



Attendees

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	MA	Marwa Al-Qadi	East Sussex CC
AE	Alan Elder	EBS Consulting	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
BH	Ben Hook	Rother DC	MS	Martin Searle	FSB
CB	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	PJ	Philip Johnson	Locate East Sussex
CS	Clive Soper	FSB	PSm	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
DS	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	RS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	SBa	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
IS	Ioni Sullivan	East Sussex CC	SBe	Suzanne Bennett	South East LEP
JHa	Jane Hartnell	Hastings BC	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	SH	Cllr Stephen Holt	Eastbourne BC
KF	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings BC	TL	Tony Leonard	Rother DC
KG	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
KT	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC			

Apologies

BS	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	ZN	Cllr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC
DT	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC			

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/tes200504

1. Welcome & introductions

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the second *virtual* meeting of Team East Sussex. **DE** ran through the list of attendees and apologies. **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; no additional interests were declared.

2. Review of previous minutes

- 2.1. **GP** ran through the actions of the previous two meetings (16 Mar and 15 Apr 2020) and noted that all had been completed or are now in progress. **TL** advised that work on the *Hastings & Rother Task Force Economic Review* is currently paused due to the ongoing Coronavirus situation, but they'll continue to liaise with the consultants and bring the item back to TES in due course.
- 2.2. The minutes were approved by the group as accurate records of both meetings.

3. East Sussex Economy Review Plan

- 3.1. **AE** updated the group on the initial steps taken since the proposal to create an *Economy Review Plan* was agreed at the last TES meeting on 15 Apr 2020. The County Council has appointed EBS Consulting to lead the work, which has been divided into three stages. The first phase involves setting the overall context for the Plan – the impact on the East Sussex economy, effects on key business sectors, Government progress against targets, plus any potential opportunities created by situation. Stage two will involve engagement sessions with partners; around 45+ interviews are already planned for the coming weeks, and questions have already been formulated (to be shared in advance). Stakeholder input is vital in defining 'what next' and 'how'. Interviews will run until 15 May, and towards the end of that period there will also be collective meetings of BES and SES to ensure all of the individual points from those groups/sectors have been raised. Stage three will see the coordination and development of an Action Plan that will be brought back to TES on 8 Jun 2020.
- 3.2. TES discussed the above and made the following points:
 - When considering recovery we need to think about "what do we actually want to recover to?"
 - Crawley is one of the hardest-hit towns in the UK with up to 57% unemployment, plus Gatwick Airport potentially losing BA and Virgin. This will have a massive impact on the area and we must be mindful of the knock-on effect on the supply chain in East Sussex.

- We must keep in mind that the inevitable economic downturn is due to a sudden ‘crisis’ rather than a steady recession, so as we move forward we can’t react as we would in normal recession circumstances; our response must be to ‘adapt and change’.
 - Boroughs and Districts have been at the forefront of supporting businesses through this crisis, so their input to this recovery plan is vital.
 - We should consider ‘environment and renewables’ as opportunities moving forward.
 - SELEP’s Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) was developed pre-CV19 and is focused on productivity, so will need to be updated/revised to take account of the recovery work. Note however that all LIS policy from Government is currently on hold. SELEP is gathering intelligence and will consider what the crisis means for us strategically, but any strategy put out by SELEP in the future will need to compliment any new local strategies, such as this Economy Recovery Plan.
 - Businesses will experience cashflow problems as they start to recover. All financial aid from Government is currently aimed at helping businesses survive the immediate crisis, not the longer-term recovery. This will be particularly relevant to the hospitality and tourism industries which will really struggle during the summer months.
- 3.3. Once the Phase 2 engagement is complete, **AE** will present an overview of the key outcomes of the consultation sessions to the next TES meeting on 19 May 2020, and will then aim to work up an Action Plan for the subsequent TES meeting on 8 Jun 2020.

4. Outcomes of the SELEP Board meeting

- 4.1. **GP** noted that SELEP’s first ever virtual meeting, as well as being the inaugural meeting of the new SELEP Ltd Board, went very well. The key outcomes were as follows:
- The new framework agreement, updated terms of reference and other updated policies were all adopted, and the appointment of Co-opted Directors from Jun 2020 was agreed. This means that all of the LEP Review work has finally been completed in full.
 - Flexibility is to be offered on GPF repayments for existing projects, plus a 12-month grace period in charging interest where there are delays to repayments, in order to support our schemes through the crisis. For LGF projects, while extensions have already been offered to some, a blanket 6-month extension was also agreed.
 - In terms of possibly using existing funds for recovery, GPF Round 3 investment is to be held until a full options assessment can be completed (to be presented to the next SELEP Board meeting on 12 Jun 2020). It’s likely that a ‘hybrid’ approach will be favoured, using only part of the pot for recovery, as there are important and viable GPF-R3 schemes readily-available.
 - The proposal to use the remaining Sector Support Fund (SSF) monies to support a CrowdFunder project was rejected. For now, SSF will remain open.
 - The proposal to establish a CV19 Crisis Subcommittee was also rejected as it was deemed unnecessary given the ease with which virtual meetings can be arranged for the full Board.
 - The Coastal Prospectus was approved, but it was noted that information on CV19 impact/recovery will now need to be referenced.
- 4.2. **SBe** advised that since the SELEP meeting, three SSF bids have been submitted with a total ask of £274k. The bids are *Teaching for Growth* bursary scheme extension (£74k), *Buy Local* from SELEP’s rural working group (£70k), and *South East Export Development* from Kent CC (£130k). The SSF pot has only £206k of funding remaining so it’s clearly oversubscribed. The submissions will be appraised by SELEP and recommendations will be presented to the SELEP Board meeting on 12 Jun 2020.

5. Growth Hub update

- 5.1. **IS** gave a brief update on the work of the Growth Hub since the last TES meeting. The Growth Hub is coping well with demand – 100% of interactions are CV19 related, and while fewer queries are being received compared to the initial rush, those queries now tend to be more complex (e.g. from businesses that may have previously fallen through the gaps in available Government funding).

- 5.2. Comms in general have been really good, and the Growth Hub is now trying to reach businesses where English is not their first language.
- 5.3. The tender process for the new 'South East Business Boost' contract (SEBB-2) is currently underway, so should be up-and-running by early Jun 2020.

6. Round table issues & responses / AOB

- 6.1. **GP** asked the group to copy him into any correspondence on CV19 issues so that he can pass matters onto Chris Brodie, to lobby at SELEP, LEP Network or Government level as appropriate. **KG** added that the South East 7 (SE7) partnership is holding weekly calls to prepare for recovery, so he'd be happy to pass anything onto that group as well.
- 6.2. **AC** advised that an open letter to the Prime Minister from the British Chambers of Commerce, with recommendations on a 'phased restart' to the economy, is available to view on the [BCoC website](#).
- 6.3. **CB** noted that information reaching businesses has improved but there's still a lot of important information to communicate, such as the new 'discretionary' support just announced (for those who fell through the business-rates net).
- 6.4. **JHa** confirmed that the discretionary fund will be administered through the District and Borough Councils, and suggested a coordinated approach across the D&Bs where possible (for fairness, consistency and to avoid reinventing wheels in terms of process).
- 6.5. **JHv** advised that a range of points have been submitted to Government on behalf of the Higher Education sector, many of which will have a knock-on effect to the wider economy. **SBa** added that universities will face huge financial black holes as a result of this crisis.
- 6.6. **MS** advised that the FSB is holding UK-wide webinars every other Thursday at 2pm, plus East Sussex is holding networking calls every other Tuesday. The subject of 'resilience', both business and personal, is currently a hot topic.
- 6.7. **PSm** noted that support is available to the Social Enterprise sector, and SELEP will be pushing that support through its Social Enterprise working group. It will be useful to know who/how many are accessing that support in East Sussex.
- 6.8. **PJ** advised that Locate East Sussex has increased its newsletter output. Everyone is invited/encouraged to sign-up to the newsletter via the following link: <http://eepurl.com/ghehlf>. The two most recent editions are also available to view: [LES Newsletter 21 Apr](#) and [LES Newsletter 28 Apr](#).
- 6.9. **SD** commented that the tourism sector is working incredibly hard to find ways to sustain itself in the coming months, but it's critical for the sector that the furloughing scheme continues through the recovery period. **MS** noted that a 6% VAT rate has been suggested by some groups specifically for the visitor economy.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. **GP** advised that an additional virtual TES meeting will be held on 19 May 2020 to review progress on the East Sussex Economy Review Plan.

[Summary of actions](#)

None