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**Minutes of the meeting of the SELEP Accountability Board, held online on Friday, 12 March 2021****Present:**

Sarah Dance	Chair
Cllr David Finch	Essex County Council
Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
Cllr Rodney Chambers	Medway Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Ron Woodley	Southend Borough Council
Cllr Rob Gledhill	Thurrock Council
Marwa Al-Qadi	East Sussex County Council
Richard Bartlett	Barletts Seat Ltd
Suzanne Bennett	SELEP
Amy Bernardo	Essex County Council
Stephen Bishop	Steer
James Brett	Milton Studio
Chris Broome	Sea Change Sussex
Bernard Brown	Member of the public
Adam Bryan	SELEP
Lee Burchill	Kent County Council
Matthew Brown	Colchester Borough Council
Joanne Cable	Medway Council
Paul Chapman	Essex County Council
Katharine Conroy	Kent County Council
Ben Cuddihee	Kent County Council
Howard Davies	SELEP
Richard Dawson	East Sussex County Council
Helen Dyer	SELEP
Anna Eastgate	Thurrock Council
Amy Ferraro	SELEP
Chris Lee	Gladman
Ian Lewis	Opportunity South Essex
Gary MacDonnell	Essex County Council
Steve Mannix	Mercury Theatre
Gerrard McLeave	Thurrock Council
Stephanie Mitchener	Essex County Council (as delegated S151 Officer for the Accountable Body)

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Charlotte Moody	Essex County Council (Legal representative for the Accountable Body)
Rhiannon Mort	SELEP
Lorna Norris	Essex County Council
Sarah Nurden	KMEP
Vivien Prigg	Essex County Council
Tim Rignall	Southend Borough Council
Alex Riley	SELEP
Christopher Seamark	Kent County Council
Peter Shakespear	Essex County Council
Lisa Siggins	Essex County Council
Robert Willis	Essex County Council
Charles Wimborne	Somerlee
Katherine Wyatt	SELEP

## **1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The following apologies were received:

- Rosemary Nunn
- Simon Cook

## **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

An amendment was proposed to the minutes of the previous meeting to make clear the request for a lessons learnt report and the rationale for this work being required.

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 12th February were agreed as an accurate record, subject to the amendment being made as proposed.

## **3 Declarations of Interest**

Sarah Dance declared a non-pecuniary interest as the co-chair of Thames Estuary Production Corridor.

## **4 Questions from the public**

There were none.

## **5 Getting Building Fund funding decision**

The Accountability Board (the Board) received a report from Katherine Wyatt, SELEP Capital Programme Officer and a presentation from Steer, the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the award of £1,113,204 Getting Building Fund (GBF) to the Laindon Place Project (£790,000) and St George's Creative Hub project (£323,204).

Councillor Finch spoke in support of the Laindon Place project, advising that the project supports the aims of the Climate Commission in a drive to increase electric charging points which is one of the steps towards becoming carbon neutral.

Councillor Gledhill also spoke in support of the Laindon Place project, pointing out that electric charging points will be essential and the importance of getting the infrastructure in place now.

Councillor Gough spoke in support of the St George's Creative Hub project, advising that there is no planning risk associated therewith and stressed its importance to the local area and that it is within the aims of the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Agree** the award of £323,204 GBF to the St George's Creative Hub project which has been assessed as presenting high value for money with low/medium certainty
2. **To Agree** the award of £790,000 GBF to the Laindon Place project which has been assessed as presenting high value for money with low/medium certainty, subject to written confirmation by Essex County Council, to confirm:
  - 2.1. Essex Highways have approved the public realm works; and
  - 2.2. The S73 application has been approved for the installation of the electric vehicle charging points.

## **6 GBF (Getting Building Fund) Update**

The Board received a report from Katherine Wyatt the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the overall position of the Getting Building Fund (GBF) capital programme.

Councillor Chambers raised the issue of the risk regarding the second tranche funding due in 2021/22. He acknowledged the seriousness of the risk but also stressed his concern at the fact that this is a Government initiative and that if it did not provide the funding it would itself be subject to a high level of criticism.

He requested that an update be provided to Board members as soon as there was more information available. Rhiannon Mort advised that no formal decision had been made and that it was likely to be made in April/May. She confirmed that Board members would be advised accordingly.

Councillor Gough enquired about the position regarding the next projects in line to receive funding. It was confirmed that a decision in this regard will be made at the next meeting of the Strategic Board.

Councillor Finch spoke in respect of the Jaywick Market and Commercial Space, advising that Essex County Council were working closely with regards thereto with Tendring District Council and that a meeting was due to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> July regarding planning issues. He felt confident that matters would be resolved.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Note** that the Swan Modular Housing Factory Project has met three of four conditions of funding, as detailed in section 6.4 of the report
2. **To Agree** that the final condition against the Swan Modular Housing Factory Project, for the scheme promoters to obtain BOPAS accreditation of the steel fabrication process, should be removed.
3. **To Agree** a further extension of time to the time available for the Jaywick Market and Commercial Space to gain full planning consents to the end of July 2021
4. **To Note** the current forecast spend for the GBF programme for 2020/21 financial year of £20.4 million

## 7 Growing Places Fund funding decisions

The Board received a report from Helen Dyer, SELEP Capital Programme Officer the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the award of £4.5m Growing Places Fund (GPF) funding to the two projects (the Projects) detailed in Appendix B of the report. These projects were included in the GPF project pipeline agreed by Strategic Board on 12 June 2020.

Councillor Woodley advised that work was still ongoing in respect of the No Use Empty South Essex project, and that he was confident that it will be completed.

**Resolved:**

**To approve the award of:**

1. £1m GPF by way of a loan to support the delivery of the No Use Empty South Essex project, as set out in Appendix C, which has been assessed as offering High value for money with High certainty of achieving this; and
2. £3.5m GPF by way of a loan to support the delivery of the Herne Relief Road – Bullockstone Road Improvement Scheme project, as set out in Appendix D, which has been assessed as offering High value for money with Low/Medium certainty of achieving this. Noting that the funding will be transferred in two tranches, with the second tranche (£1.4m) dependent upon a successful outcome of the ongoing planning appeal. If the planning appeal is unsuccessful, the value of the GPF loan will be reduced to £2.1m (tranche 1 only).

## 8 M11 Junction 8 Project

The Board received a report from Howard Davies, SELEP Capital Programme Officer, the purpose of which was to provide an update to the Accountability Board (the Board) on the delivery of the M11 Junction 8 project (the Project).

**Resolved:**

1. **To Agree** the award of an additional £1 million Local Growth Fund (LGF) to the Project which has been assessed as presenting high value for money and high certainty of being achieved; and

2. **To Note** that Essex County Council has now provided confirmation through the S.151 Officer that the full funding package is in place for the Project.

## 9 **Queensway Gateway Road Project Update**

The Board received a report (Appendix B was considered under Exempt items) from Richard Dawson, Head of Service - Economic Development, Skills and Infrastructure, East Sussex County Council and Helen Dyer, the purpose of which was for the Board to receive a further update on the delivery of the Queensway Gateway Road project (the Project).

The Chair stated that she was keen to have as much discussion as possible in the public part of the meeting and that there had been a lot of public interest.

An update will be provided to the Strategic Board in June 2021, on the delivery of the Project.

The Board were updated on the current position in relation to the land acquisition issues which are impacting on the delivery of the final section of the new road and which represent a significant risk to delivery.

The Board received a confidential update from Richard Dawson.

### **Resolved:**

1. **To Note** the latest position on the delivery of the Project; and
2. **To Agree** that an update will be provided to Strategic Board in June 2021 to make them aware of the issues faced by the Project; and
3. **To Agree** that the Board will be provided with a further update on the Project, which sets out a clear delivery plan and associated milestones, at its meeting on 10th September 2021.

## 10 **Bexhill Enterprise Park North project update**

The Board received a report from Helen Dyer, the purpose of which was for the Board to receive a further update on the delivery of the Bexhill Enterprise Park North project (the Project).

The Board were advised that unfortunately the outcome of the planning process was still unknown.

Councillor Glazier acknowledged that the delay in respect of the planning process was unfortunate but spoke in support of Option 3 as set out in the report.

Councillor Gough felt that the Board had established a good principle of a September long stop date in respect of LGF funding.

It was pointed out that the date set out in Option 3 of the report should be 1<sup>st</sup> not 12<sup>th</sup> September.

**Resolved:**

**To Approve** the transfer of the outstanding allocation of £1.5m as a ring-fenced grant with a condition that all funding for the Project (£1.94m) must be returned within 4 weeks of notice of an unsuccessful planning appeal or by 1 September 2021 if full consents are not in place by that date.

**11 A28 Sturry Link Road Project Update**

The Board received a report (Appendix A was considered under Exempt items) from Rhiannon Mort, Capital Programme Manager, the purpose of which was for the Board to receive an update on the delivery of the A28 Sturry Link Road project (the Project), Canterbury, Kent.

Councillor Gough advised the Board that the planning application for the project was considered by Kent County Council planning committee on 9 March but as yet no formal decision notice had been published. He did however advise that indications are that the application was narrowly rejected.

Rhiannon Mort proceeded to clarify the timeline regarding LGF funding, explaining the implications and the associated risks.

There followed a detailed discussion by the Board regarding the risks involved in delaying making a decision regarding funding. It was stated that the money should be spent wisely, as opposed to being spent within Government timeframes. It was felt that a detailed explanation should be provided to Government if the Board decided to delay the funding award. It was also felt that the reputation of the Board was more important than that of individual projects. The Board stressed the importance of the provision of a lessons learnt report.

At the end of the discussion it was felt that an alternative recommendation should be made, which is reflected below.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Agree** that LGF spend on the project remains on hold and the £4.656m LGF currently held by Essex County Council, as Accountable Body, continues to be held by the Accountable Body at the end of the 2020/21 financial year.
2. **To Agree** that planning consent must be in place for the Project by 1 September 2021
3. **To Agree** that a further update is provided to the Board on 2 July 2021 to set out the latest position of the Project.

**12 A13 Widening LGF Funding Decision**

Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing & Transport Infrastructure Projects, Thurrock Council and Rhiannon Mort SELEP Capital Programme Manager, SELEP the purpose of which was to provide an update to the Board on the delivery of the A13 widening project (the Project).

Through the last few meetings, the Board has been made aware of issues which have arisen through the delivery of the Project to date, which have led to an increase in costs to the Project.

Anna Eastgate provided a confidential update on the delivery of the project.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Agree** the award of an additional £1.5m LGF to the Project;
2. **To Note** that significant progress has been made since the last update and the project is entering the last 12 months of construction.

**13 Kent and Medway EDGE Hub – LGF funding decision**

The Board received a report from Helen Dyer, the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the award of additional Local Growth Fund to the Kent and Medway EDGE hub project

**Resolved:**

**To Agree** the award of an additional £901,128 to the Kent and Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise Hub project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with High certainty of achieving this.

**14 Local Growth Fund Additional Funding Award**

This item was not considered by the Board, as no funding was made available to award to the projects listed in the report.

**15 Any other business**

The Chair offered her good wishes to all Members in respect of the forthcoming elections. She offered her personal thanks to Councillor Finch, who will not be standing for re-election, for all his contributions to the Board and wished him well for the future.

The Chair also advised of the sad news that Rhiannon Mort will be leaving SELEP for a new position at Surrey County Council. On behalf of the Board the Chair offered her thanks to Rhiannon for her incredible hard work and wished her well for the future.

**16 Date of Next Meeting**

The Board noted that the next meeting will take place on Friday 2nd July 2021 the venue to be confirmed.

**17 Exclusion of the Public**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**18 Queensway Gateway Road Project CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX B**

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

**Chair**