

Attendees

ACo	Alex Colbran	East Sussex CC	JM	Clr James MacCleary	Lewes DC
BHo	Ben Hook	Rother DC	KG	Clr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
BP	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	KT	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
BS	Clr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	MC	Matthew Chenery	East Sussex CC
CB	Clr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	MS	Martin Searle	FSB
CS	Clive Soper	FSB	PSm	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
DSH	Dan Shelley	East Sussex College	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
DSp	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	RS	Clr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
DT	Clr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	SBa	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	SBe	Suzanne Bennett	South East LEP
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	SS	Sally Staples	East Sussex CC
JHa	James Harris	East Sussex CC	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	ZE	Zoe England	East Sussex CC

Apologies

ACh	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	JB	Jonathan Buckwell	Developers East Sussex (DES)
BHe	Beth Heritage	Wealden DC	KF	Clr Kim Forward	Hastings BC
DG	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion

1. Welcome and 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, 27 Sep 2021

- 2.1. **GP** ran through the actions of the previous meeting and confirmed they were all completed.
- 2.2. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. LEP Review 2021

- 3.1. **SBe** advised that publication of the *Levelling Up White Paper* has been further pushed back into the new year, so nothing has been confirmed and there is very little updated information to give at this time. She reiterated what we know so far about the required changes to SELEP's operation:
 - A concentrated suite of activities/priorities from 1 Apr 2022 has been tentatively agreed, to be confirmed at the SELEP Strategic Board meeting in Mar 2022. Some areas of work will be ceased, such as support for the Housing and Skills groups. There will also be reduced comms work. SELEP is currently looking at transitional plans for these areas, to handover to other groups where possible.
 - The Secretariat team has been going through a redundancy consultation period, and redundancy notices will be issued in the next couple of weeks. The size of the team will be reduced by 40% compared to Apr 2021.
 - SELEP has now been invited to apply for the second tranche of this year's core funding, which was previously held back by Government. There is no confirmation of next year's funding at all, but a balanced budget for 2022/23 has been approved by the SELEP Accountability Board, based on funds that are already secure (i.e. covered by reserves) and making no assumptions around any further incoming funding.
- 3.2. **GP** gave his sincere thanks to Secretariat team on behalf of TES, and particularly those under notice of redundancy.

4. Appointment of SELEP Directors

- 4.1. **GP** ran through the paper provided by **DE**, setting out TES's options for choosing its representation on the SELEP Strategic Board for 2022/23.

4.2. In terms of private sector representation, the group agreed that continuity is essential during this time of uncertainty, with both TES and SELEP needing to maintain as much of a 'business as usual' operation as possible. It was therefore decided that TES would **reappoint** its three existing SELEP Directors (**GP**, **ACh** and **CS**) for another term. However, instead of committing them to another full two-year tenure, *they'll be reappointed as SELEP Directors for up to 12 months only*, aligned to the terms of private sector TES members (which the TES Board agreed to extend for up to a year at its last meeting on 27 Sep 2021). This means that when TES eventually conducts its open recruitment process during 2022, the TES Board can consider this again and can either ask **GP**, **ACh** and **CS** to continue their SELEP tenures to their full two-year terms, or nominate new SELEP Directors at that time. The above is set out as Option 2 in the accompanying paper.

[Decision: GP, ACh and CS are to be reappointed as SELEP Directors for a further 12-month term from 1 Mar 2022; these tenures will be aligned to TES Board membership, which has been extended for up to a year (to the end of Feb 2023) for all private sector TES members]

4.3. Regarding the appointment of co-opted SELEP Directors, **SBe** confirmed that East Sussex will be asked to nominate a local authority co-opt for 2022/23, and SELEP will not stipulate any specific areas of focus for the nomination (subject to SELEP Strategic Board approval). **CB** put herself forward for consideration, endorsed by the other Borough and District members of TES, and then **agreed by the TES Board as a whole**. The appointment will need to be approved by the SELEP Strategic Board in Mar 2022, after which **CB** will be registered as a SELEP Director for one year from 1 Apr 2022.

[Decision: CB will be put forward to SELEP as the East Sussex local authority co-opted nomination for 2022/23, to be appointed as a SELEP Director for one year from 1 Apr 2022]

4.4. **GP** reminded the group that the Higher Education, Further Education and Social Enterprise co-opted members of the SELEP Strategic Board are nominated by the U9 Working Group, the Skills Working Group and the Social Enterprise Working Group respectively. **PS** confirmed that as Chair of the Social Enterprise Working Group, she is expecting to be put forward again as the Social Enterprise co-opt for 2022/23 (for decision at the Mar 2022 SELEP Strategic Board).

5. Business East Sussex (BES) Priorities

5.1. **DSp** delivered a presentation on the revised Business East Sussex (BES) priorities that the BES Steering Group has been developing over the past twelve months, to support sustainable growth in the East Sussex economy as we move towards a 'new normal'.

5.2. In terms of immediate priorities, business support is mostly focussed in the areas of the pandemic; Brexit; business skills; debt; international trade; furlough; hospitality; and tourism.

5.3. In the longer term, the following seven priorities have been identified:

- Productivity: addressing East Sussex's low productivity levels.
- Innovation: increasing innovation support to drive sustainable growth.
- Business Skills: helping businesses to upskill and develop pathways for career progression.
- Net Zero: supporting local SMEs to implement reductions in carbon use.
- Business Support Ecosystems: ensuring a supportive environment for entrepreneurialism in East Sussex.
- International Trade: ensuring SMEs are supported on trading with the EU and the rest of the world.
- Access to Finance: helping SMEs access the full range of financial options available.

5.4. **CB** queried why 'connectivity' is not mentioned as a priority, specifically in terms of Broadband coverage. **DSp** clarified that while this list highlights the highest priorities identified by businesses, they are not the only issues that might arise from time to time, so the list is flexible to accommodate these.

6. Sussex Tourism and Culture Recovery Group

6.1. **SS** delivered a presentation on the Sussex Tourism and Culture Recovery Group (STCRG), which was established in Sep 2020 at the instruction of the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF), and is made up of the South Downs National Park (SDNP); Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) including Visit Brighton; West Sussex County Council (WSCC) including Experience West Sussex; and East Sussex County Council

(ESCC), Visit Eastbourne and Visit 1066 Country. The group was tasked with supporting the economic recovery of the Tourism and Cultural sectors through *pan-Sussex* working, supporting the work of existing Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and destination marketing organisations by identifying what added value a pan-Sussex group can uniquely bring to the table.

- 6.2. Some of the next steps for the STCRG will include implementing the recommendations/actions identified in the STCRG Visitor Economy Report, creating a Sussex Tourism Leadership Group (STLG) to drive forward the vision, and exploring additional funding opportunities.
- 6.3. **DT** advised that Eastbourne BC is currently exploring ways of marketing the town as a 'covid-safe' town, and would be happy to share the details with any interested colleagues.

7. Funding programmes: updates

- 7.1. **ZE** confirmed that the list of successful *UK Community Renewal Fund* (UKCRF) project bids was eventually published by the Government on 3 Nov 2021. East Sussex received a total of £2.5m for five projects. Grant agreements are now being produced for each of the project sponsors.
- 7.2. **IG** queried whether the Sustainable Wine & Cultural Tourism UKCRF project will stretch any further than Lewes; **ZE** clarified that the project will initially be piloted in the Lewes area, as per the key focus and priority of the fund, but as it's being delivered by Plumpton College, Sussex Modern and South Downs National Park Authority, the benefits of the programme (and its successor application) will have a broader scope and reach a wider area. **CE** added that following last year's East Sussex Visitor Summit, an ACES survey (with more than 3,000 responses) asked what people look for in a staycation, and 'viticulture/food/drink' was in the top 3 answers.
- 7.3. **JHa** commented that although UKCRF was oversubscribed, any unsuccessful applicants should note that the Government's *Shared Prosperity Fund* (SPF) will be launched sometime next year.
- 7.4. **PSp** provided an update on the *Levelling Up Fund* (LUF), giving details of the successful bids from Lewes DC (£12.6m for the Capturing the Value of the Catch programme in Newhaven) and Eastbourne BC (£19.8m for three core projects linking town centre regeneration with a strengthened visitor economy). **RD** added that ESCC was also awarded £7.9m of LUF funding for its Exceat Bridge project, which means a total of more than £40m of LUF investment into East Sussex, with projects proposed to be delivered by Mar 2024.
- 7.5. **DE** provided a brief update on the *SELEP Sector Support Fund* (SSF), highlighting two projects – Building Back Better and Accelerating Nature Based Climate Solutions – for which ESCC is the lead authority. Both projects are submitting Project Change Requests to SELEP to extend the projects by twelve months and six months respectively. **The TES Board endorsed the Project Change Requests for both SSF projects.**
- 7.6. **RD** and **ACo** provided an update on the *Growing Places Fund* (GPF), *Local Growth Fund* (LGF) and *Getting Building Fund* (GBF) programmes, highlighting in particular those projects currently considered 'high risk' by SELEP. High risk projects include Queensway Gateway Road (LGF), Bexhill Enterprise Park North (LGF) and UTC Maritime and Sustainable Technology Hub (GBF). Full details are given in the Stakeholder Reports and in this week's SELEP Strategic Board papers, and progress updates continue to be provided to the SELEP Accountability Board on a regular basis.
- 7.7. **ACo** also flagged the cancellation of our Fast-Track Business Solutions project from the GBF programme. This was due to the project not as yet obtaining planning permission within the already extended SELEP timescales, meaning that the project has effectively 'timed out'. It still remains a viable project going forward, but **SBe** made it clear that it would not be reinstated in the funding stream unless there is another open call for projects. **GP** commented that he had written to Sea Change Sussex seeking an explanation for the project not meeting deadlines, and felt that the response he received was (at the time of the TES meeting) not satisfactory.
- 7.8. However, as a result of the funding being returned from the Fast-Track project, there are two other East Sussex projects on the GBF pipeline – Food Street, Eastbourne (£100k GBF bid) and Seven Sisters Visitor Infrastructure Uplift (£200k GBF bid) – that have now been asked to come forward and submit business cases for consideration at the next Accountability Board meeting in Feb 2022.

8. University of Brighton – Eastbourne Campus

- 8.1. **JHv** provided an update on the University of Brighton’s proposal to close its campus in Eastbourne. The university is trying to consolidate and co-locate its schools, looking at a number of options. The option to relocate the Eastbourne campus to Falmer became possible after Virgin Active moved out of its site at Falmer, allowing for the expansion of the university at that site.
- 8.2. TES members all expressed their collective disappointment at the proposed closure, but more importantly their deep concerns about the impact it will have on Eastbourne – economic and skills impacts, changes to the demographic of the town as young people are drawn away, future use of the redundant buildings. **DT** in particular suggested that the overall impact on the local economy will be devastating.
- 8.3. The consultation on the closure of the campus remains open until 10 Dec 2021, and everyone is encouraged to respond. **GP** agreed to provide a response on behalf of TES via a formal letter.

[Action: GP to provide a response to the University of Brighton’s consultation on the closure of its Eastbourne campus via a formal letter on behalf of TES]

- 8.4. **JHv** stated that the University of Brighton will continue to work with colleagues in East Sussex, and will continue to be active participants on our Business and Skills forums (BES and SES). The university is not withdrawing from East Sussex altogether, just relocating. **GP** commented that, at their invitation, he had arranged a meeting for TES business colleagues with the Vice Chancellor and senior management team of the University of Brighton, where they discussed the implications of the campus’s closure and successfully sought positive ways to ameliorate its impact and increase interaction between Sussex businesses, the third sector and the university. It was agreed that regular consultative meetings would take place after the University of Brighton has made its final decision on the Eastbourne move.
- 8.5. **JHv** advised that a working group is being put together to look at the future of the Eastbourne sites, and agreed to liaise with TES on involvement (should any TES members be interested in joining the group). **JHv** will also keep TES fully informed of the group’s progress.

[Action: JHv to liaise with GP on whether any TES members wish to join the University of Brighton’s proposed working group looking at the future of their Eastbourne sites]

9. SELEP Strategic Board, 10 Dec 2021

- 9.1. **SBe** ran through the agenda items going to this week’s SELEP Strategic Board meeting, which will include: moving to a new SELEP model, including a discussion on appointing co-optes (already covered above); minor updates to the SELEP Assurance Framework; succession planning (the Chair and Deputy Chair have agreed to extend their terms for twelve months); a presentation from Transport East; capital programme updates; a presentation on the SECEN Statement of Intent (already seen by TES); and Sector Support Fund updates.

10. Additional updates and stakeholder reports (for info)

- 10.1. **DE** highlighted the BES update, which includes a link to a pamphlet celebrating ethnic minority led enterprises in East Sussex, demonstrating the equality and diversity work going on in the county, and the EES update which includes a summary of the recent net zero strategies and COP26 messages.

11. TES round table / AOB

- 11.1. **GP** led a brief discussion on the possibility of returning to face-to-face meetings. The group agreed that the next meeting in Jan 2022 is too soon, but the subsequent meeting in Mar 2022 may be appropriate. We’ll need to look at venue options that are covid compliant (e.g. large enough to maintain social distancing) and possibly investigate hybrid options too, and whilst we acknowledge that additional restrictions could be reintroduced at any time over the next few months, for now we’ll tentatively consider the Mar 2022 TES meeting to be a face-to-face meeting. The group further agreed that the longer-term expectation will be to alternate future meetings between virtual and in-person.
- 11.2. **DSH** advised that East Sussex College has now launched its Strategic Plan. An Ofsted inspection has also taken place recently, which went extremely well (official report to be published in due course).

JHa noted that this is **DSh**'s last TES meeting, as he's moving to East Kent College in the new year, and thanked him on behalf of TES for his positive contribution to skills agenda in East Sussex.

- 11.3. **BP** advised that Let's Do Business Group (LDBG) has won two awards: Enterprise Support Organisation of the Year at the National Enterprise Network Awards 2021, announced on 26 Nov 2021, and Professional Service of the Year at the Sussex Business Awards 2021, held on 2 Dec 2021.
- 11.4. **GP** closed the meeting by thanking all of the officers who support TES for their work behind the scenes throughout the year; he also thanked all of the TES members and colleagues for their continued contribution.

Summary of decisions:

- 4.2 **GP, ACh** and **CS** are to be reappointed as SELEP Directors for a further 12-month term from 1 Mar 2022; these tenures will be aligned to TES Board membership, which has been extended for up to a year (to the end of Feb 2023) for all private sector TES members.
- 4.3 **CB** will be put forward to SELEP as the East Sussex local authority co-opted nomination for 2022/23, to be appointed as a SELEP Director for one year from 1 Apr 2022.

Summary of actions:

- 8.3 **GP** to provide a response to the University of Brighton's consultation on the closure of its Eastbourne campus via a formal letter on behalf of TES.
- 8.5 **JHv** to liaise with **GP** on whether any TES members wish to join the University of Brighton's proposed working group looking at the future of their Eastbourne sites.