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**Minutes of the meeting of the SELEP Accountability Board, held in Castalia Room, The Nucleus Business and Innovation Centre, Brunel Way, Dartford DA1 5GA on Thursday, 13 April 2023**

**Present:**

Cllr Lesley Wagland	Essex County Council
Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Rodney Chambers	Medway Council
Cllr Stephen George	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Cllr Mark Coxshall	Thurrock Council

**Also Present:**

Chris Broome	Sea Change Sussex
Bernard Brown	Member of the public
Lee Burchill	Kent County Council
Paul Chapman	Essex County Council
Kerry Clarke	Kent County Council
Ellie Clow	SELEP
Alex Colbran	East Sussex County Council
Howard Davies	SELEP
Richard Dawson	East Sussex County Council
Helen Dyer	SELEP
Zoe Gordon	SELEP
Jessica Jagpal	Medway Council
Keri Lawrence	SELEP
Gary MacDonnell	Essex County Council
Stephanie Mitchener	Essex County Council
Kevin Munnelly	Thurrock Council
Michael Neumann	Essex County Council (as delegated S151 Officer for the Accountable Body)
Lorna Norris	Essex County Council
Huw Oxburgh	Reporter
Tim Rignall	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Steve Samson	Kent County Council
Freya Shelley	Southend-on-Sea City Council
Lisa Siggins	Essex County Council
Steven Stott	Member of the public

## 1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

- Cllr Kevin Bentley substituted by Cllr Lesley Wagland
- Simon Cook
- Rosemary Nunn had tendered her resignation and is no longer a member of the Board

Cllr Roger Gough acted as Chair in the absence of an appointed Chair of the Board.

## 2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 27 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

## 3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Stephen George declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7, in that his brother-in-law sits on the Board at Sanctuary Housing Association.

## 4 Questions from the Public

Zoe Gordon, SELEP Business Engagement and Comms Manager, advised the Board that one Public Question had been received. She read the question and response to the Board.

### **Submission by Hastings Lines Commuter Group**

“When will Queensway Gateway Road be fully open (for clarification directly connected to A21)?

As this is affecting the amount of time it is taking for commuters to reach train stations.”

### *Response provided by East Sussex County Council:*

Work is ongoing to complete the Queensway Gateway Road project. Currently financial and contractual discussions are being undertaken between East Sussex County Council and Sea Change Sussex and until these matters are concluded we are not in a position to state a definitive timeline to the public on the completion of the project.

East Sussex County Council recognise the issues that this is causing to the public and the business community and remains committed to resolving the matter with Sea Change Sussex as soon as possible.

### *Response from SELEP/Accountability Board:*

SELEP and the Accountability Board continue to closely monitor delivery of the Queensway Gateway Road project and will take appropriate action, in

accordance with the Service Level Agreement in place between SELEP Ltd, East Sussex County Council and Essex County Council (as Accountable Body), should the project no longer be deliverable in accordance with the agreed Business Case.

## 5 SELEP Operations update

The Board received a report from Amy Ferraro, SELEP Governance Officer which was presented by Zoe Gordon, the purpose of which was for the Board to be updated on the operational activities carried out by the Secretariat to support both this Board and the Strategic Board. The report included an update on risk management, compliance with the Assurance Framework and performance against governance KPIs.

Zoe gave the Board an overview of the key points in the report, with a particular focus on the risks arising from the announcement by Government on their intention to no longer fund LEPs from April 2024. The identified risks include retention of both staff and Board members. Zoe indicated that there was a lot of work to be done in order to understand and manage the operational impact of the decision by Government.

Cllr Keith Glazier stressed that more guidance was required from Government with regard to the transition of LEP activities to local authorities to help inform local discussions in this regard.

There was also a commitment from local partners to work together to achieve a smooth transition, whilst also seeking to safeguard the expertise of those involved in SELEP's work where possible.

### **Resolved:**

1. **To Note** the proposed updates to the Assurance Framework (Appendix A) at Section 5 of the report.
2. **To Note** the update on Assurance Framework compliance monitoring and Governance KPIs at Appendices B and C of the report.
3. **To Note** the changes to the Risk Register at Appendix D of the report; and
4. **To Note** the updated Public Questions Policy at Appendix E of the report.

## 6 Finance Update

The Board received a report from Lorna Norris, Senior Finance Business Partner, the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the updated forecast to the 2022/23 budget including specific grants. In addition, an update on the funding position for 2023/24 was provided.

The Board's attention was drawn to the fact that in the March announcement of the Government's budget, it was confirmed that no further Core Funding would be made available for LEPs after 2023/24; the Government are currently

engaging with LEPs and Local Authorities to understand the impact of no future funding, with an expectation that LEP functions are transitioned across to Local Authorities.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Approve** the updated 2022/23 SELEP revenue forecast budget set out in Table 1 of the report, including the specific funds summarised in Table 3 of the report.
2. **To Approve** the appropriation of £33,993 of the Sector Support Fund to the Operational Reserve to support the on-going operations of SELEP.
3. **To Approve** the appropriation of £927 of the Energy Strategy grant to the Operational Reserve to support the on-going operations of SELEP, specifically, towards Net Zero activities.
4. **To Note** the update on the 2023/24 funding position.

## 7 **Getting Building Fund Capital Programme update**

The Board received a report from Helen Dyer, SELEP Capital Programme Manager, the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the overall position of the Getting Building Fund (GBF) capital programme. The report included an update on those projects which have received approval for retention of GBF funding beyond March 2022 and provided an update on GBF spend to date.

In addition, the report set out requests from eight projects to retain their GBF funding allocations beyond March 2023, with all projects forecasting full GBF spend by 30 June 2023.

The Board were advised that funding owed by Swan Housing had now been returned to Essex County Council. Cllr Lesley Wagland expressed her thanks in this regard and acknowledged the hard work of all those involved.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Note** the current forecast spend across the GBF programme for the 2022/23 financial year of £17.238m, as set out in Table 1 of the report.
2. **To Agree** the reported GBF spend on project delivery in Q1, Q2 and Q3 2022/23 of £7.373m, as set out in Table 1 and Appendix A of the report.
3. **To Agree** that Essex County Council (as responsible Upper Tier Local Authority) can have an extension until 12 April 2023 to repay the outstanding balance of £3.071m GBF following the removal of the Swan Modular Housing Factory project from the GBF programme. Noting that an extension request would have been brought forward prior to the 31 March 2023 (original repayment date) if the Board meeting had gone ahead as scheduled on 10 March 2023.
4. **To Note** the update on the Better Queensway project.

5. **To Agree** that the GBF funding allocation can be retained against the following projects for a further maximum period of 3 months (to 30 June 2023):

- 5.1. No Use Empty South Essex
- 5.2. ASELA LFFN – Phase 3
- 5.3. Better Queensway
- 5.4. Extension of full-fibre broadband rollout in Essex to reach rural and hard to reach premises
- 5.5. Tindal Square, Chelmsford
- 5.6. Jaywick Market and Commercial Space
- 5.7. Tendring Bikes and Cycle Infrastructure
- 5.8. Enterprise Centre for Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park

6. **To Note** the deliverability and risk assessment, as set out in Appendix C of the report.

## 8 Local Growth Fund Programme Update

The Board received a report from Helen Dyer, the purpose of which was for the Board to consider the overall position of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) capital programme, as part of SELEP's Growth Deal with Government.

The Board were advised that there continued to be issues with a lot of post scheme completion Monitoring and Evaluation reports outstanding.

Helen also advised that Thurrock Council had failed to submit their quarterly reporting in advance of the meeting and therefore the figures shown in Table 1 were based on their previous reporting submission.

Cllr Keith Glazier provided an update on the status of East Sussex County Council's post scheme completion Monitoring and Evaluation reports, with outstanding reports expected to be submitted to SELEP during Q1 2023/24.

Cllr Roger Gough indicated that additional resource had been allocated to the completion of the outstanding Kent County Council post scheme completion Monitoring and Evaluation reports, with an expectation that all outstanding reports will be completed and submitted to SELEP within 6 months.

Cllr Mark Coxshall provided an update on the Purfleet Centre project and indicated that it was important to look at what had been delivered to date and to understand why further benefits had not yet been forthcoming. These conversations will also involve Homes England as the Purfleet Centre project has also benefited from Housing Infrastructure Fund funding. A further update on the project will be provided at a future meeting. Cllr Mark Coxshall also gave an update on the A13 Widening project and indicated that final delivery costs should be known by the next Board meeting. He also acknowledged the importance of learning lessons from project delivery which can be applied to future schemes.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Agree** the updated total planned LGF spend on project delivery in 2022/23 of £13.5m excluding DfT retained schemes and increasing to £13.824m including DfT retained schemes, as set out in Table 2 and Appendix A of the report.

2. **To Agree** the reported LGF spend on project delivery in Q1, Q2 and Q3 2022/23 of £8.784m, as set out in Table 1 and Appendix A of the report.

3. **To Agree** the updated completion dates for the following projects which have experienced a delay of more than 6 months:

3.1. University of Essex Parkside - Phase 3 - project completion delayed from December 2022 to September 2023.

3.2. Hailsham/Polegate/Eastbourne Movement and Access Package – project completion delayed from March 2023 to March 2025.

4. **To Note** the deliverability and risk assessment, as set out in Appendix D of the report.

5. **To Note** the list of outstanding post scheme completion Monitoring and Evaluation reports, as set out in Appendix G of the report.

## 9 **Beaulieu Park Station LGF Project Update Report**

The Board received a report from Gary Macdonnell, Network Coordinator, Essex County Council and Howard Davies, SELEP Capital Programme Officer, the purpose of which was for the Board to receive an update on the Beaulieu Park Station Local Growth Fund (LGF) project (the Project) which has been identified as High risk.

Gary Macdonnell gave the Board a verbal update regarding progress and advised that the project is progressing well with five initial track possessions having already occurred. He advised that the second implementation agreement referenced in the report had not yet been signed but that positive meetings had been held with Network Rail. Internal governance was now well advanced, and it was hoped that the process would be completed soon.

He acknowledged that there remains a risk regarding the security of the HIF funding, but steps have been taken since the last meeting to mitigate this risk. Formal approval of the proposed approach remains outstanding, but the approval process is progressing well.

Howard Davies proceeded to highlight the risks from SELEP's perspective which included bridging the funding gap on the Chelmsford North East Bypass project to safeguard the HIF funding and risks around track possessions particularly over the festive period 2023/24. Gary Macdonnell stated that he was optimistic

with regards to the required festive track possessions but that these were not yet confirmed.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Note** the update on the Project and the risks to project delivery which have been identified.

2. **To Note** a further update on the Project will be brought to the June 2023 Board meeting which will include confirmation of a complete funding package for both elements of the HIF project and Government approval for the change in funding approach and an update on the required track possessions.

## 10 **Queensway Gateway Road LGF Project Update**

The Board received a report 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 progress update on the delivery of the Queensway Gateway Road Local Growth Fund (LGF) project (the Project).

Richard Dawson indicated that since the publication of the report, Sea Change Sussex had submitted an amended drawing package for review by East Sussex County Council and National Highways. However, the required traffic and road signs package has yet to be submitted. This package will be required to enable the final technical assessment to be undertaken.

Helen Dyer provided an update on risks from a SELEP perspective, with particular reference to the risks associated with the ongoing uncertainty regarding the funding package for the remaining elements of the Project.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Note** the latest update position on the delivery of the Project.

2. **To Agree** that the Board will be provided with a further update on the Project at its meeting in June 2023.

## 11 **A28 Sturry Link Road LGF Project Update**

The Board received a report from Kerry Clarke, Lee Burchill, Kent County Council and Howard Davies, the purpose of which was for the Board to receive an update on the A28 Sturry Link Road (LGF) project (the Project), which has been identified as High Risk.

Kerry Clarke advised that an issue with the dependent Sturry development had impacted the delivery of the project. There are ongoing discussions between the landowner and developer of the Sturry development site (as set out in the confidential appendix), with a view to the issue being resolved by the end of June 2023. However, Kent County Council have had to delay publication of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) until the issue has been resolved, as it is difficult to confirm the need for the land without confirmation that the Sturry

development is coming forward. Due to this delay, an extension to the deadline for completion of the required land acquisition to April 2025 is required.

Howard Davies gave the Board an overview of the risks from SELEP's perspective as set out in the report and explained the options available to the Board.

Cllr Keith Glazier addressed the Board, proposing support for option 1 as set out in the report.

**Resolved:**

1. **To Agree** to extend the deadline for the completion of the required land acquisition to 7 April 2025, noting that it was agreed at the November 2021 Board meeting that the remaining LGF funding would be transferred to Kent County Council on condition that the land acquisition be completed by 31 August 2023.

2. **To Agree** to extend the completion date of the Project from 31 December 2025 to 31 December 2026, which will align delivery of the Project with the housing developments.

3. **To Note** that a further update on the Project will be provided at the June 2023 Board meeting which will include:

- 3.1. an update on progress towards the completion of the land acquisition process; and
- 3.2. an update on land negotiations on the Sturry development.

**12 London Gateway/Stanford le Hope and Grays South LGF Project Update**

The Board received a report from Kevin Munnelly, Assistant Director Regeneration and Place Delivery, Thurrock Council and Howard Davies, the purpose of which was for the Board to receive an update on the delivery of the following high risk Local Growth Fund (LGF) projects which are being delivered by Thurrock Council: London Gateway/Stanford le Hope and Grays South.

Kevin Munnelly gave the Board a verbal update and in particular covered the impact of the ongoing Government Intervention and Section 114 notice on the delivery of two ongoing projects, as set out in the report.

Kevin confirmed that the Inner Circle Consulting led review of the wider Grays South Regeneration Area scheme, the project readiness review and the GRIP4 report from Network Rail are all currently in draft form. Noting that it is intended that these reports will form the basis of the Grays South project update to the Board in June 2023.

Kevin also committed to bringing forward a timeline for the revised London Gateway/Stanford le Hope Business Case to the June 2023 Board meeting.



Howard Davies then gave the Board SELEP's perspective on both projects drawing attention to the fact that Thurrock Council have not complied with the timeline as imposed by the Board in September 2022 and detailing the recommendations made in respect of this issue. He also drew the Board's attention to the various risks associated with both projects in question.

Cllr Mark Coxshall spoke in support of both projects, requesting the continued support of the Board. He also referenced the importance of learning from previous experience, particularly in relation to the Grays South project, and spoke in support of placing LGF spend on the project on hold until the future direction of the project and its' ongoing compliance with the SELEP Assurance Framework can be confirmed.

### **Resolved:**

#### London Gateway/Stanford le Hope

1. **To Agree** to not automatically enact the removal and reallocation of the LGF funding from the project despite the requirements of the decision taken by the Board in September 2022 not being met. Noting that in November 2022, Thurrock Council indicated that an extension to the deadline for consideration of the revised Business Case would be needed, with the decision due to come forward at the postponed March 2023 Board meeting.

2. **To Agree** that a request for an extension to the deadline for consideration of the revised Business Case for the project can be presented at the June 2023 Board.

3. **To Note** that a further update on delivery of the project will be brought to the June 2023 Board meeting, which will include an update on progress with Phase 2 design options.

#### Grays South

1. **To Note** the latest position on the delivery of the project.

2. **To Agree** that the unspent £5.36m LGF funding, currently held by Thurrock Council, be placed on hold due to deliverability and affordability concerns and should remain on hold until it can be demonstrated that the project continues to comply with the requirements of the Assurance Framework.

3. **To Note** that the Board will be provided with a further update on the project, which will include an update on the progress of the current review process, including an indication of the findings at its meeting in June 2023.

## **13 Growing Places Fund Update**

The Board received a report from Helen Dyer, the purpose of which was to update the Board on the latest position of the Growing Places Fund (GPF) Capital Programme.

Cllr Keith Glazier advised the Board that work is underway with regards to plans for the required review of the Eastbourne Fisherman's Quayside and Infrastructure Development project delivery partners financial position and consideration of the ongoing viability of the proposed revised repayment schedule to ensure that updates are provided to SELEP and the Board as required..

**Resolved:**

1. **To Note** the updated position on the GPF programme.
2. **To Agree** that, despite East Sussex County Council defaulting on the agreed repayment schedule for the Sovereign Harbour project, interest should not be charged on the overdue amount (£3.575m) for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as required under the terms of the loan agreement. Noting that the default only arose as a result of the postponement of the 10 March 2023 Board meeting.
3. **To Agree** the proposed revised repayment schedule for the Sovereign Harbour project (as set out in Section 6 of the report) and agree that interest will not be charged on the remaining balance of the loan at this time subject to compliance with the proposed revised repayment schedule.
4. **To Agree** the proposed revised repayment schedule for the Eastbourne Fisherman's Quayside and Infrastructure Development project (as set out in Section 7 of the report), subject to provision of annual updates on the ongoing viability of the repayment schedule and agree that despite defaulting on the agreed repayment schedule, the application of interest on the outstanding balance can be waived subject to compliance with the proposed revised repayment schedule.

**14 Any other Business**

It was Cllr Rodney Chambers final SELEP Board meeting before he stands down at the next election and consequently Cllr Keith Glazier delivered some words of thanks to Cllr Chambers on behalf of the SELEP Ltd/the Board.

Cllr Chambers then addressed the Board, expressing his thanks to Members.

**15 Date of Next Meeting**

The Board noted that the next meeting will take place on Friday 16 June 2023, at the Launchpad at Southend Airport Business Park.

**16 Urgent Business**

None.

**17 A28 Sturry Link Road Project update- CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX A**

The Board received A28 Sturry Link Road Project update - CONFIDENTIAL  
APPENDIX A.