions to attempt to offset the worsening impacts on the economy. However, as the regional organisation with responsibility for economic growth it is important that the South East LEP plays a role in providing support for the businesses of the South East during this unprecedented time.
- 3.2. We are faced with a disaster that we have not seen the likes of in our working lives and the governance of the company did not make provision for a situation of this type. In addition, many Board Members are dealing with huge pressures in their primary businesses, whether that be local authorities having to act to protect their residents and vulnerable people or private companies working to protect their staff and the future of their business.
- 3.3. Given the fast moving nature of the Crisis period the organisation must have the ability to make decisions more frequently than the quarterly meetings that are already planned and that ability must not create further pressures on Board members who do not have the spare capacity to give to the partnership at this time.
- 3.4. On that basis the Chair has requested that a Sub-Committee be established to cover the period between the Board meeting to be held on 17 April and the next planned meeting on 12 June 2020. A sunset clause is proposed that will ensure that the Sub Committee cannot operate beyond 31 May 2021. This aligns with the similar restrictions made by HM Government regarding emergency changes to governance of sub-committees of Local Authorities.
- 3.5. The proposed operation of the Sub Committee is set out in the Terms of Reference that can be found at Appendix A. The guiding principle will be that the Sub Committee will meet only to take decisions that must be made in advance of the next planned Strategic Board meeting on 12 June 2020. Justification for the decision being made by the Sub Committee will be documented and shared with all Board Members in advance of the meeting.
- 3.6. The grouping of the Chair, Deputy Chair and Federated Board Chairs has been meeting regularly to discuss the emerging issues and response to the Covid-19 Crisis. These meetings will continue to happen but a meeting of the Sub Committee will only be called when decisions are required and Justification for the Sub Committee to make those decisions have been circulated.

4. Operations of the Sub Committee

- 4.1. The Articles of Association for SELEP Ltd allow for directors to delegate to any committee on the terms they see fit. The Assurance Framework does not preclude the establishment of a committee but does enshrine the principle of transparent and accountable decision making and that principle has been applied here within the remit of a pragmatic approach given the crisis situation. It should be noted that the Articles allow for Directors to revoke delegations at any time



(article 8.1.3).

- 4.2. The powers delegated to the Sub Committee are set out above and in the Terms of Reference, which also sets out the detail on how the Sub Committee will operate. The purpose of the Sub Committee is to allow time sensitive decisions to be made during a crisis period, there is no intention for this Sub Committee to become part of the standard operating processes of the company.
- 4.3. It is proposed that the Sub Committee function for the period from 00:01 18/04/2020 to 23:59 11/06/2020 (BST). The Board may wish to extend the operation of the Sub-Committee at the Board meeting due to be held on 12 June 2020 but cannot extend the operations of the Sub Committee beyond 31 May 2021.
- 4.4. The Sub Committee will meet virtually via video-conference. Whilst these meetings will not be public, they will be recorded and published on the SELEP website. Reports to the Board will be circulated to Board Members in advance of the meeting of the Sub Committee and minutes will be circulated after. As these will not be public meetings the Public Questions Policy will not apply to the Sub-Committee.
- 4.5. The Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body will require oversight of the functions of the Sub Committee, therefore due notice will need to be given of decisions and supporting reports. The Secretariat are working with the Accountable Body to agree how this will work but the Accountable Body will need at least five working days' notice of decisions, in advance of publication of reports.
- 4.6. A process is suggested that will allow the Board to revoke delegations. This process is constructed so that Board Members could instigate a revocation ahead of decisions being made if the majority of Directors agree.
- 4.7. The powers of the Accountability Board cannot be delegated to a sub committee the of Strategic Board and therefore the remit of Accountability Board remains the same. Any investment will require Accountability Board approval. Accountability Board can now meet virtually and should it be necessary an emergency meeting(s) of the Accountability Board could be called.

Terms of Reference

- 4.8. A draft Terms of Reference is attached at Appendix A. This Terms of Reference, with any changes agreed by the Board, will be adopted by the Sub-Committee at their first meeting. Any changes to the Terms of Reference requires approval of Board.

5. Accountable Body Comments

- 5.1. The implementation of a Sub-Committee of the Strategic Board is permissible with the Articles of SELEP Ltd, provided that the Sub-Committee operates within the requirements of the SELEP Assurance Framework. In approving the Sub-Committee, the Board can choose to agree to delegate some or all of the responsibilities set out in the recommendations.
- 5.2. The implementation of an end-date for the Sub-Committee is strongly endorsed, as, whilst it is understood that the Board may wish to be able to respond to the COVID-19 emergency in a more agile manner, it does not ensure full commitment to a number of requirements of the Assurance Framework, for example the requirements to ensure Board diversity.

- 5.3. As the Sub-Committee isn't reflected in the current Assurance Framework, the SELEP website will need to be updated to reflect these revised Governance arrangements.
- 5.4. It should be noted that should the Board wish to make decisions outside of a full Board meeting, it may still make electronic decisions where these are considered necessary and appropriate.
- 5.5. The operation of the Sub-Committee will generate additional resource requirements from both the SELEP Secretariat and the Accountable Body; any additional costs arising from this requirement will need to be met from the current Secretariat budget for 2020/21. This budget will be subject to review at the Accountability Board meeting on the 15th May 2020 as it is already recognised that there are pressures arising; it may be necessary to re-prioritise these resources to address the challenges arising from the COVID-19 emergency. It is anticipated that this will be considered further by the Board when the 2020/21 Delivery Plan is considered by the Board in June 2020.

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Appendix A: Draft Terms of Reference

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Item 8: Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Strategic Board (the Board) of the Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is asked to endorse the Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus (the Prospectus) has been commissioned, by a partnership of 14 Local Authorities across Essex, Kent and East Sussex (Castle Point Borough Council, Colchester Borough Council, Dover District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Essex County Council, Hastings Borough, Lewes District Council, Maldon District Council, Rochford District Council, Rother District Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Tendring District Council, Thanet District Council and Wealden District). While local authorities have made contributions, it has been supported, predominantly, by the SELEP Sector Support Fund.
- 3.2. The Prospectus highlights common strategic issues along with potential opportunities to inform and enable the poorest towns on the South East Coast to improve their economic performance and attract investment and support.
- 3.3. The Prospectus sets out the priorities which will assist in both improving the coastal economy and alignment with the themes in the National Industrial Strategy. It has also informed the ongoing development of the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy.
- 3.4. While the Prospectus has been commissioned by a defined partnership of 14 Local Authorities (as set out in section 3.1), the ambitions identified in the document, and the evidence to support these, should broadly support activity across all coastal local authorities within the SELEP geography.
- 3.5. The outputs from the Prospectus have informed the ongoing development of the 'Coastal Catalyst' strategic opportunity in the draft SELEP Local Industrial Strategy. It is the intention that this strategic opportunity will apply to all coastal local authorities within the SELEP geography, regardless of if they were or were not one of the 14 local authorities directly involved in the development of the Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus.

4. Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus

- 4.1. The Prospectus was match funded by SELEP, through the Sector Support Fund (£40,000 awarded), as well as the partnership of 14 Local Authorities mentioned above. The commission was in recognition that South East coastal economies face unique challenges to economic growth and that identifying these barriers as well as developing policies and ambitions to overcome them should be central to any future economic growth and productivity strategy.
- 4.2. As such, it was recognised that this piece of work should inform the development of the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). To ensure this, the Prospectus has been developed in parallel to the LIS and has informed the emerging priorities, namely the 'Coastal Catalyst' strategic opportunity.
- 4.3. There is no ongoing SELEP budget associated with the Prospectus. The £40,000 allocation from the Sector Support Fund has been used, alongside £20,000 match funding from 14 coastal Local Authorities, for the production of the Prospectus and associated evidence base.



Economic Context

- 4.4. The South East coastal economy is a significant part of the wider economic picture, and currently contributes over £36 billion (1.3% of the national output) per annum to the UK economy.
- 4.5. The South East coast is home to over 2 million people and is anticipating future growth averaging at 7.5% per annum over the next decade. This population growth will partly consist of elderly and unskilled/unemployed inward migration at higher concentrations than inland areas in the South East.
- 4.6. The South East coast is also home to over 72,000 businesses registered for VAT and employs over 800,000 people.
- 4.7. The wider South East's Gross Value Added per head in 2017 was £28,683, while the South East coast averaged just £17,840 per head. This is comparable to the performance of Blackpool (£17,309), Lancaster and Wyre (£18,482) and Cornwall (£17,634), all of which are economies recognised as requiring significant investment.
- 4.8. The house price to workplace-based earnings ratio for the South East coast revealed that prices are 13x earnings, compared to 10x earnings for the wider South East region.
- 4.9. If the South East coast were able to match the predicted growth rate for the UK over the next decade, the South East coastal economy could grow by 15% to £43 billion per annum, potentially creating 48,000 additional jobs.

Vision Statement and Ambitions

- 4.10. The vision statement set out in the Prospectus is to:

"Improve the economic performance of the coast in absolute and relative terms, to grow our economy and narrow the gap with the wider SELEP region.

Ensuring our residents and communities benefit from inclusive regeneration and through improved skills and workforce development."

- 4.11. The Prospectus also sets out the key priorities and ambitions for coastal economies in the South East, namely:

- 4.11.1. improving connectivity in order to improve mobility and attract new investment and business;
- 4.11.2. working alongside the Clean Growth Working Group to ensure that the coast is at the forefront in delivering programmes that address the climate emergency;
- 4.11.3. providing residents and communities with improved skills and workforce development;
- 4.11.4. working with Government to make policy and programmes "coast friendly";
- 4.11.5. attracting and retaining business investment and Government interest in supporting growth in economic productivity;
- 4.11.6. improving the environmental fabric of the coast including housing, seafronts, and town centres; and
- 4.11.7. building on existing relationships including with our Clinical Commissioning Groups and health partners to address long term health issues which impact our communities and economies.



- 4.12. The Coastal Communities Group will oversee delivery of these priorities, as well as seek partners and identify funding sources to deliver on the stated ambitions.
- 4.13. Given the prominence of the coastal agenda in the draft Local Industrial Strategy, and the degree of local buy-in to this project and its stated ambitions for SELEP's coastal areas, it is currently planned that one member of the SELEP secretariat will have the coastal agenda, namely delivery against this prospectus and the coastal elements of the final Local Industrial Strategy, as the core focus of their role. This will be reflected in delivery planning through 2020/21 and will be reported to the board of SELEP Ltd in due course.

5. Covid-19 Crisis

- 5.1. This prospectus is even more timely given the disproportionate economic impact that the Covid-19 Crisis is likely to inflict on coastal communities across the South East. Coastal economies in the South East are built on micro and small businesses as well as traditional industries and sectors that are predominantly low skilled and seasonal by nature. These businesses and sectors are likely to acutely feel the impact of the response to Covid-19 and, as the prospectus outlines, were already significantly lagging behind the wider South East in terms of growth and productivity even before the onset of the ongoing economic crisis.
- 5.2. If endorsed, the current actions outlined in the prospectus will go some way to promote both growth and resilience within coastal economies. An endorsed prospectus will provide the platform to promote future work to assist coastal economies in recovering from the impact of Covid-19 over the medium to long-term.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. If the Prospectus is endorsed by the Board:
 - 6.1.1. Strategic Board members would act as champions of our coastal communities, promoting and assisting actions outlined in the prospectus where possible, without SELEP making a commitment of funding to this activity;
 - 6.1.2. SELEP, alongside coastal partners, would use the Prospectus to engage Parliament, Government departments, senior civil servants, anchor industries and education organisations in support of the Prospectus ambitions;
 - 6.1.3. relevant stakeholders and partnerships would be signposted to the Prospectus; and
 - 6.1.4. the Prospectus would support and inform the actions to be considered in the implementation of the LIS.
- 6.2. However, it is important to note that by endorsing the prospectus, while SELEP would be stating its support for the overall ambitions, this cannot be taken as a commitment of any SELEP resources or funding. SELEP is not currently in a position to allocate resources or funding to new strategies/plans.

7. Accountable Body Comments

- 7.1. Any commitment to resource a post or any activity to support delivery of the ambitions included in the Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus will be subject to sufficient funding being made available and prioritised for this purpose by the Board. The revenue budget agreed for 2020/21 by the Accountability Board in November 2019, includes provision for a member of the Secretariat to support this activity, albeit subject to receipt of the Core revenue funding from Government, due to be confirmed in April 2020.



- 7.2. Revenue funding to support this post beyond 2020/21 will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22; the Accountability Board has already been made aware at their meeting in February 2020, that there is no confirmed commitment of funding from Government on-going; also, other sources of revenue income, such as income from interest receipts is expected to be reduced as 2020/21 is the final year of the Local Growth Programme, with no confirmation from Government yet of a successor scheme. These challenges mean that it is not possible to commit to the funding of this post beyond 2020/21, at this time.
- 7.3. Further to the challenges in the revenue budget, there is currently no Capital funding aligned to support delivery of the identified opportunities for economic growth within the prospectus; the respective partners will need to work with Government and other agencies to secure greater certainty with regard to future funding arrangements to support the ambitions of the prospectus.

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix A: Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus: 'Boosting Coastal Productivity: An Economic Prospectus for the South East Coast'
- 8.2. Appendix B: Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus - Data Pack

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