

Attendees:

ACh	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	JS	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
ACo	Alex Colbran	East Sussex CC	JW	Jon Wheeler	East Sussex CC
AN	Cllr Ann Newton	Wealden DC	KG	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
BH	Ben Hook	Rother DC	KT	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
BP	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	LR	Lisa Rawlinson	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
CB	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
CS	Clive Soper	Hailsham & District Chamber	NW	Nichola Watters	Wealden DC
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	PB	Cllr Paul Barnett	Hastings BC
DH	Donna Harfield	East Sussex College	PD	Pranesh Datta	Hastings BC
DS	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	RS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion

Apologies:

CL	Craig Lamberton	East Sussex CC	JM	Cllr James MacCleary	Lewes DC
DG	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	PS	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DT	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	RC	Rebecca Conroy	East Sussex College
HA	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex CC	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
JHa	James Harris	East Sussex CC	ZN	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. 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, 18 July 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. Funding programmes: updatesGetting Building Fund (GBF)

- 3.1. **ACo** updated the group on the SELEP GBF Pipeline, for which there is currently an unallocated GBF balance of £3.3175m as a result of two projects being removed from the GBF programme. Each federated area has submitted to SELEP a prioritised list of existing GBF projects seeking additional funding, either to offset cost increases or for an additional phase of the project. In East Sussex we received bids from five of our GBF projects, which were assessed against the criteria provided by SELEP and ranked into a priority order, agreed by TES on 21 September 2022 by electronic procedure. One project subsequently withdrew, so we have four projects to be placed on the GBF Pipeline.
- 3.2. **ACo** ran through the proposed SELEP-wide ranking of all the projects submitted, which is to be discussed and agreed by the SELEP Strategic Board on 21 October 2022. There are fifteen projects in total, with the top seven currently set to receive funding (falling within the £3.3m threshold). East Sussex has one project, the Observer Building in Hastings, within that £3.3m threshold.
- 3.3. **GP** noted that some of the data on the SELEP-wide list has changed since the SELEP papers were produced; in particular, the Seven Sisters project now has 100% spend (shown as only 27% in the papers) and building consent will be in place prior to the next Accountability Board meeting in November (where the funding awards will be confirmed). As the current SELEP-wide list would leave £64k remaining in the pot, we should make the case for Seven Sisters to utilise this remaining funding, instead of their full £84k ask, to ensure all of the GBF funds are fully spent without delay.
- 3.4. **GP** observed that we don't know how the discussions at the upcoming SELEP Strategic Board meeting will play out, so asked that our SELEP Directors be allowed full autonomy to 'negotiate' on behalf of TES at the meeting. *TES Board members fully endorsed this request.*

[Decision: TES members attending the SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 21 October 2022 have the full endorsement of the TES Board to ‘negotiate’ on their behalf when discussing the GBF Pipeline]

SELEP Sector Support Fund (SSF)

- 3.5. **KT** advised that the ‘Building Back Better’ project is to be removed from the SSF programme following a decision by Orbit Housing to withdraw as the project delivery lead, meaning the project cannot be delivered within the timeframes as originally approved by SELEP.
- 3.6. **KT** also advised that a Project Change Request (PCR) has been submitted by the ‘Accelerating Nature-Based Climate Solutions’ project, seeking a short extension of just eight weeks due to a bereavement within the project lead organisation. The project is still due to complete by the end of this year. The PCR requires federated board endorsement; *TES Board members fully endorsed this Project Change Request.*

[Decision: The TES Board endorses the Project Change Request from the ‘Accelerating Nature-Based Climate Solutions’ SSF project]

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

- 3.7. Borough and District colleagues confirmed that all of their UKSPF Investment Plans were submitted by the 1 August 2022 deadline, and while the Prospectus indicates that the first payments will be made to lead authorities “from October 2022”, as yet they have not received any further information from Government. **BH** suggested that they’re not expecting to hear anything before the end of November. **LR** advised that she’s happy to share the Lewes/Eastbourne submissions with TES for their information, but with the caveat that until Government approval is received, they are still just ‘proposals’.
- 3.8. **BP** queried whether there will be an open tender process for the county-wide projects. **KT** confirmed that all of the county-wide projects will go out to tender, with the procurement process expected to take place during January 2023.
- 3.9. **RD** reminded the group that a portion of UKSPF was top-sliced 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 – ESCC has now received confirmation of its £2.5m allocation over the three-year period from April 2022. The procurement process for our *Multiply* programme is already underway, with tenders to be returned by the end of this month and projects expected to commence in November 2022.
- 3.10. **NW** advised that the *Rural England Prosperity Fund* was launched on 3 September 2022, providing rural top-up funding to UKSPF. Eligible local authorities are asked to develop proposals for capital projects to support small businesses and community infrastructure in rural areas. In East Sussex, Wealden DC and Rother DC are listed as eligible, and have been allocated £838,120 and £603,963 respectively for the two-year period of 2023/24 and 2024/25. The deadline for project submissions is 30 November 2022, with Government approvals expected in January 2023.

Levelling Up Fund (LUF)

- 3.11. As with UKSPF above, Borough and District colleagues confirmed that their LUF Round 2 bids were submitted on time, but as yet they have not received any further information from Government. Bids were submitted from Wealden DC and Rother DC (revised versions of their Round 1 bids focusing on Hailsham Aspires and the De La Warr Pavilion respectively), plus a new bid from Eastbourne BC focused on the large culture/heritage option that has been introduced for LUF Round 2.

Growing Places Fund (GPF)

- 3.12. **RD** advised that as a result of continued loan repayments, SELEP currently holds around £10m in the GPF pot, so intends opening a new GPF funding round in the new year. This will be an opportunity to bid for loan funding, and colleagues are encouraged to start thinking about possible projects now.
- 3.13. **RD** also suggested it would be worthwhile for TES to hear from some of our previous successful projects, by asking them to present a short update at a future TES meeting. This need not be restricted to GPF projects, but could cover any project funded through TES/SELEP. All agreed.

[Action: RD/DE to liaise with appropriate colleagues – County/Borough/District lead officers – on bringing project leads to future TES meetings to present on their successful schemes]

Investment Zones

- 3.14. **KT** advised that Investment Zones were announced as part of the Government's new Growth Plan, published in September 2022. Expressions of Interest were encouraged from all upper tier authorities, but the required information within the EOI would need to be provided by Local Planning Authorities. ESCC officers approached all of our Borough and District colleagues, and only one proposal came forward from Rother DC for a potential Investment Zone in the North Bexhill area. **KT** thanked Jeff Pyrah at Rother DC for his support in helping to get the EOI submitted by the 14 October deadline. Note that there is no funding associated with Investment Zones, just greater freedoms and flexibilities. Partners and stakeholders will be kept informed as the EOI progresses.

Towns Fund

- 3.15. **PD** reminded the group that Hastings BC was awarded £24.3m from the Government's Towns Fund in June 2021 as part of the Hastings Town Deal. There are 14 distinct projects within the overall programme, 11 of which have received approval to proceed, and several have already completed. All of the information can be found on the [Hastings Town Deal website](#).
- 3.16. In regard to the area around the railway station in Hastings, Homes England has indicatively expressed an interest in helping to develop the site, and is currently in discussions and exploring options with Hastings BC.

4. Strategic Transport Infrastructure

- 4.1. **JW** delivered a presentation on transport infrastructure in East Sussex, providing updates on the Strategic Road Network (SRN); the rail network; Gatwick's northern runway; the Active Travel programme; major projects; Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure; Transport for the South East (TfSE); and Local Plans. All of the detailed information is contained within the regular Stakeholder Reports, circulated to TES with the meeting papers.
- 4.2. **JW** advised that a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) is being developed, aided by consultants Steer. The previous LTP covered the 15-year period from 2011 to 2026. A lot will have changed in that time, so work has already begun to review the evidence base, and early engagement/consultation is planned with the public and various stakeholder groups over the coming months to seek their views on the future of transport and mobility in the county. A six-week consultation will start at the end of this month, so TES will be invited to contribute. The new LTP is expected to run until 2050.

[Action: JW to share the link to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) consultation when it's published at the end of October 2022; TES members are invited to respond to the consultation]

5. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- 5.1. **JW** delivered a presentation on the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which was developed in response to the Government's Bus Back Better Strategy published in early 2021. Our BSIP was submitted to Government in October 2021, and it was announced in April 2022 that East Sussex would be allocated up to £41.4m towards a range of projects set out in the BSIP. This indicative allocation was finally confirmed in September 2022, with £22.3m of capital and £19.1m of revenue funding, to be spent by March 2025. A new Bus Team has been created within the ESCC Transport Hub to deliver the BSIP.
- 5.2. **CB** and **PB** both suggested that communication and promotion will be key moving forward, and any promotional campaigns should begin immediately. They also queried some of the specific detail (a breakdown of investment within each district within the final allocated budget). **JW** advised that a report was taken to ESCC's Lead Member for Transport and Environment in July 2022, the appendices of which contain a great deal of detail. The report/appendices are publicly available on the ESCC website: [East Sussex BSIP LMTE report 18 Jul 2022](#). A copy of the full [East Sussex BSIP](#) can also be found on the ESCC website.

6. Evolution of LEPs – the future of TES

- 6.1. **DE** presented a paper setting out TES's roles and responsibilities, with an explanation of the position of TES in regard to LEP functions being devolved over the next few years. The paper describes the remit

of TES so that, following the publication of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper (LUWP) earlier this year, TES can be clear on its continuing role, focus and overall function.

6.2. The paper asks TES members to consider the current list of TES's roles/responsibilities, as well as the size of the TES Board, sectors represented and frequency of meetings, and to discuss whether any 'tweaks' ought to be made moving forward. The group made the following initial comments:

- Overall, the current setup of TES seems largely sensible and fit-for-purpose. There is little value in picking apart the details, especially given the current political landscape and potential for even more change in the future.
- TES's role is largely strategic oversight, and that should continue. While we might wish to be more of a 'doing' group, that's what the subgroups are for, and they already do excellent work. It's important for those groups to continue, but with TES providing strategic oversight. Perhaps we need more rigorous reporting from the subgroups, and/or ask the subgroup Chairs to convene their own regular meetings. Better communication between everyone to ensure opportunities aren't missed.
- The frequency of meetings could easily be reduced. Keep the quarterly TES Board meetings (aligned to the SELEP Strategic Board meetings) but perhaps remove/reduce the TES workshops from the schedule.
- In terms of engagement and TES's role to "Maximise connections with SMEs across the county", we could do more in this area. TES's profile is lower than it should be in the business community.
- Similarly, we could also do more communication with wider partners and neighbouring economic partnerships. There are already strong partnerships that stretch wider than East Sussex, as they tend not to see boundaries in the same way (such as the education sector, culture, visitor economy). Could TES look to engage more with Brighton and Hove, C2C, Kent etc to build stronger collaborative relationships?
- Do we really need to go through the full business member recruitment exercise in the new year? The LEP Review may now be over, but there continues to be an ongoing level of uncertainty. What TES and SELEP need most is a sense of stability and continuity.
- Counter to the above, we should acknowledge that a degree of uncertainty is likely to go on indefinitely, so if we must conduct recruitment (due to our governance procedures), let's try to make it as simple as possible, a 'light touch' refresh.

6.3. The paper presented was welcomed by the group and supported in terms of the remit, purpose and direction of travel outlined for TES moving forwards. **GP** asked all colleagues to give the paper further thought, and feed any comments back to **DE** via email by 28 October 2022.

[Action: TES members to consider the questions in the 'Future of TES' paper and feed any comments back to DE via email by 28 October 2022]

7. SELEP Strategic Board, 21 October 2022

7.1. **JS** ran through the agenda items going to this week's SELEP Strategic Board meeting, some of which had already been covered above. Additional items will include governance issues (Board composition needs to be 50% female by the end of March 2023); a presentation on the future of SELEP and what happens next, which will continue to be an evolving discussion; a presentation on housing delivery (postponed from the previous meeting); a capital programme update; an update on the Chair recruitment process; a summary of the appointment of new Directors; and a review of the annual Statement of Accounts.

8. Additional updates and stakeholder reports (for info)

8.1. For information only, no additional comments were made.

9. TES round table / AOB

- 9.1. **DS** reinforced the implications of reduced funding in the Growth Hub and business support. Future funding will not be available to the same levels, which will have a definite impact on businesses. We'll need to give consideration to how we can best deliver support to businesses moving forward.
- 9.2. **CB** flagged the significant impact of increased fuel prices on businesses. While local authorities distributed significant amounts of funding support to businesses during the pandemic, there is no such support for the current crisis. It's likely we'll see businesses close in waves over the coming months, particularly small businesses.
- 9.3. **JHv** advised that discussions are ongoing on the future of Brighton University's campus in Eastbourne. Conversations continue with colleagues at Eastbourne BC, looking at various options, but at the moment there is very little to report. As things begin to move forward, an update will be brought back to TES.
- 9.4. **SD** highlighted the visitor economy and suggested it would be useful to report back to TES on the great work currently going on in this sector, particularly on any LEP-funded projects. Something to consider for a future TES meeting.

[Action: SD to liaise with DE on adding 'visitor economy' to an upcoming TES agenda, to present on LEP-funded projects]

Meeting closed at 16:55.

Summary of decisions:

- 3.4 TES members attending the SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 21 October 2022 have the full endorsement of the TES Board to 'negotiate' on their behalf when discussing the GBF Pipeline.
- 3.6 The TES Board endorses the Project Change Request from the 'Accelerating Nature-Based Climate Solutions' SSF project.

Summary of actions:

- 3.13 **RD/DE** to liaise with appropriate colleagues – County/Borough/District lead officers – on bringing project leads to future TES meetings to present on their successful schemes.
- 4.2 **JW** to share the link to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) consultation when it's published at the end of October 2022; TES members are invited to respond to the consultation.
- 6.3 TES members to consider the questions in the 'Future of TES' paper and feed any comments back to **DE** via email by 28 October 2022.
- 9.4 **SD** to liaise with **DE** on adding 'visitor economy' to an upcoming TES agenda, to present on LEP-funded projects.