

Attendees

ACh	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	JHr	James Harris	East Sussex CC
ACo	Alex Colbran	East Sussex CC	JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton
BHk	Ben Hook	Rother DC	KF	Clr Kim Forward	Hastings BC
BHr	Brian Horton	Developers East Sussex (DES)	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
BS	Clr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	MS	Martin Searle	FSB
CB	Clr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	MT	Michael Turner	Environment East Sussex (EES)
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	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	Clr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
HA	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex CC	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
HB	Hannah Brookshaw	Hastings BC	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
IF	Ian Fitzpatrick	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC	SH	Clr Stephen Holt	Eastbourne BC
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	SS	Sally Staples	East Sussex CC
IS	Ioni Sullivan	East Sussex CC			

Apologies

DT	Clr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	KG	Clr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
JB	Jonathan Buckwell	Developers East Sussex (DES)	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
JM	Clr James MacCleary	Lewes DC	ZN	Clr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC

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/tes210125

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; no interests were declared.

2. Previous TES minutes, 7 Dec 2020

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

3. EU Transition: latest updates

- 3.1. **ACh** led a brief discussion to cover any further issues/questions that have been raised since the UK officially left the EU on 1 Jan 2021. TES members highlighted the following points:
 - Delays are occurring in road freight, but this is most likely due to us not being able to fully test the process/systems beforehand, so we'd expect such difficulties to work themselves out.
 - There seems to be some confusion on the requirement for health certificates (for livestock, food and drink etc).
 - Supply issues include a shortage of pallets; this may be related to the above point as pallets are wood origin so require treating and now also require a health certificate.
 - Courier companies may be struggling with the additional paperwork, but note that parcels sent via the Post Office are also subject to the same duties and declarations.
 - Delays caused by customs declarations not being done properly are mostly occurring in those coming *from* the EU to the UK, rather than the other way around.
- 3.2. **ACh** advised that the British Chamber of Commerce has conducted an analysis of the Trade Agreement with the EU, available here: [UK-EU Trade Deal Analysis Jan 2021](#). Virtual events and webinars on UK/EU trade relations will continue in the coming weeks and months, posted on the [Sussex Chamber website](#). There is also information and guidance covering [Post-Brexit Trade Preparation](#).

- 3.3. **ACh** asked TES colleagues to continue providing her with any new/ongoing Brexit-related issues so they can be highlighted to the British Chamber and fed back to Government.

[Action: TES colleagues to continue providing ACh with any new/ongoing Brexit-related issues]

4. Happier Homeworking

- 4.1. **SB** provided an update on this discrete piece of work, originally proposed at a previous TES meeting (Nov 2020) in a discussion on mental health support during the national lockdown. Colleagues at the University of Sussex, along with **GP**, **PJ** and other partners, agreed to look at developing some sort of home/work balance ‘toolkit’, to respond to the technical and mental/physical health challenges of working from home during the ongoing pandemic. This work also ties into the [wellbeing survey](#) conducted by the County Council last summer on the impacts of Covid-19.
- 4.2. Researchers are currently gathering information on what best practice is out there, to consider what we can put into practice here in East Sussex. The expectation is to have something to present to colleagues at the Apr 2021 TES meeting.

5. Towns Fund updates

- 5.1. **PSp** and **HB** each delivered a short presentation on their Towns Fund bids from Lewes DC (for Newhaven) and Hastings BC respectively, both of which have already undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement, including with TES at previous meetings.
- 5.2. For the Newhaven bid, a ‘virtual exhibition’ generated huge interest, with around 1,500 viewers. The bid seeks £24.7m of Towns Fund investment for seven key strategic programmes across the town, unlocking at least £18m in additional match funding.
- 5.3. The ongoing Town Investment Plan for Hastings has enabled the development of a detailed bid to the Towns Fund, with 155 project ideas submitted through stakeholder engagement. These have been distilled into twelve distinct schemes across seven programme themes. The Hastings bid seeks £28.2m of Towns Fund investment, unlocking £85.6m of match funding.
- 5.4. Both the Newhaven and Hastings Towns Fund bids are to be submitted by the end of this week.
- 5.5. **PSp** also provided an update on Newhaven’s bid to the *Future High Street Fund* (FHSF). The bid has three core elements – Creative Hub, Urban Living Room and Wayfinding, Access and Connectivity. Newhaven has been offered in-principle funding of just over £5m, but as that’s equivalent to only 69% of the original ask, it means there’s a shortfall of £2.23m. Lewes DC is currently looking at options to plug the gap. The deadline for FHSF revisions is the end of Feb 2021, with funding decisions expected at the end of Mar 2021.

6. TES subgroup updates

Developers East Sussex (DES)

- 6.1. **BHr** provided an update on the activities of the DES group over the past few months, highlighting the following key points:
- The annual Leaders’ Dinner took place last week as a virtual ‘conversation’ with the Leaders. The event was well attended, and **JB** sends his thanks to all who took part.
 - DES has been holding virtual meetings more frequently in order to respond to the ongoing effects of Covid-19 and Brexit. The response was focused initially on areas of planning, housing starts/completions, Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT), Help to Buy, and the general state of play for getting construction back onsite. Advocacy has now moved toward the importance of *confidence* in the housing market, and the potential for a ‘cliff edge’ with SDLT and Help to Buy. Potential Brexit issues have largely been around skills and materials, which DES is keeping under scrutiny.
 - **BHr** and **JB** have maintained regular engagement with MHCLG and Homes England on market intelligence. MHCLG acknowledged that the weekly calls during the early part of the pandemic were really useful, so calls have continued open-ended on a monthly basis.

- DES has been liaising with the Kent and Essex developer groups on more joined-up work, with joint correspondence exchanged with the Secretary of State, *Robert Jenrick MP*. A further meeting has now been arranged for 18 Feb 2021 with the Minister for Housing, *Chris Pincher MP*.
- Additional work has included feeding into the Economy Recovery Plan (ERP), engagement with Localis, and working with the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for SME Housebuilding.
- DES members are appreciative of the Borough and District Councils' involvement, as it's made it a much more open and collaborative environment. All of the interventions of DES have been positive, and the voice of DES has been much louder over the Covid-19 period.

Environment East Sussex (EES)

6.2. **MT** provided an update on the current work and focus of the EES group, and highlighted the following points:

- Climate change mitigation is the key focus for the group.
- EES is currently working on a 'roadmap to decarbonisation', and is hoping to share this with TES and partners by the summer.
- The [LoCASE programme](#) (Low Carbon Across the South East) has been extended to Spring 2023; 'LoCASE-2' has a £13.9m budget to help SMEs across the SELEP area who are looking at green projects.
- Two bids have been submitted to the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, to support upgrading homes for low income families; one bid has already been approved (from Hastings BC) and the outcome of the second bid is expected shortly.
- EES is developing a 'natural capital' bid to the SELEP Sector Support Fund (SSF), to help accelerate nature-based climate solutions. The bid will be submitted this week.
- The group is helping to deliver projects/actions on the Economy Recovery Plan (ERP), including some transport-related actions.
- Southern Water and South Downs National Park (SDNP) are now properly engaged with EES.

7. Other matters arising

SELEP Strategic Board (extra meeting) 29 Jan 2021

- 7.1. **GP** advised that an additional SELEP Strategic Board meeting will be held this week, specifically to consider endorsing Freeports bids. There are two bids from the SELEP area – Freeport East (covering the Port of Felixstowe in Suffolk and Harwich International Port in Essex) and Thames Freeport (bringing together London Gateway and the Port of Tilbury). A third bid from the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel has been withdrawn, as they've chosen instead to develop a submission for a Global Trade & Innovation (GTI) Zone.
- 7.2. **PSp** noted that Newhaven is not submitting a bid at this time, but if there is a further/extended round with a change in the process for smaller ports, then we'd certainly consider it. **RS** agreed to flag this point at the Strategic Board meeting.

Current national lockdown

- 7.3. TES members briefly discussed the most recent (and ongoing) national lockdown, to consider any new impacts.
- 7.4. **CE** observed that a lack of energy levels is an unforeseen side effect, where low motivation and a general weariness is setting into businesses, particularly those that are barely holding on and will struggle further when the Government's business support packages come to an end. The plea to Government is simply to continue with financial support for as long as possible.
- 7.5. **CB** commented that whilst a large number of smaller businesses have now moved online, they still require advice and guidance – not on how to move online in the first place, but on how to make the most out of the internet once they're there. **JHr** advised that the County Council is considering putting together a bid to SELEP's Covid-19 Business/Skills Recovery Fund to provide such digital advice, and will report back if the proposition is developed any further.

8. TES round table / AOB

- 8.1. **CB** asked whether TES could consider 'equalities' at a future TES meeting, i.e. how lockdown/furlough has affected the employment of minority groups, so that we're addressing the issue head-on as the economy rebuilds. **GP** noted that diversity is a recurring subject in his regular conversations with Julie Kapsalis (C2C LEP) and Sarah Dance (SELEP), so suggested he raise the matter with them so it's addressed at LEP level.

[Action: GP to discuss the subject of equalities (how lockdown/furlough has affected the employment of minority groups) with the Chair/Deputy Chair of C2C LEP and SELEP]

- 8.2. **CE** advised that Eastbourne and District Enterprise Agency Ltd (EDEAL) is providing lots of advice and support to help businesses survive, available free of charge. More information on the [EDEAL website](#).
- 8.3. **MS** reminded the group that many businesses in events (and their supply chains) are still not qualifying for Government financial support, so it's incumbent on us all to support *local* businesses to rebalance the economy. We can also support local business directories, such as [Click It Local](#).
- 8.4. **ACh** advised that the Kickstart scheme, which provides funding for employers to create new job placements for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit, is to be opened up to businesses that want to apply to Government directly rather than through a 'gateway' provider. It's not currently known precisely how DWP will do this, so for the moment **ACh** would encourage employers to continue using gateway organisations. **PSm** also flagged that we're not sure whether providing employability support to those on the Kickstart scheme (trying to link participants to existing programmes) counts as 'double funding', and DWP has not yet given a definitive response.

Summary of actions

- 3.3 TES colleagues to continue providing **ACh** with any new/ongoing Brexit-related issues.
- 8.1 **GP** to discuss the subject of equalities (how lockdown/furlough has affected the employment of minority groups) with the Chair/Deputy Chair of C2C LEP and SELEP.