

Attendees:

ACh	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	JM	Clr James MacCleary	Lewes DC
ACo	Alex Colbran	East Sussex CC	JS	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
AT	Alison Turner	FSB	KG	Clr 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
CBa	Clr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	MC	Matthew Chenery	East Sussex CC
CBe	Chris Bending	Wealden DC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	PB	Clr Paul Barnett	Hastings BC
CS	Clive Soper	Hailsham & District Chamber	PDo	Clr Pam Doodles	Wealden DC
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	PS	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
DG	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
DH	Donna Harfield	East Sussex College	RS	Clr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
DT	Clr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	SDr	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
HA	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex CC	VG	Vera Gajic	East Sussex CC
JHa	James Harris	East Sussex CC			

Apologies:

AN	Clr Ann Newton	Wealden DC	SDe	Sean Dennis	Let's Do Business Group
DS	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	ZN	Clr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC
PDa	Pranesh Datta	Hastings BC			

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the TES Board meeting.
- 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** advised that an additional last-minute item would be added to today's agenda (item 5a) to discuss the Locate East Sussex contract, for which he would ask any Locate colleagues on the call to leave the meeting for the duration of the item, to avoid any possible conflicts and to allow the group to speak candidly.

2. Previous TES minutes, 5 December 2022

- 2.1. **GP** confirmed that all of the previous actions had been completed.
- 2.2. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. TES business member recruitment

- 3.1. **DE** provided an update on the business member recruitment exercise, which the TES Board agreed to proceed with at its last meeting on 5 December 2022. The process of reappointing existing business members has already been concluded. All current business members indicated that they wished to be reappointed, and the full TES Board voted on individual members by electronic procedure during January 2023. **DE** confirmed that all eight existing business members have now been reappointed to the TES Board for another (up to) two-year term, beginning 1 March 2023. For clarity, those eight business members are **ACh, CE, CS, DS, GP, ME, PS, and SDr**.

Decision: The TES Board approved the reappointment of all eight TES business members to the TES Board for another (up to) two-year term beginning 1 March 2023.

- 3.2. The process for appointing new business members is underway, and an application form with accompanying information has been uploaded to the ESCC website ready to go live this week. When that happens, TES colleagues will be asked to share/promote it through business networks and comms channels. There will be a three-week window for applications, after which a small 'selection panel' will be convened, as per the TES Terms of Reference, with delegated authority to choose who to appoint to the TES Board. Any new members will be appointed during March 2023.
- 3.3. The final phase of this process is to (re)appoint the TES Chair and Deputy Chair, as the tenure of those roles run concurrently with TES membership. **DE** advised that both **GP** and **DS** have indicated that they

would like to continue in those respective roles, for reasons of continuity/stability during what will undoubtedly be a period of change for SELEP. All other business members have also been asked via email whether they would want to put themselves forward for consideration, with no response, so the recommended course is to reappoint **GP** and **DS** as TES Chair and Deputy Chair respectively, for another (up to) two-year term beginning 1 March 2023. **TES Board members approved this recommendation.**

Decision: The TES Board approved the reappointment of GP and DS as TES Chair and TES Deputy Chair respectively for another (up to) two-year term beginning 1 March 2023.

4. TES appointments to the SELEP Strategic Board

- 4.1. **DE** provided an update on the process to (re)appoint SELEP Directors, starting with the co-opted SELEP Directors, who are appointed for one year at a time. Each year there are two local authority District/Borough co-opted positions, and last year one of those came from East Sussex, with **CBa** taking on the role. This year East Sussex has again been asked to nominate someone to be a local authority co-opt. All of our District and Borough TES members have already discussed this between themselves and agreed that **CBa** should again be put forward as our nominated co-opted SELEP Director for the next year, subject to the endorsement of the full TES Board. **TES Board members endorsed this nomination.** **DE** noted that the Higher Education, Further Education and Social Enterprise co-opted SELEP Directors are put forward each year by their respective representative groups rather than by federated boards.

Decision: The TES Board endorsed CBa as the nominated East Sussex local authority co-opted SELEP Director for 2023/24.

- 4.2. For the TES business members on the SELEP Strategic Board, **ACH**, **CS** and **GP**, all three have indicated that they would like to continue serving as SELEP Directors. All other business members have been asked via email whether they would want to put themselves forward for consideration, with no response, so the recommended course is to reappoint **ACH**, **CS** and **GP** as TES's business-member SELEP Directors for another (up to) two-year term. **TES Board members approved this recommendation.**

Decision: The TES Board approved the reappointment of ACh, CS and GP as TES's business-member SELEP Directors for another (up to) two-year term.

5. Universities updates

- 5.1. **SB** delivered a presentation on the work being done by the University of Sussex to support economic development across the county, providing some background to the university itself, statistics on the number of graduates employed in the region, and information on business collaborations. **SB** ran through some of the projects that are helping to make a real difference to businesses, places and people in East Sussex.
- 5.2. **ME** queried the graduate employment figures, observing that whilst the top half of achievers go into high-value jobs, there is no information on the other half. **SB** responded that employment is spread across various sectors, and agreed to provide a more detailed breakdown.

Action: SB to provide a more detailed breakdown of graduate employment figures (to be shared with the minutes).

- 5.3. **DG** and **HA** further queried graduate employment, specifically whether students really understand the local SME market and the difficulty SMEs have in recruiting graduates. **SB** noted that this is a complicated topic, so agreed to organise a separate meeting to discuss the matter with interested colleagues (**SDr** flagged his interest in joining the meeting).

Action: SB, DG and HA to arrange a separate meeting with any other interested colleagues to discuss graduate employment in more detail.

5a. Locate East Sussex

- 5a.1 **GP** advised that this item was added to today's agenda in order to provide some clarity on the current position of the Locate East Sussex (LES) contract. At **GP**'s invitation, **BP** courteously left the meeting for the duration of this discussion, to allow the group to speak openly.

5a.2 **JHa** outlined the current contract with Let's Do Business Group (LDBG) to deliver the LES service, which has funding from the County Council and all five Borough and District Councils, matched by ERDF funding. After the current contract ends on 30 April 2023 there will be no further ERDF monies to draw on, so moving forward the service will at best have half the current levels of funding. While the sponsors have already met to discuss the future of the service, more time is required for them to give this further consideration.

5a.3 The group discussed this in more detail and the following comments were made:

- As previously discussed at TES, there is a lot less funding available to local authorities, and as a consequence there is an inevitable need to reduce some services. The difficulty is choosing where to focus, but none of these deliberations are about consciously choosing to cut services, it's about deciding how/where to refocus. Councils are in a very difficult position.
- TES colleagues have always been very keen on working together in partnerships, and want to continue doing so. LES, as a commissioned service, is an example of this partnership working in practice, and if resources allow, it is worth holding on to.
- It's a critical time for businesses, with huge changes taking place in the business environment, so now is not the time to consider removing support. Even a reduction in business support is a concern.
- We need to be clear about where businesses go for support, i.e. a clear distinction between the LES and BES services.
- Think about how we use funding strategically. Getting businesses into the county is critical, so we're not just relying on seasonal tourism.
- Let's not forget the additional wider work LES has been involved in, e.g. culture and tourism work and the vital advice given to developers and larger businesses already within the county to grow and relocate.
- With the removal of ERDF, is there now an opportunity to consider using commercial income to supplement the sponsors' funding?
- Whatever the decision-making process, it's crucial that decisions are made before the end of the current contract. If the service ends, even for a short period, we risk losing all of that expertise.

5a.4 **GP** thanked the group for their input, and concluded that further discussion is clearly necessary. TES colleagues stand ready to aid in those discussions if needed.

6. Funding programmes: updates

- 6.1. Getting Building Fund (GBF): **RD** confirmed that both of the East Sussex projects previously added to the GBF pipeline (made up of existing GBF projects seeking additional funding) have now been awarded funding. The *Observer Building* and *Seven Sisters Visitor Centre* projects have been awarded £315k and £84k respectively.
- 6.2. Local Growth Fund (LGF): **RD** advised that following a decision by Hastings BC to no longer support the cycle path in Alexandra Park, this element has been removed from the *Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package* (HBMAP) LGF project. Discussions are taking place on how to reprofile the funding originally intended for this element of the scheme.
- 6.3. Growing Places Fund (GPF): **RD** advised that updated repayment profiles for the *Eastbourne Fishermen* and *Sovereign Harbour* GPF projects have been submitted to SELEP and are recommended for approval at this week's SELEP Strategic Board meeting, before they seek further approval at the next SELEP Accountability Board meeting on 10 March 2023. **JS** added that another GPF funding round is expected to be launched later this year, as the Accountable Body is currently holding in excess of £8m in the GPF pot from completed projects' repaid loans. SELEP is developing the process, with some new underlying principles to be agreed at this week's Strategic Board meeting. The remaining GBF underspend may also be added to the GPF pot, allowing all available funding to be managed through a single process.
- 6.4. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF): All five Investment Plans submitted to Government by the Borough and District Councils have now been approved, and funding awards for the first year are expected to be received imminently. **CBe** advised that Wealden DC's year-1 projects, which all fall under the Communities and Place investment priority, are now well underway. Wealden DC's year-1 allocation is £14,225 capital and £128,023 revenue. **LR** advised that Lewes DC's year-1 allocation for

the delivery of 8 projects is £46,930 capital and £47,499 revenue, while Eastbourne BC's allocation is £14,820 capital and £77,235 revenue for the delivery of 9 projects. **JM** added that for the Lewes projects, as the funding has not yet arrived, they will initially be paid for by Lewes DC (to be reimbursed later) so that they can get underway as soon as possible.

- 6.5. Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2: **BH** advised that the Rother DC bid has been successful, with an award of £19,192,000 to deliver 'culture-led' regeneration to improve the lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Rother. The LUF award will help fund the transformation of the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill and the development of new leisure and community facilities in Sidley, creating new jobs and upskilling local residents. **CBa** expressed her thanks to the officers involved and to **SDr** for all their work. **BH** added his thanks to TES for the very helpful letter of support. **LR** and **CBe** advised that the LUF Round 2 bids from Eastbourne BC and Wealden DC were not successful.
- 6.6. Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF): Wealden DC and Rother DC have been allocated £838,120 and £603,963 respectively as capital top-up funding to their UKSPF allocations, for the two-year period of 2023/24 and 2024/25. **CBe** advised that Wealden DC has developed a programme that includes a rural business grants programme, a local infrastructure grants programme, plus measures to support rural tourism and community organisations looking to install EV charging points. The programme sees most of the funding (75%) backloaded into year-2, but delivery of the year-1 elements is due to begin in April 2023.
- 6.7. **CBe** suggested that future updates on funding programmes from Borough and District officers should be provided as written reports, to be included in the quarterly stakeholder reports.

Action: Borough and District officers to provide regular written updates on funding programmes, to be included in the quarterly stakeholder reports delivered to TES Board meetings.

7. SELEP Strategic Board, 10 February 2023

- 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 an update on SELEP's Annual Performance Review; two papers on capital funding programmes, including proposed principles for a new GPF funding round; a recommendation that the Deputy Chair is recruited from within the Strategic Board, with an external process to be conducted if that proves unsuccessful; agreement to renew the Power of Attorney and approval of the annual Confirmation Statement; modifications to the Public Questions Policy in order to streamline the process; and updates on Sub-national Transport Bodies, Sector Support Fund and the Growth Hub.

8. Additional updates and stakeholder reports (for info)

- 8.1. No additional comments.

9. AOB

- 9.1. **ACH** highlighted two press releases from the British Chambers of Commerce which may be of interest. Firstly, a [Quarterly Recruitment Report](#) that highlights "the highest level of recruitment difficulties on record", and secondly [a reaction to the Chancellors Economic Vision](#) that suggests it does not sufficiently address export support and energy issues.

Meeting closed at 16:25.

Summary of decisions:

- 3.1 The TES Board approved the reappointment of all eight TES business members to the TES Board for another (up to) two-year term beginning 1 March 2023.
- 3.3 The TES Board approved the reappointment of **GP** and **DS** as TES Chair and TES Deputy Chair respectively for another (up to) two-year term beginning 1 March 2023.
- 4.1 The TES Board endorsed **CBa** as the nominated East Sussex local authority co-opted SELEP Director for 2023/24.

- 4.2 The TES Board approved the reappointment of **ACh**, **CS** and **GP** as TES's business-member SELEP Directors for another (up to) two-year term.

Summary of actions:

- 5.2 **SB** to provide a more detailed breakdown of graduate employment figures (to be shared with the minutes).
- 5.3 **SB**, **DG** and **HA** to arrange a separate meeting with any other interested colleagues to discuss graduate employment in more detail.
- 6.7 Borough and District officers to provide regular written updates on funding programmes, to be included in the quarterly stakeholder reports delivered to TES Board meetings.