

Attendees

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	KF	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings BC
AE	Alan Elder	EBS Consulting	KG	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
BH	Ben Hook	Rother DC	KT	Katy Thomas (minutes)	East Sussex CC
BS	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
CB	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	PD	Pranesh Datta	Hastings BC
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	PJ	Philip Johnson	Locate East Sussex
CS	Clive Soper	FSB	PSm	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DSp	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
IF	Ian Fitzpatrick	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC	RS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
JM	Cllr James MacCleary	Lewes DC	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC

Apologies

DSy	Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group	JHa	James Harris	East Sussex CC
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All of the papers and any presentations delivered at the meeting can be viewed on the following page of the ESCC website: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/eastsussex/selep/tesminutes/tes200730

1. Welcome & introductions

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Cllr James MacCleary as this is his first TES meeting as an official TES member.
- 1.2. **GP** asked the group for any specific conflicts of interest with today's agenda items and for any additional interests not already held on record. **RS** declared an interest in the Getting Building Fund (GBF) project 'Fast Track Business Solutions for the Hastings Manufacturing Sector' as a Director of Sea Change Sussex; **KF** declared the same interest. **SB** declared an interest in the 'Sussex Innovation Centre Covid-19 Adaptations' GBF project.

*The agenda was rearranged to cover the Economy Recovery Plan item next. However, **GP** experienced technical difficulties and left the call, so **RD** took the Chair and introduced the Economy Recovery Plan item whilst waiting for **GP** to rejoin.*

2. East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan

- 2.1. **AE** presented the final draft of the Economy Recovery Plan (ERP). The first phase of work involved desk research and meetings with 743 people from 50 key local stakeholder organisations. The aim was to gain input from a wide range of stakeholders across East Sussex who work in different sectors and spheres of operation to seek information about current support activities as a result of the pandemic alongside consideration of what an economy recovery plan might look like.
- 2.2. The results of the consultations showed a remarkable level of consistency. The ambitions and proposals have been grouped under the following six headings:
 - Support businesses to recover, grow and ensure increased investment in the local economy
 - Retain our skills infrastructure, support employment, build workforce resilience
 - Restart the leisure, tourism, retail and cultural economy
 - Adapt and improve places
 - Expand low carbon transport and energy infrastructure
 - Capitalise on digital connectivity
- 2.3. The Action Plan is a living document that will flex and change, particularly as there are a number of unknown critical variables such as: future work and consumption trends; additional waves of Covid-19; a vaccine; government fiscal measures; 'V' or 'U' shaped economic recovery; Brexit and trading relationship with others (e.g. China and the USA).
- 2.4. TES will have a key role to play in: coordinating inputs from TES family and partners; lobbying government, SELEP and others for actions to support the local economy; business cases for future

funding bids; managing the Action Plan; monitoring the delivery and impacts of the Action Plan; production of a business friendly document that will enable an official launch with partners in Sep 2020.

GP resumed the Chair from this point.

2.5. **GP** invited comments on the Economy Recovery Plan:

2.5.1. **CB** commented that an incredible amount of hard work has gone into producing the plan and she warmly welcomes it. She raised a concern that childcare is not mentioned once in the plan and that this is a big miss. Childcare providers are under pressure financially and may close which will mean that parents may not be able to go back to work through lack of childcare and may end up losing their jobs. **GP** stated that this is a business document but that she was right to raise this as it might affect businesses. **CB** responded that childcare providers are businesses in their own right and we should be encouraging new entrants to the market, which will provide job opportunities and employment, particularly for women returners. **PSm** noted that there is also the issue of holiday childcare across a wider age range where previously older grandparents have absorbed childcare needs to enable parents to work – so it is not just nurseries but also after-school and holiday childcare provision. Schools and the provision of childcare are essential to enabling parents to get back to work. The financial viability of nursery and childcare provision is marginal, with current government offers of ‘free’ childcare not underpinned by sufficient funds flowing to providers. **CB** proposed that TES commissions a report on how childcare supports the economy, availability of childcare and the impact the supply (or lack of) might have on the Recovery Plan. She also suggested a campaign and support for 1 year to help childcare businesses set up. **GP** said that he and **RD** would discuss along with **BS**. **CB** further commented that she agreed that connectivity was important and stated that Rother District Council meetings were sometimes difficult due to issues.

[Action: GP, RD and BS to discuss childcare]

2.5.2. **CE** agreed strongly with **CB**, especially as it is likely to be women in particular that will be affected by lack of childcare. She stated that this was an impressive and comprehensive plan however she would like to see a specific broadband target of 100Mbps upload and download. She questioned the footfall statistics that were quoted in the presentation and said that in the case of Eastbourne, levels are nowhere near those of last year. **GP** commented that he too was surprised by Alan’s statistic but imagined that supermarket on- and off-line shopping turnover is up whilst other retailers have fallen very substantially. He agreed with **CE** that he was in favour of specific broadband targets but that 100Mbps would be amazing for some who suffer on 10Mbps – superfast all over first please.

2.5.3. **CS** echoed colleagues saying this was a comprehensive and impressive plan. He said that there is some evidence that recovery will be long and slow and that he didn’t see much about opportunities in the plan, e.g. renewable/environmental industries, maximising the opportunities of greater staff numbers who previously worked in Crawley (Gatwick) and for other businesses to come and work in East Sussex where certain jobs are available immediately. He recognised the opportunity that exists around creating and marketing the workspaces we have for audiences outside the county to relocate here. He also welcomes the actions around skills development.

2.5.4. **KG** congratulated TES for the work undertaken. He asked who the intended audience is, and **GP** responded that the ERP is a framework to use with SELEP/Government and for partners to use to drive forward actions, but that a business-friendly version is being produced for a business audience. **KG** commented that in relation to the childcare issue raised earlier, Government is not going to incentivise more, so asked whether it’s TES putting a campaign together for more support. He agreed with **CS** that there are actions we can take now but feels we may not be making enough of opportunities, although he stated that this can be difficult in the absence of clear Government policies short-to-medium term (e.g. carbon reduction). There is a Government proposal to remove petrol/diesel vehicles by 2025, but where is the policy that allows us to plan and move towards this, where is the hydrogen network?

2.5.5. **JM** commented that this is a comprehensive plan and offered congratulations. He is excited about Lewes District Council directly supporting Ambition 1. He asked about timings, saying that businesses need help quickly – it would be good to look at the pace of delivery, timeframes and monitoring. **RD** responded that actions are already underway and are noted in the plan, and that timeframes are set out against each ambition, 0-4 months etc. It is the responsibility of delivery

partners to drive forward actions over the next 18 months. Monitoring and review (addition or removal) of actions will be done by the TES working groups and ambition leads. He said that he thought strategic oversight and steering would take place at TES, perhaps every 4 months. **GP** said we might need more light-touch oversight but more regularly than 4 months. **RD** commented that Government has an expectation that new Recovery and Local Industrial Strategies will need to be developed in the autumn. This plan will be the building blocks for that. Whilst there are lots of resources identified in the plan, that does not mean that we don't need more in order to help the economy restart and recover.

- 2.5.6. **AC** commented that this is a very comprehensive document and recognises it will be live and changing. Brexit is mentioned only once, however, and needs to be more prominent. This will have an impact on businesses as new requirements will be onerous and unfamiliar. Costs may well be added to importing from the EU. In addition, changes in immigration rules will mean added costs for businesses and we should look to ensure that businesses can get people in quickly. Chambers will be doing more to help. She is supportive of the low carbon agenda – less car use and a lack of flights has helped, although in the shorter term we are likely to see increased car usage through a reluctance to use public transport as lockdown eases and people return to work. We must encourage walking and cycling. **RD** responded saying we have been investing over £25m of £80m Local Growth Fund monies over the last 5 years into these measures and will continue to do so over coming years, alongside the County Council's own local transport capital programme. In addition, ESCC has secured monies from the DfT Emergency Active Travel programme over the last month and is delivering measures before Sep 2020 to repurpose road space in towns to support greater walking and cycling. We are also applying for the second tranche of funding and will be submitting a bid early-Aug 2020 for schemes that are deliverable by Mar 2021.
- 2.5.7. **BS** commented on childcare, noting that a premium was paid for childcare provision to open. He also recognised that not every home is ideal for home working, i.e. rooms not available, poor connectivity etc. 97% superfast coverage recognised but we need 100%. If you are in the remaining 3% you are effectively deprived. **GP** agreed and said that there is a huge opportunity, particularly to attract and retain wealth generators, by making it easier for them to work from home and not commute. We must chivvy the County Council to do more.
- 2.5.8. **CB** agreed re Broadband but stated that there are problems with other utilities too – electricity supply in Burwash for example where there are regular power cuts.
- 2.5.9. **RS** agreed that Broadband is critically important. He has written to the Secretary of State and had hoped to receive a response by now that he could share with TES. East Sussex is currently at 97% superfast coverage – important to note that neighbouring counties do not have a third contract to deliver, and we are still aiming for as close to 100% coverage as possible. The cost of engineering is very expensive to deliver to in the remaining areas and we have to ensure value-for-money for the public purse. The budget is not limitless.
- 2.5.10. **SD** thanked all involved and in particular **RD**'s colleagues who have steered and supported the cultural sector which is very much appreciated. Does the plan currently lack vision? **GP** said that the business-facing document will be visionary. **RD** said that this is an immediate response to the pandemic but the new Economic Plan which will follow will be visionary and aspirational. We are expecting Government guidance in Sep 2020 on new Local Industrial Strategies/Economic Plans. **SD** commented that social enterprise and social inclusion do not figure highly enough in the plan and misses how things will be different in future. **RD** commented that this will also be picked up in future plans. **SD** said that we need to be alert to actually how agile we can be, especially in any public-facing document. He cited Sector Support Funds (SSF) and said that, although understanding why necessary due diligence has to take place with public money, SSF is not available in practise for this season. When we say we will do something we must work together to find resources and get actions delivered.
- 2.6. **RD** asked if TES endorsed the Economy Recovery Plan – all in agreement, **endorsed**. To be kept confidential until the public launch.
- 2.7. **GP** brought the item to a close, with very many thanks to **JHa**, **RD** and their teams – and also to **AE** and EBS Consulting – for their hard work especially whilst also doing other, existing work.

3. Previous TES minutes, 8 Jun 2020

- 3.1. **GP** ran through the actions of the previous TES meeting and noted that all had been completed. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

Getting Building Fund (GBF)

- 4.1. The East Sussex projects have been approved although the news is currently embargoed. The successful projects are:

- Charleston entry access improvement
- Creative Hub, Fisher Street, Lewes
- Fast Track Business Solutions for the Hastings Manufacturing Sector
- Observer Building Hastings
- Restoring the Glory of the Winter Garden
- Riding Sunbeams Solar Railways
- Sussex Innovation Centre Covid-19 Secure Adaptations
- UTC Maritime and Sustainable Technology Hub

- 4.2. **GP** thanked **RD** and his teams for their hard work in getting the bid ready in a challenging timescale. **RD** thanked project sponsors for their hard work and noted that there might be more funding calls since local government and partners have proven they can be very responsive and flexible and turn bids round in a tight timeframe. Next steps will be press releases and business case development work. ESCC will provide a level of support to enable projects to submit over the coming months. **SB** asked if press releases about individual projects needed to be cleared with anyone. **RD** said no although it is good to share beforehand to make sure that quotes are included as necessary and things can be coordinated. **AC** said that it would be good to have a chat as there is an opportunity to get editorial for the Business Edge magazine.

[Action: RD and AC to discuss editorial for the Business Edge magazine]

Local Growth Fund (LGF)

- 4.3. SELEP has been informed that the one-third of LGF withheld monies should be released in Aug 2020. This will release monies for Eastbourne Fisherman of £1.08m to be spent immediately on phases 2 and 3 of the project.

Growing Places Fund (GPF) Round 3

- 4.4. The SELEP Accountability Board approved two East Sussex projects on 3 Jul 2020 – Observer Building in Hastings and Barnhorn Green Medical and Commercial Workspace in Bexhill. £1.75m is allocated subject to full business case submission. The total SELEP pot is £12m so East Sussex has done well to secure £3.5m.
- 4.5. SELEP has taken the decision to repurpose GPF monies as a response to Covid-19 and its impact on the economy via a £2m Skills Fund and a £2.4m Business Support Fund. There will also be £1m Sector Support Funding (SSF) to support proposals from SELEP working groups. **RD** stated that we will want to work with partners and see collaborations across SELEP to access funding once the criteria are endorsed by the SELEP Strategic Board on 2 Oct 2020. **GP** stated that he would like to see further monies put into Covid-19 pots from the £3.6m allocated to cover the overspend on the LGF programme. He commented that SSF is a particularly useful pot.

5. TES round table / AOB

- 5.1. **AC** shared a link to a webinar event so businesses can prepare for the transition period post-Jan 2021 (view via the [Sussex Chamber of Commerce](#) website).
- 5.2. **BS** commented that Wealden District Council has been very flexible around planning permissions. Also doing what they can re pavement licenses in order to support recovery.
- 5.3. **CE** noted that Eastbourne Borough Council has taken over licensing of businesses who want to trade on the street and are not charging for this.

- 5.4. **KG** advised that the TfSE Transport Strategy and ask of Government is now with the Secretary of State. **GP** congratulated **KG** on his re-election as Chair of TfSE.
- 5.5. **DSp** advised that South East Business Boost (SEBB) business support services are now live – Inclusive Growth is being delivered by Always Possible, whilst Specialist Support and New Enterprise Support are being delivered by Digital Islands. The BES Steering Group is supporting Ambition 1 of the Economy Recovery Plan but are also looking beyond the immediate Covid-19 actions to business support provision thereafter.
- 5.6. **IG** commented that it's very good news about the Riding Sunbeams project – thanks to all. Thanks also to **AE** for the Economy Recovery Plan. Wealden DC has its Restart & Recovery Plan and is looking forward to working with TES going forward.
- 5.7. **Psm** advised that SELEP's Social Enterprise Working Group will be submitting an SSF bid aimed at plugging gaps – the proposal will come to the next TES meeting for endorsement.
- 5.8. **PJ** advised that Locate has been working on the ERP business-friendly document. Enquiries have been coming in to Locate for premises, particularly workspace. The Locate service has been recommissioned by ESCC on behalf of partners and a new 3-year contract is in place.
- 5.9. **SD** offered congratulations to Lewes DC on the Newhaven event – feels sure this will have a positive impact on the perception of Newhaven. Brilliant comms.
- 5.10. **SB** noted that paid internships have gone so well that University of Brighton is hoping to embed these in future. Thanks to **RD** and his teams for their hard work getting GBF in. Very happy to support the ERP.
- 5.11. **GP** closed the meeting by reminding the group of the date of the next TES meeting, 28 Sep 2020, although he stated that TES may need an interim meeting before then to deal with any pressing matters.

Summary of actions:

2.5.1 **GP, RD** and **BS** to discuss childcare.

4.2 **RD** and **AC** to discuss editorial for the Business Edge magazine.