

Attendees

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	JWi	Jon Willis	Via Analytics
BH	Ben Hook	Rother DC	KF	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings BC
BS	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	KG	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
CB	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	KT	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	MA	Marwa Al-Qadi	East Sussex CC
CS	Clive Soper	FSB	MC	Matthew Chenery	East Sussex CC
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
DG	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	PD	Pranesh Datta	Hastings BC
DSp	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	PJ	Philip Johnson	Locate East Sussex
DSw	Deborah Shaw	Marlowe Theatre	PSm	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DSy	Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group	PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
DT	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	RS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
GR	Gareth Robertson	Via Analytics	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
HR	Helen Russell	South East LEP	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
IF	Ian Fitzpatrick	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC	SN	Sarah Nurden	Kent CC
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	SS	Sharon Spicer	South East LEP
JHr	James Harris	East Sussex CC	VG	Vera Gajic	East Sussex CC
JK	Jeremy Kerswell	Plumpton College	ZN	Cllr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC
JWh	Jon Wheeler	East Sussex CC			

Apologies

JB	Jonathan Buckwell	Developers East Sussex (DES)	JM	Cllr James MacCleary	Lewes DC
JHi	Joe Hill	Towner Gallery	JS	Jo Simmons	South East LEP

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/tes201102

1. Welcome & introductions

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the apologies.
- 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. **AC** and **PSm** both declared interests in Sector Support Fund projects at agenda item 5 (as a partner in the SEED-2 bid and as Chair of the working group proposing the Building Back Better bid respectively). No other interests were declared.

2. Previous TES minutes, 28 Sep 2020

- 2.1. **GP** ran through the actions of the previous TES meeting and noted that all had been completed.
- 2.2. Regarding action 4.4 (clarifying whether pre-starts/start-ups from outside the SELEP area are eligible for the Covid-19 Business Support fund if they set up *within* the SELEP area), **GP** read a note from **JS** confirming that this would be eligible in principle, providing the business can demonstrate that they are indeed within the SELEP region.
- 2.3. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. EU Transition: Impacts on East Sussex

- 3.1. **AC** delivered a comprehensive presentation on the current/expected impacts of Brexit on East Sussex, covering the No Deal and Free Trade Deal scenarios, changes to the GB/EU Border operating model, changes to export documentation, customs declarations, UK global tariffs and the basics of business readiness. Full details are given with the slides which **AC** agreed to share.

[Action: AC to circulate her EU Transition presentation, including accompanying notes]

- 3.2. The Chamber network is still running its 'countdown to change' series of national webinars, leading up to the end of the EU Transition period. You can register for the next sessions via:

[Webinar 11 Nov 2020: Countdown to change, 50 days to go](#)

[Webinar 01 Dec 2020: Countdown to change, 30 days to go](#)

- 3.3. **JK** suggested that the lack of preparedness amongst businesses is particularly worrying, especially given that the prospect of a No Deal has been with us for ages, so it's vital that we push messages as much as we can. **AC** added that an extra concern is people putting EU Transition on the backburner again as they focus on the new national lockdown.
- 3.4. **DT** queried whether a factsheet could be compiled aimed at East Sussex businesses, or if we could just provide links to relevant parts of the Sussex Chamber or Gov.UK websites. **RD** clarified that this is already being provided through a variety of resources and links on the Business East Sussex website, which is the main portal for business advice in the county.
- 3.5. **CB** observed that our small local retailers are selling online now more than ever, largely due to the ongoing lockdown restrictions. Such businesses will be using "post rather than ports" so may be completely removed from the notion of EU Transition. **GP** agreed that getting information out to local retailers is a key step, and suggested picking this up with **CB** offline.

[Action: GP to discuss with CB how best to reach local retailers with EU Transition information]

4. SELEP Economy Recovery & Renewal Strategy

- 4.1. **HR** explained that the implementation of SELEP's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) was put on hold at the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis, and while SELEP has already taken steps to support the economy during the crisis, the medium and longer term approach to recovery and growth will be shaped in part by the Government's *White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery* – originally expected in Autumn 2020 but delayed until next year. Despite that delay, there is a strong expectation that LEPs will be required to create 'Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategies', for which SELEP colleagues will utilise the wide evidence base collected during the LIS development, supplemented by the intelligence already gathered on the impact of Covid-19 on the local and national economy. Even in the absence of the Government's White Paper, SELEP has committed to developing the SELEP Economy Recovery and Renewal Strategy, with an indicative publication planned for Mar 2021.
- 4.2. **HR** shared a diagram describing the overall framework of the Strategy, including the strategic opportunities (three carried forward from the LIS plus a new fourth one covering business resilience), the key priorities and the expected deliverables.
- 4.3. **ZN** observed that a strategy covering recovery and renewal has already been produced by TES, the 'East Sussex Reset' document, and **BS** added that similar recovery strategies have also been produced by some of the Borough and District Councils. **HR** clarified that any such local documents will feed heavily into the overarching LEP-wide strategy, but asked the group to consider whether there are any topics/themes in those documents that we would particularly want to be highlighted and championed at LEP level.
- 4.4. **GP** stated that Broadband and 4G/5G connectivity are obvious priorities, plus renewables, but suggested that the collective views of TES are fairly represented in the above-mentioned East Sussex Reset and Borough/District documents.

[Action: Borough and District colleagues to provide HR with copies of any local recovery strategies]

- 4.5. **CS** recommended we keep a very close eye on what's happening with Brexit over the coming weeks and months, as that could massively impact all of these strategies. **HR** added that developing the SELEP strategy is an iterative process moving forward so there will be room to input further if necessary. An informal workshop for SELEP Strategic Board members is taking place next week on 11 Nov 2020, and our TES representatives on the SELEP Board are invited to the discussion.

5. Other matters arising

Sector Support Fund (SSF)

- 5.1. **DE** reminded the group that SELEP accepts Sector Support Fund (SSF) project applications in a series of tranches throughout the year, and advised that five new SSF applications have been submitted within the current open bidding period: *Building Back Better*, *Carbon Pathways (C-Path)*, *Catalyst for Culture*, *Creative High Streets* and *South East Export Development (SEED 2)*. As usual for SSF bids, these projects are now seeking federated board endorsement.

- 5.2. TES members noted the summary information given in the accompanying paper and agreed that all five projects are a good strategic fit in helping to deliver SELEP's strategic objectives. **TES members endorsed all five SSF project applications.**

Local Growth Fund (LGF)

- 5.3. **JWh** provided an update on SELEP issuing unallocated Local Growth Fund (LGF) monies as 'gap funding'. A number of high-risk projects have returned their LGF allocation to SELEP, increasing the amount of LGF available to reallocate beyond the existing pipeline. As such the SELEP Strategic Board agreed on 2 Oct 2020 to establish a new single LGF pipeline, specifically providing the opportunity for *existing* LGF projects to seek additional LGF funding *where the impact of Covid-19 has led to a funding gap* (due to cost increases and/or local funding sources no longer being available).
- 5.4. There is currently £6.7m LGF available for allocation through this 'LGF Covid Response Fund', but note that only live LGF projects which have reported a Covid-related funding gap have been considered. In East Sussex the *Eastbourne Fishermen* and *Plumpton College* LGF projects have reported funding gaps and meet the initial criteria to apply for further funding; both submitted the required application form for LFG gap funding on 30 Oct 2020.
- 5.5. The SELEP Strategic Board will be asked to compile the bids into a single prioritised pipeline at its meeting on 11 Dec 2020, so to give our projects the best possible chance of gaining funding, the County Council has commissioned consultants Genecon to independently assess our two applications against the SELEP criteria for the Covid Response Fund and our own local strategic priorities as set out in the East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan. Genecon's assessment, to include a recommended priority order, will be shared with TES for endorsement w/c 16 Nov 2020, ahead of the 20 Nov deadline for federated areas to submit their agreed local prioritised projects to SELEP.
- 5.6. **TES members acknowledged this progression and agreed that they're happy with the process.**

New national lockdown

- 5.7. **GP** raised this additional item following the Government's announcement over the weekend that England will be entering a new four-week lockdown from 5 Nov to 2 Dec 2020.
- 5.8. **AC** advised that the British Chambers are meeting HM Treasury and BEIS to discuss what financial support will be available and to seek clarity on precisely which businesses can open/close, as there are currently a large number of unanswered questions (such as: what is the evidence for why a business must close when they're Covid-secure; are the restrictions clear; do businesses have time to fully prepare; will the new furlough scheme follow-on from the last scheme on 1 Nov or will it begin on 5 Nov 2020; what are the longer-term plans after 2 Dec 2020).
- 5.9. **DSp** reiterated some of the points raised at this morning's Business East Sussex (BES) Steering Group meeting, at which the three main concerns/priorities were furloughing (making it as flexible as possible), financial support (particularly to companies that fall short of current provision), and what happens when loans expire (the payback schedule when a business hasn't improved, e.g. mortgage holidays).
- 5.10. **BH** highlighted that business grants for rateable property of up to £3,000 have been announced, but there's confusion around precisely how much each business will be eligible for and it seems they'll only be available to businesses that are mandatorily shut down. More clarity is urgently needed. There will also be another discretionary grant, so we'll again need to ensure we have consistent criteria across the county.
- 5.11. **KG** agreed that there's still a great deal we don't know, so we just need to continue sharing information to ensure any gaps are quickly identified.
- 5.12. **SD** flagged the continued impact on freelancers, directors drawing on dividends and the self-employed who really struggle to access support. The new lockdown will have a catastrophic impact on the visitor economy through the winter, so it will need significant investment early in the new year (such as through SELEP's Covid-19 Business Support fund and the SELEP Sector Support Funded projects supporting the visitor economy, such as Sussex Modern).
- 5.13. **AC** stated that an ongoing area of concern is the impact on mental health – clearly people need support, but there's no financial provision to enable this. **GP** said he's been considering putting together a 'making homeworking better' resource and has started a conversation with **PJ**, but wants to build on it in terms of both technology and mental health. **SB** suggested liaising with academic

colleagues to see if there's anything they could offer in terms of self-help support. **GP** suggested a more detailed offline discussion with **PJ** and **SB** on these points.

[Action: GP to discuss ways of providing mental health support/resources with PJ and SB]

- 5.14. **GP** reminded the group that he has regular meetings with SELEP Chair *Chris Brodie*, who himself has regular high-level meetings at Ministerial level, so encouraged TES colleagues to continue feeding any issues to him to pass on (preferably by 9am every Tuesday before they meet).

[Action: TES colleagues to continue feeding any lockdown-related issues to GP, to be passed onto Chris Brodie to raise at Ministerial level]

6. TES round table / AOB

- 6.1. Due to the meeting running over, **GP** asked for any 'AOB' items to be emailed directly to **DE** by the end of the week for circulation to the group and inclusion in the minutes.

[Action: TES members to share any AOB items with DE by 6 Nov 2020 for circulation to the group and inclusion in the minutes]

Summary of actions

- 3.1 **AC** to circulate her EU Transition presentation, including accompanying notes.
- 3.5 **GP** to discuss with **CB** how best to reach local retailers with EU Transition information.
- 4.4 Borough and District colleagues to provide **HR** with copies of any local recovery strategies.
- 5.13 **GP** to discuss ways of providing mental health support/resources with **PJ** and **SB**.
- 5.14 TES colleagues to continue feeding any lockdown-related issues to **GP**, to be passed onto Chris Brodie to raise at Ministerial level.
- 6.1 TES members to share any AOB items with **DE** by 6 Nov 2020 for circulation to the group and inclusion in the minutes.