

**Attendees**

<b>AC</b>	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	<b>JHa</b>	James Harris	East Sussex CC
<b>AN</b>	Cllr Ann Newton	Wealden DC	<b>JHt</b>	Jane Hartnell	Hastings BC
<b>CBa</b>	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	<b>JHv</b>	Jo Havers	University of Brighton
<b>CBe</b>	Chris Bending	Wealden DC	<b>JS</b>	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
<b>CE</b>	Christina Ewbank	ACES	<b>KTm</b>	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
<b>CS</b>	Clive Soper	FSB	<b>KTp</b>	Kate Thorpe	University of Sussex
<b>DE</b>	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	<b>ME</b>	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
<b>DS</b>	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	<b>PSm</b>	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
<b>GP</b>	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	<b>PSp</b>	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
<b>HA</b>	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex CC	<b>RS</b>	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
<b>IG</b>	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	<b>SD</b>	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion

**Apologies**

<b>AB</b>	Adam Bryan	South East LEP	<b>KG</b>	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
<b>BH</b>	Ben Hook	Rother DC	<b>MC</b>	Matthew Chenery	East Sussex CC
<b>BP</b>	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	<b>MS</b>	Martin Searle	FSB
<b>BS</b>	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	<b>RC</b>	Rebecca Conroy	East Sussex College
<b>DG</b>	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	<b>RD</b>	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
<b>DT</b>	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	<b>SB</b>	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
<b>JB</b>	Jonathan Buckwell	Developers East Sussex (DES)	<b>VC</b>	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
<b>JM</b>	Cllr James MacCleary	Lewes DC	<b>ZN</b>	Cllr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC

**1. Welcome and introductions**

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked **SD** for hosting at the De La Warr Pavilion, and for providing the buffet lunch. Round table introductions were made.
- 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, 24 Jan 2022**

- 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. Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)**

- 3.1. **AC** delivered a presentation on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), providing an overview of the project scope and a timeline of engagement activities, a breakdown of the challenges identified in terms of the labour market, skills provision/policy, sector profiles and accessibility, and the priorities subsequently formulated in each of those areas. Those priorities and their emerging solutions have been brought together to form an initial 'Roadmap for Change', along with the development of a 'Future Skills Improvement Framework' for the Sussex area.
- 3.2. The group thanked **AC** for her commitment to this complex piece of work, which has seen significant progress being made over the last few months, and which TES fully supports.
- 3.3. **JHa** offered reassurance to the group that the Roadmap for Change and the Future Skills Improvement Framework will not try to reinvent or duplicate existing skills work. He also suggested that the next phase on implementing the actions will be key.
- 3.4. **ME** suggested that any future actions give consideration to our regional geography, e.g. our reach to London, and how we can keep our talent here. **PSm** added that employment support organisations should also be included in the delivery programme.
- 3.5. **DS** queried the size and scope of the funding award from DfT. **AC** confirmed that while we can definitely expect 'some' funding, we don't yet know any of the details. **JHv** further speculated on how much of the funding will be *new* money and how much will simply be reallocated from existing commitments – we'll have to wait and see.
- 3.6. **AC** advised that the LSIP will be signed-off by the LSIP Board on 24 Mar 2022 and then submitted to Government at the end of the month. A further update will be brought back to TES in due course.

#### 4. Levelling Up White Paper

- 4.1. **KTm** referenced the summary paper that covers some of the key headlines of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper (LUWP), finally published on 2 Feb 2022. The paper sets out twelve national 'missions' to be achieved by 2030, and while it also implies changes to structures through a new devolution framework for England, it's still lacking any real detail.
- 4.2. In terms of 'levelling up', a key point to remember is that we *do* have lots of areas of deprivation here in the south east. As such, ESCC officers and partners will be commissioning a detailed economic insight analysis over the coming weeks and months, to ensure we have the right tools and evidence to make the LUWP work for us. More details will be brought back to TES in due course.
- 4.3. **JS** provided a LEP perspective on the LUWP, noting that whilst it hasn't completely removed the uncertainty that has affected SELEP over the past few months, the LUWP has confirmed that LEPs do have a remit to continue, giving a positive appraisal of LEPs and providing a welcome acknowledgement. The LUWP advocates the 'integration' of LEPs as part of the new devolution framework, but where Mayoral Combined Authorities or Devolution Deals don't exist, *LEPs are encouraged to continue*. SELEP is now awaiting a letter from Government to fully explain the mandate of LEPs moving forward and to confirm details of funding allocations.
- 4.4. **SD** noted that other funders, such as the Arts Council, will also be affected by the LUWP, so encouraged **KTm** to include reference to such organisations in her economic analysis work.
- 4.5. **PSm** observed that, according to the LUWP, provision to replace EU funding for the socially disadvantaged in the labour market (DWP/Lottery funding) won't come into effect until 2024, exposing a massive gap that needs urgent discussion. Communication on this does not appear to be happening (nationally) so we need to pick it up in as many forums as possible.
- 4.6. **DS** suggested that the new devolution framework is something for us to be mindful of. Even though the chances of us creating a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) in East Sussex are extremely slim, devolved decision-making is a fundamental part of the LUWP and will impact on all our roles in the future. It should be an evolving discussion in the coming months. **JHt** added that lots of counties have already been identified for County Deals and MCAs, so it's not something to be too concerned about just yet, but agreed we should keep it in mind.
- 4.7. In term of levelling up work already undertaken, **CE** cited the Levelling Up Fund and thanked **PSp** for putting together the successful bids for Newhaven and Eastbourne, also thanking the TES Board for providing letters of support.

#### 5. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

- 5.1. **IG** delivered a presentation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), providing an overview of the information given in the Government's [pre-launch guidance](#) published alongside the LUWP on 2 Feb 2022.
- 5.2. UKSPF is a £2.6 billion fund – £0.4bn in 2022/23, £0.7bn in 2023/24 and £1.5bn in 2024/25 – to be managed by District and Borough Councils. The fund can be used for both capital and revenue on any of the three investment priorities of Communities and Place, Supporting Local Businesses, and People and Skills. While last year's Community Renewal Fund (the 'precursor' to UKSPF) was funded through competitive bidding, this time the funds will be passed directly to D&B authorities. The formula to be used by Government has not yet been released, so the funding allocations are still unknown at present.
- 5.3. The group discussed the information available on UKSPF and made the following comments:
  - The value of UKSPF is approximately 40% lower than the previous EU funding that it's replacing (EU Structural Investment Funds, made up of European Regional Development Fund, ERDF, and European Social Fund, ESF).
  - Several existing EU-funded programmes are due to end over the next 12-18 months, including ERDF business-support programmes and ESF skills/employment programmes. Consideration will need to be given to how (and if) these programmes can continue.
  - We know there are economic similarities between East Sussex and certain parts of north England (e.g. coastal communities); can we find ways to collaborate with those distant local authorities – say on projects using research funding – in order to benefit from the funding that goes north?

- We also need to be cleverer in our approach to funding overall and look to link-up various funding sources, joining forces and working smarter on how we bid to avoid competing locally.
- UKSPF governance will be complicated, but D&Bs have all agreed in principle *to collaborate as much as possible*. A key concern (and risk) is whether the D&Bs will be given capacity funding to help manage UKSPF, so joined-up collaborative working will be critical.
- As a well-established entity, **TES members proposed using the TES Board as a forum for county-wide collaboration**. TES is prepared to be nimble and pull together meetings at short notice, as appropriate.

5.4. **IG** advised that detailed guidance, to include funding allocations, is expected to be published in the Spring. Each D&B will then have to submit an Investment Plan by the summer in order to release those funds. More details will be provided to TES as they become available.

## 6. Skills East Sussex (SES)

6.1. **HA** delivered a presentation on the current activities of Skills East Sussex (SES), explaining the structure of SES and its relationships to other groups, the six SES priorities agreed upon last year to cover a *ten year* period, and some of the ongoing activities of the various Task Groups. Highlighted programmes included the Careers Hub; the Employability for Supported and Temporary Accommodation and Refugees (ESTAR) project; Moving On Up; and Transform. A whole raft of information is available on the [Careers East Sussex website](#), which has evolved considerably and continues to grow. **HA** also described some of the impacts of the Levelling Up White Paper and what it means for schools and adult skills.

6.2. **CBa** highlighted a particular skills issue in Rother where a lack of catering qualifications is causing problems in the hospitality sector (restaurants can't find chefs), and queried whether our catering courses are attracting enough students. **HA** advised that the SES Visitor Economy Task Group is looking at precisely that issue. **GP** also agreed to flag the query separately with **RC** at East Sussex College.

## 7. Funding programmes: updates

7.1. **DE** highlighted the *SECEN Creative Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus Sector Support Fund (SSF)* project, which has submitted a request to SELEP for a six-month extension. The submission needs the endorsement of the appropriate federated board, which in this case is TES (as ESCC is the lead authority for the project). **The TES Board endorsed the project change request.**

7.2. **DE** noted that updates on other funding programmes are provided in the Stakeholder Reports, including project updates on UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF), Getting Building Fund (GBF), Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Growing Places Fund (GPF).

## 8. SELEP Strategic Board, 18 Mar 2022

8.1. **JS** highlighted the additional items (not already covered above) on the agenda for the upcoming SELEP Strategic Board meeting. This includes a progress update on Freeport East; some non-material changes to the SELEP Assurance Framework; confirmation of business member appointments for 2022/23; confirmation of the Delivery Plan for the first quarter of 2022/23; updates on the capital programme, the Covid-19 Recovery Funds, and the Sector Support Fund (including the above SSF project change request); a proposal to formally close SSF to any new applications; and a proposal from Kent CC to repurpose ERDF Legacy Funding to support their Growth Hub (as the Government has *still* not committed any funding for Growth Hubs in 2022/23).

8.2. Regarding the Growth Hub, **KTm** reassured the group that ESCC has agreed to continue underwriting the service in East Sussex in the short term until there is clarity on core funding from Government. A navigator presence will therefore be maintained at the front line so that businesses in East Sussex will see no disruption in service.

## 9. Additional updates and stakeholder reports (for info)

9.1. Reports provided for information; no additional comments made.

## 10. TES round table / AOB

- 10.1. **GP** advised that SELEP and East Sussex County Council are currently receiving a high number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in regard to Sea Change Sussex (SCS). SELEP has also received two formal complaints. All of these are being responded to. **CBa** noted that Rother DC's member on the SCS Board has resigned.
- 10.2. **DS** noted that *Martin Searle* has now left the FSB. TES members offered their thanks to Martin for his dedication to East Sussex and to TES, and wished him well in his new venture.
- 10.3. **SD** advised that the [Bexhill Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair](#) is taking place at the De La Warr Pavilion on 25 Mar 2022. **PSp** added that this year's [Big Futures Show](#) is taking place at Eastbourne Sports Park on 26 Apr 2022.

### Summary of decisions:

- 7.1 The TES Board **endorsed** the project change request from the SECEN Creative Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus Sector Support Fund (SSF) project.

### Summary of actions:

None.