

**South East LEP (SELEP) Skills Advisory Panel**

**Terms of Reference**

1. **Purpose**

The Skills Advisory Panel is a regional partnership to strengthen the link between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges and universities. The Skills Advisory Panel will reflect the geography of the SELEP area and will work closely with local federated skills and business boards. The Panel will be employer led, providing a strong voice to SELEP employers on skills and bringing together skills providers and key stakeholders to pool knowledge on skills and labour market needs and to work together to understand and address key SELEP wide challenges.

This includes both immediate needs and challenges and looking at what is required to help the SELEP area adapt to future labour market changes and to grasp future opportunities. This will help colleges, universities and other providers deliver the skills required by employers, now and in the future.

1. **Functions of the Panel**

The introduction of Skills Advisory Panels will help SELEP to achieve this by ensuring all areas have strong governance arrangements in place meaningful analytical capability and access to the right data. This will allow them to:

* generate analysis of skills and labour markets to understand the SELEP and local position – an analytical toolkit
* discuss and agree local and SELEP wide skills needs priorities and make recommendations accordingly in the short-term and more longer-term.
* consider how these will be met through regional provision over time working with educators and providers and sharing findings with the Department for Education and other government departments as appropriate.

Skills Advisory Panels’ analysis will also support the development of the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy to ensure that this reflects skills requirements across the SELEP area.

**2a. Remit and Responsibilities of the Panel**

Government guidance sets out that the panel is expected to have an advisory role to the LEP and to:

* Provide a strong leadership role on skills in the SELEP area, engaging with employers and providers and providing skills advice to the LEP strategic and Accountability Board
* Developing a clear understanding of current and future regional skills needs and local labour market as well as the present skills and employment support provision in the SELEP area.

This will be achieved by:

* producing robust and authoritative evidence-based skills and labour market analysis which clearly identifies existing regional skills and employment challenges, and identifies key areas of future needs relating to projected regional employment growth areas
* developing a sophisticated understanding of both the SELEP wide labour market and skills provision in the local area, the extent to which labour mobility within, or into, the SELEP and local economy can address skills needs, and the projected gaps between skills needs and skills provision
* building knowledge of the range of both local, regional and national employment provision that exists or is planned
* presenting the analysis at board level and sharing it with the wider employer and provider communities to ensure that their perspective on the SELEP wide labour market and local employment and skills system is reflected in the prioritisation the board takes forward
* providing analysis to inform the development and the implementation of the ‘People’ element of Local Industrial Strategy

Building on this high-quality analysis to develop a clear approach to addressing skills and employment challenges within the SELEP area, including by looking ahead to likely skills priorities in the coming decade. Skills Advisory Panels are expected to do this by:

* building an understanding of the LEP area across a range of partners including employers (SME and larger employers from across the private and public sectors), all types of providers and other key partners (including the community & voluntary sector) to agree shared approaches to addressing the challenges the analysis has identified
* working with the LEP to develop the ’People’ element of the Local Industrial Strategy

Understanding the wider dependencies in the LEP area and working together with other parts of the LEP to:

* link them to the skills and employment analysis as well as strategic plans
* ensure the ‘People’ element of the Local Industrial Strategy is integrated effectively with the wider work of the LEP

Acting as co-ordinator of LEP area skills providers and working with the provider networks by:

* Supporting co-operation between providers in mix of provision
* actively working with a range of LEP wide providers (Further Education, Higher Education and independent) to plan for how the skills needs are to be met
* encouraging providers to reflect the Skills Advisory Panel analysis when planning for T Levels implementation and delivery, and for the Skills Advisory Panel analysis to inform the investments that are made in the provider base to prepare for T Levels roll-out

Working closely with careers advisory services (National Careers Service and Careers Enterprise Company) to ensure that potential learners are informed about potential career routes within the SELEP area, and that all careers information and guidance is informed by up-to-date regional labour market information. This will involve Skills Advisory Panels working with:

* the Careers & Enterprise Company’s Enterprise Advisor Network, to ensure that the Skills Advisory Panel analysis is shared through the network and informs the activities they support across the LEP
* the National Careers Service area-based contractors to ensure that Skills Advisory Panel analysis is embedded into advice and guidance given to adults

Raising the profile of apprenticeships with LEP based employers and providers.

Advising where skills and labour market resource should be directed to support LEP based employers and residents, using understanding of existing employment support provision in the area and the needs of the regional and local labour market.

Sharing analysis and best practice, as widely and transparently as possible, with central government and other Skills Advisory Panels to learn from each other and tackle wider skills challenges.

Utilising the analytical toolkit and combined knowledge and expertise of panel members to make representations on key issues to government where appropriate and to include potential solutions. To utilise the Local Industrial Strategy and related mechanisms to achieve this also.

1. **Membership of the Panel**

The board should be formed of approximately 20 members, with employers covering the priority sectors identified in the South East LEP Skills Strategy as follows:

* Logistics
* Engineering
* Construction
* Care
* Health
* IT, digital and creative
* Land-based and food
* Energy
* Tourism and visitor economy
* Finance
* Employer Chairs or nominated representative from each SELEP federated Boards will be automatic members (Sussex Essex, Opportunity South Essex, Kent and Medway Skills Commission and Skills East Sussex)

Recruitment will take place via local skills and federated boards and through a general invitation. Employer membership will also reflect the geographical and federated areas of the South East LEP and include representation from Kent, Essex, East Sussex, Southend, Medway and Thurrock. Members will be expected to speak on behalf of their sector and /or geography and to reach out to employers in this sector across the SELEP area, with support from the SELEP Secretariat.

The chair will be a member of the main LEP Board to ensure that the Skills Advisory Panel advice is reflected in strategic board discussions. The government expects that arrangements for the chair’s term to be in line with the arrangements for the LEP board’s chair. Arrangements for the chair will be reviewed annually.

There will also be strong links to the LEP Investment Panel, particularly further and higher education representatives and LEP federated Board representatives. Where possible, Skills Advisory Panel meetings will be scheduled to ensure feedback can be provided to the LEP Strategic Board and Investment Panel.

Additionally, membership will include representatives from the following given the central role they have in the skills and employment agenda and as large sectors of employment in their own right:

* Higher education
* Further education
* Training providers
* Local Government
* The voluntary and community sector
* A business representative organisation such as the Chamber of Commerce or Federation of Small Businesses

Interview information and biographies will be produced for all members.

There will be a mechanism for interested employers and partner organisations to be involved to help ensure openness and transparency. This will include larger events / meetings for non-members to attend. This is likely to take the form of associate members.

Relevant local representatives of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Local Growth Unit and Job Centre Plus will be invited to attend meetings where appropriate as well as agencies such as the Careers Enterprise Company, STEM Learning and National Careers Service.

The Board should be diverse and have members with the necessary knowledge and expertise to oversee influential skills and labour market analysis, advise on effective LEP wide strategies and advise on and assist in the implementation of effective funding and investment decisions. The government expects LEPs and MCAs to improve gender balance and representation of those with protected characteristics on all boards and sub-boards, including the Skills Advisory Panel.

1. **Secretariat**

The panel will be serviced by the SELEP Secretariat predominantly via the SELEP Skills Lead and SAP Support and Data Analyst. This will include responsibility for:

* Ensuring the efficient administration of Panel meetings
* Ensuring that the Board operates within its Terms of Reference
* Managing forward planning for Panel meetings
* Providing information and support to the Chair, Vice Chair and members
* Monitoring work commissioned by the Panel
* Coordinating the development of papers and agenda items
* Managing effective communications activity
* Maintaining engagement with providers, members and employers
* Identifying new funding sources for skills activity
* Reporting to the LEP Accountable Body and LEP Board as required
1. **Local Enterprise Partnership and main LEP Board**

As per the guidance produced by the Department for Education[[1]](#footnote-1) the Panel will be expected to adhere to the standards of transparency, conflicts of interest, accountability and diversity as set out in the Local Enterprise partnership National Assurance Framework and Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The diagram in appendix A illustrates how the Panel fits into the LEP structure and the direct relationship and representation it will have on the main LEP Board and local skills Boards.

1. **Sub-structures**

The Panel will be supported by the [**SELEP Skills Working Group**](https://www.southeastlep.com/our-strategy/working-groups/skills-working-group/) which will ensure recommendations can be carried out and acted upon. Additionally, as per the structure diagram (appendix A), other LEP working groups will feed into the Panel as appropriate.

The Skills Working Group will assist in undertaking actions agreed by the Panel and with support from the SELEP Secretariat and Skills Lead. There is precedent for this group delivering against priorities with notable examples including the successful bid to be a Digital Skills Partnership area and the Tutor Bursary and awareness raising programme.

It is proposed that the Panel’s work and delivery is grouped around priority areas identified and that structures are setup accordingly, i.e. Task and Finish group to consider a priority area such as apprenticeships, or a key sector such as construction.

1. **Role of the Chair**

The Chair will be an employer member of the main LEP Board to ensure the Skills Advisory Panel advice is reflected in strategic board discussions. The Chair will be nominated by the LEP Skills Advisory Panel members and ratified by that group.

The Chair’s role will be to:

* lead the Panel meetings, follow governance rules and ensure its smooth and effective operation;
* lead on the development of strategy;
* ensure the Board is operating effectively and within its mandate, that budgets (or project budgets) are appropriately applied and that proper policies and processes are in place and observed;
* ensure effective liaison with all members, and to undertake representation / communication / influencing activity as required according to the business plan or emerging needs;
* comply with any reporting requirements of the accountable body.

The Chair will be supported with the above by the Secretariat.

Arrangements for both the Chair and Vice-Chairs should be reviewed annually.

1. **Role of members**
* Attend Panel meetings up to four times a year and representing the Panel in other forums where possible. Additional meetings and conferences may be convened.
* Act in accordance with the agreed Panel Terms of Reference
* Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda and paperwork in advance and raising any issues for clarification with the SELEP Secretariat
* Contribute input at Panel meetings to help inform Panel discussions at a higher strategic level and for input to the LEP Board
* Act as an ambassador for the SELEP Skills Advisory Panel and related work (e.g. through related events, networks and social media)
* Actively engage with all stakeholders (and sector member is representing), but particularly with the private sector, to capture intelligence; engage their interest; and facilitate their activity in improving skills across the SELEP area
* Contribute to the development of the Panel and its priorities, providing expert advice and guidance to inform the LEP’s priorities for skills
* Help ensure effective planning and management procedures are in place as and when they are necessitated.
* It is fully recognised that Member input and participation is subject to availability and members should appoint delegates where possible
* Members will be fully supported in their role by the SELEP Skills Lead, SAP Support Officer and Data Analyst and SELEP Secretariat. The role is primarily strategic.
1. **Attendance and Quorum**
* Each member of the Board can name one alternate to attend in his / her place who is authorised to take decisions on his / her behalf.
* For the Board to be quorate, at least8 members or nominated alternates should be present at the meeting. This should include the SELEP Board representative/s or their nominated deputy and at least two other private sector members.
1. **Role of Secretariat, Chair and Vice-Chair**

To agree agendas and papers for meetings and related events / workshops Papers for meetings will be made available 5 days in advance where possible and published on the SELEP website.

1. **Frequency of meetings**
* The Panel will meet at least three times a year.
* Meetings will be private but to ensure transparency agenda and minutes will be published on the SELEP website. Events will also be held to engage more widely such as conferences and workshops.
* Extraordinary meetings/ events or workshops relating to a economic sub-theme can be called by the Chair between Board meetings if required.
* Meetings will be held in London as a central location for all attendees.
1. **Rules on decision making and voting**
* By consensus; simple majority; or Chair’s casting vote deployed in that order as necessary.
* Should decisions be taken outside of meetings by Electronic Procedure, the same preference of decision making shall apply. The panel will be informed of decisions being made by electronic procedure at their next meeting.
1. **Conflicts of Interest**

The Panel shall ensure that all conflicts of interest are fully disclosed, as part of the written interview process. Panel Members shall not vote or participate in discussions on any issues on which they have registered an interest and shall declare this at the start of the meeting.

1. **Legal Status**

The Panel is an informal partnership. It does not have legal status to enter into contracts or make any decisions and, if necessary, will act through Essex County Council, a nominated Accountable Body.

1. **Risk management arrangements**

A risk register for the activities of the panel will be produced and mitigation measures will be developed by the SELEP Secretariat and agreed by the Board at an appropriate time.

1. **Public accountability arrangements**

The panel will publish all meeting dates and updates relating to its activity online through the South East LEP website.

For the purposes of transparency, minutes will also be published and disseminated to LEP working groups and networks.

1. **The methodology for revising the Panel’s rules, including planned revision dates** Governance arrangements will be reviewed regularly according to need generated by wider economic drivers and continued information through the analytical toolkit. In lieu of this these Terms of Reference should be reviewed at least annually. Specific changes can be requested via the Chair and discussed at meetings with a view to revision in advance of the next meeting.

1. **The procedure for individual members to leave the Board** Should they not be in a position to complete their duties, members will indicate their intention to leave the panel to the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretariat in advance of their final meeting. Their reasons for leaving will be recorded by the Secretariat. This will then be confirmed at their last meeting and the Chair and SELEP Secretariat will work to recruit a suitable replacement.
2. **The triggers and procedures for dissolving the panel** The Skills Advisory Panel will be re-established or dissolved by a formal resolution if the membership, SELEP and Department for Education agree that any of the following occur:
	1. It has achieved no impact on outcomes or the fulfilment of objectives;
	2. The members decide that they could achieve their objectives by working alone or by working as part of other existing and successful partnerships;
	3. It has been succeeded by another entity;
	4. It’s original purpose and objective has become obsolete

**Appendix A: Skills Advisory Panel and LEP Structure**

1. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762629/Skills_Advisory_Panels-Guidance_on_the_Role_and_Governance.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)