

Attendees

AB	Adam Bryan	South East LEP	JHa	James Harris	East Sussex CC
BP	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	JM	Cllr James MacCleary	Lewes DC
CBa	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	KT	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
CBe	Chris Bending	Wealden DC	MC	Matthew Chenery	East Sussex CC
CBr	Caroline Bragg	East Sussex CC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
CS	Clive Soper	FSB	PSm	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	RC	Rebecca Conroy	East Sussex College
DS	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
FM	Frances Meeten	University of Sussex	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
FO	Faith Orchard	University of Sussex	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC			

Apologies

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	JB	Jonathan Buckwell	Developers East Sussex (DES)
BS	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	KG	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
CL	Craig Lamberton	East Sussex CC	PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the TES workshop meeting. **DE** 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.
- 1.3. **GP** noted that **BS** will be standing down as Leader of Wealden DC later this month, handing over to Councillor Ann Newton (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development); he further noted that **IG** will be retiring next month. On behalf of TES, **GP** thanked both for their support over the years and their contribution to Wealden and East Sussex.
- 1.4. **GP** advised that agenda item 5 has been withdrawn from today's meeting. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was submitted to Government in Oct 2021, and an announcement on indicative funding allocations was expected to be made last month. However, this has been delayed as the Department for Transport (DfT) has posed further clarification questions. An update will be brought back to TES once confirmation of the funding allocation has been received from DfT.

2. Previous TES minutes, 14 Mar 2022

- 2.1. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting. There were no actions to be followed up.

3. Matters arising

Evolution of LEPs

- 3.1. **AB** provided an update on the current position of SELEP following the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper in Feb 2022 and the subsequent letter SELEP received from Government on 31 Mar 2022. The letter described Government's expectations for a 'pathway to devolution' and set out the mandate for LEPs moving forward. This included confirmation of £375k core funding for 2022/23, representing a 25% reduction on previous years.
- 3.2. The letter charts the journey from now to devolution, indicating what LEPs are expected to do over the coming months/years as LEP functions are integrated into local democratic institutions across the country by 2030. The implications for SELEP are likely to be more medium-term, as in the short-term SELEP will continue to function largely as normal. The expectation is that *next* year's workplan will include work on supporting local areas in their devolution. For the moment it is difficult to be more precise as the pace of devolution is likely to be different in each federated area. Overall, the message is positive as SELEP now has greater clarity on the context to work in, and Government is very clear that LEPs will be maintained until devolution deals are agreed or a local solution is found.

- 3.3. **AB** will take a detailed paper to the next SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 24 Jun 2022, fully explaining the direction of travel, SELEP's delivery plan and the expected plans for next year. He will also speak with each of the SELEP Directors individually to get their specific views on how they would like SELEP to move forward, which will help shape that Board paper/meeting. *TES's views are also very welcome.*
- 3.4. **JHa** clarified that in East Sussex there is no current appetite to pursue a new devolution model at this time, but acknowledged that the other areas of SELEP may seek to move ahead with devolution at a different pace, which will obviously have an impact. However, with its well-established federated model, SELEP is uniquely positioned to respond to any such challenges, and in East Sussex in particular we are very well placed to transition LEP functions through our own TES Board and subgroups.

Brighton University: Eastbourne campus

- 3.5. **GP** advised that he, along with several other TES partners, attended an update meeting with **JHv** and Brighton University colleagues on 4 Apr 2022 to discuss the future of the Eastbourne sites. Discussions are still in the early stages, but we have been very clear that we would wish to see *non-residential* use, as this will be much better for Eastbourne (and East Sussex). **JHv** intends to be as open as possible with discussions, so welcomes the input from TES. The next meeting is scheduled for Sep 2022.
- 3.6. **RC** commented that East Sussex College Group is working closely with the University on how they can fill some of the gaps in provision, particularly at levels 4 and 5.

4. Working Well From Home

- 4.1. **FM** and **FO** delivered a presentation on the Working Well From Home project, which was instigated by TES in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic due to the immediate impact on working practices, and was implemented by the Psychology Department at the University of Sussex. The aim of the collaborative project was to create a research-driven, user-friendly resource to support longer-term homeworking in East Sussex, helping people work *well* from home.
- 4.2. The final report has now been published, with practical suggestions and key messages around best practice. The new website is also live – workingwellfromhome.co.uk – featuring summaries of the survey results, animations, links to the final report (full version and a more accessible shorter version) and the best practice toolkit.
- 4.3. The group agreed that the website is excellent and can only add value to our area, with real practical suggestions/solutions backed up by research and data. The group also made the following suggestions for possible additions to the website:
 - Encouraging people to meet up on 'collaboration days', and to also have meeting-free days.
 - Managing by objective rather than by timescales, i.e. goal orientated rather than micromanaged.
 - A weekly 'coffee roulette', where two colleagues are put together, either virtually or in person, to get to know each other over a coffee.
 - The addition of a 'good practice sharing platform' to the website, and a business feedback form. The current advice is based on a snapshot of data taken at a particular time during the pandemic, but as time moves on so too could people's views, so an interactive platform will enable more people to feed in, allowing the website to grow.
 - Engagement with unions, as they are likely to have been missed out of the original research (responders were mostly SMEs or micros, so may not have been affiliated with a union).
- 4.4. **FM** and **FO** welcomed all of the above suggestions, and agreed to look at implementing them over the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, TES colleagues are asked to promote the above website link through their various networks. An update on any further website developments will be brought back to TES later in the year.

[Action: TES members to share/promote the Working Well From Home website through their networks]

5. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- 5.1. Withdrawn from the agenda (see 1.4 above).

6. Borough and District funding programmes

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

- 6.1. **IG** provided a brief update on UKSPF, confirming that the funding allocations have now been announced as £1.17m for Wealden DC and £1m for each of the other borough and district councils over the 3-year period from Apr 2022 to Mar 2025.
- 6.2. The primary goal of UKSPF is to “build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.” Underneath this are three investment priorities: Communities and Place; Supporting Local Business; and People and Skills (with detailed objectives and indicators associated with each). Places are asked to identify activities that support UKSPF objectives, including interventions that are best delivered at a larger scale in collaboration with other places; delivery at this scale is strongly encouraged where appropriate, hence the strong will amongst borough/district colleagues to collaborate. **KT** has already provided a helpful list of existing county-wide programmes for consideration.
- 6.3. Each borough and district council must complete an investment plan template between 30 Jun and 1 Aug 2022, and will also need to establish a governance route to ensure the funds are spent correctly.
- 6.4. **PSm** reminded the group that several existing EU-funded programmes are due to end over the next 12-18 months, including ESF skills/employment programmes, but places in England can select People and Skills interventions mainly from 2024-25 onwards, *meaning a potential 18-month gap in funding*. This could be a major issue for our local provision so needs to be considered as a matter of urgency by the borough and district colleagues responsible for UKSPF. There is an opportunity to make the case for the value and importance of continuing current community/voluntary sector ESF-funded provision due to come to an end in 2022 or 2023. **IG** advised that this exact topic will be discussed at an additional Skills East Sussex (SES) meeting being held later this week.
- 6.5. **SD** commented that the Government choosing to channel funds through boroughs and districts rather than LEPs means that the voice of business could potentially be cut out. **VC** advised that the processes previously used by SELEP cannot easily be mirrored here as the UKSPF procedures are quite complex, particularly how cross-county projects are articulated in individual investment plans, but offered reassurance that as much information as possible will be shared with TES as the investment plans are developed.
- 6.6. **GP** reiterated the offer made by TES members at the previous meeting, to use the TES Board (and sub-boards) as a forum for county-wide collaboration, with TES being prepared to pull together meetings at short notice as appropriate. The TES workshop planned for 18 Jul 2022 could potentially help serve this very purpose in reviewing and endorsing the UKSPF investment plans produced by Borough and District Authorities.

Multiply programme

- 6.7. **RD** advised that the Department for Education (DfE) has top-sliced a portion of UKSPF funding to create the £559m Multiply programme, to help improve adult numeracy skills. The programme is to be delivered at county level, so ESCC is the lead authority and has been indicatively allocated £2.5m over a three-year period from Apr 2022, subject to the submission of an investment plan by 30 Jun 2022.
- 6.8. Officers are currently reviewing the prospectus/guidance and have allocated resources to develop the investment plan, which will involve conversations with partners involved in adult education provision to prioritise the interventions with the limited funding available and to refine the submission.
- 6.9. Interventions delivered through Multiply need to be additional/differentiated from what is already fully funded through the Adult Education Budget and should not displace that provision.

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2

- 6.10. **IG** confirmed that Wealden DC will be submitting a bid. As with the first round it will focus on the same Hailsham Regeneration programme, but will be more focussed (following good feedback from the unsuccessful first round bid).
- 6.11. **VC** confirmed that Hastings BC also intends submitting a bid (having not bid in the first round). It is likely to focus on leisure and health, but no further details can be provided at this time as Hastings BC is currently in a pre-election period.

7. TES round table / AOB

7.1. None.

Meeting closed at 16:24.

Summary of actions:

4.4 TES members to share/promote the Working Well From Home website through their networks.