

Attendees:

<b>AB</b>	Adam Bryan	South East LEP	<b>GP</b>	Graham Peters ( <b>CHAIR</b> )	ES Rural Partnership
<b>AC</b>	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	<b>JHv</b>	Jo Havers	University of Brighton
<b>AG</b>	Alex Green	DWP	<b>JS</b>	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
<b>AT</b>	Alison Turner	FSB	<b>ME</b>	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
<b>BH</b>	Ben Hook	Rother DC	<b>NS</b>	Nigel Stewardson	DLUHC
<b>BP</b>	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	<b>PB</b>	Clr Paul Barnett	Hastings BC
<b>BS</b>	Clr Bob Standley	East Sussex CC	<b>PD</b>	Pranesh Datta	Hastings BC
<b>CBa</b>	Clr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	<b>PH</b>	Paul Hetherington	HIS Ltd
<b>CBe</b>	Chris Bending	Wealden DC	<b>PS</b>	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
<b>CE</b>	Christina Ewbank	ACES	<b>RC</b>	Rob Cottrill	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
<b>CS</b>	Clive Soper	Hailsham & District Chamber	<b>RD</b>	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
<b>DE</b>	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	<b>SB</b>	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
<b>DH</b>	Donna Harfield	East Sussex College	<b>SD</b>	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
<b>DS</b>	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	<b>VC</b>	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
<b>EM</b>	Ellie McDaniel	East Sussex CC			

Apologies:

<b>ES</b>	Emma Smith	DLUHC	<b>PC</b>	Clr Paul Coleshill	Wealden DC
<b>HA</b>	Holly Aquilina	East Sussex CC	<b>SH</b>	Clr Stephen Holt	Eastbourne BC
<b>JHa</b>	James Harris	East Sussex CC	<b>SN</b>	Shane Norman	DWP
<b>KG</b>	Clr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC	<b>ZN</b>	Clr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC
<b>LR</b>	Lisa Rawlinson	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC			

**1. Welcome and introductions**

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the TES Board meeting and led round table introductions. **GP** thanked **SD** for again hosting the meeting at the De La Warr Pavilion.
- 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 additional interests were declared.

**2. Previous TES minutes, 15 May 2023**

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

**3. Change of TES Chair**

- 3.1. **GP** restated his announcement of 23 June 2023, that he is standing down as a member of both Team East Sussex and the South East LEP in order to fully concentrate on his new role of Vice Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex. On behalf of TES, **BS** thanked **GP** for his exceptional leadership and commitment over the past nine years. A video message from **KG** was also played to the group.
- 3.2. As a result of **GP**'s departure there are several items of TES governance that need to be addressed. **DE** provided an update on each of these points in turn:
- 3.3. Appointing a new TES Chair: Following **GP**'s announcement, **DE** immediately emailed TES Board members to set out the next steps, recommending that the current TES Deputy Chair be appointed to the TES Chair role. However, as the role is open to all current business members, any business member wishing to put themselves forward was asked to do so within five working days. No additional nominations were received, so TES Board members were again emailed and asked to approve the appointment of **DS** as TES Chair.
- 3.4. While most TES members responded, the short turnaround time before today's meeting meant that not all were able to, so there were not quite enough electronic responses to be quorate. Therefore the TES Board was required to confirm the appointment during this meeting.
- 3.5. **GP** asked TES Board members to approve the recommendation that **DS** be appointed TES Chair. **TES Board members approved this recommendation.**

**Decision: The TES Board approved the appointment of DS as TES Chair, effective 4 July 2023.**

- 3.6. **DS** expressed his thanks, asserting that it will be a privilege to follow **GP**, and advised that he intends contacting each TES Board member personally over the coming weeks to discuss how we push forward during what will undoubtedly be a time of great change.
- 3.7. Replacement SELEP Director: While not strictly a ‘requirement’ of SELEP, it is strongly recommended that federated boards put forward their Chairs to be one of their business representatives on the SELEP Strategic Board. Accordingly, **DE** emailed TES Board members to recommend they appoint the new TES Chair as **GP**’s replacement on the SELEP Strategic Board. A quorum of electronic responses was received, **so the recommendation to appoint the new TES Chair as a SELEP Director was approved**. **DE** and **DS** will liaise with the SELEP Secretariat to complete the registration process so that **DS** can be appointed as a SELEP Director, representing East Sussex as a business member on the SELEP Strategic Board, effective 4 July 2023 (or as close to as possible).

**Decision: DS to be appointed as a SELEP Director, effective 4 July 2023.**

- 3.8. Appointing a new TES Deputy Chair: With **DS** becoming TES Chair, we need to backfill the newly-vacated Deputy Chair role. But before doing so, as there is no requirement from SELEP that federated boards must have a Deputy Chair, in our TES Terms of Reference we’ve stated that “*TES may choose to elect a Deputy Chair with the new Chair’s agreement.*” We therefore need to clarify whether TES actually wants a Deputy Chair before seeking to appoint to the position.
- 3.9. **GP** strongly recommended that the TES Board continues to utilise the Deputy Chair position, and asked TES Board members to confirm whether they wish to do so; **TES Board members confirmed their agreement**. **GP** asked **DS**, as the new TES Chair, to confirm his agreement to the recommendation; **DS confirmed his agreement**.

**Decision: The TES Board confirmed its intention to appoint a new TES Deputy Chair.**

- 3.10. **DE** advised that he’ll follow-up with TES business members over the coming weeks to seek nominations and conduct the process to appoint a Deputy Chair, to hopefully be completed before the next TES meeting in October 2023, but possibly to be confirmed at the meeting itself.

**Action: DE to liaise with TES business members on appointing a new TES Deputy Chair.**

- 3.11. Appointing a new TES business member: With **GP** standing down, TES has a vacancy for a new business member. Fortunately, following the business member recruitment exercise conducted earlier this year, we have a short ‘reserve list’ from which to appoint a new TES business member without having to repeat another lengthy recruitment process. As per the TES Terms of Reference, **DE** conferred with the original Selection Panel that created the reserve list to ensure there had been no significant changes of circumstance, and the Panel confirmed that the list is still valid. **DE** then contacted the ‘first reserve’ candidate, **AT**, who accepted the invitation to join the TES Board.

**Decision: The TES Board appointed AT as a TES Board business member, effective 4 July 2023.**

- 3.12. **GP** noted that there are several other positions that will need appointing to as a result of the above changes, including the BES Chair role (currently held by **DS**) plus membership of several other boards where **GP** is the current TES representative, such as the Newhaven Enterprise Zone Board and the Newhaven and Hastings Town Deal Boards. **DS** will discuss this with **GP** in more detail and compile a full list of the required appointments, after which **DS** and **DE** will liaise with TES business members over the coming weeks to seek those interested in the roles.

**Action: DS and GP to compile a list of the various boards where new TES representation will be required; DS and DE to liaise with TES business members on making appointments to those roles.**

#### **4. The future of SELEP**

- 4.1. **AB** provided an update on SELEP’s proposals for future transition arrangements, following the Chancellor’s announcement in March 2023 that the Government is “minded to” withdraw support for LEPs from March 2024. An informal workshop of SELEP Directors took place on 12 June, where four possible scenarios were proposed: (A) no change, with the secretariat remaining in place to deliver pan-area activities, fully funded to March 2025; (B) retaining a reduced ‘independent’ secretariat, funded to March 2025 to deliver core activities only; (C) hosting a core team within a local authority to deliver core activities only, operating to March 2025; and (D) full closure of SELEP by the end of March 2024 (or as close to as possible) with all staff and LEP functions disaggregated into local authorities. Whilst the workshop was not a decision-making forum, the discussions plainly resulted in ‘Scenario D’

being the preferred position, largely due to the clear direction of policy and the need to provide clarity for staff and partners at the earliest point. Therefore, at this week's SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 7 July 2023, Scenario D will be the recommended course to take forward.

- 4.2. As part of the transition arrangements, the Strategic Board will be asked to agree to the development of a detailed transition plan, supported by local transition plans in federated areas/upper-tier authorities, to consider such things as governance, finance, capital funding responsibilities and strategic added-value activities such as the sector groups. **AB** made it clear that one of the main priorities of the transition will be ensuring existing SELEP staff members are properly provided for, with local authority partners asked to confirm the available capacity within each authority.
- 4.3. **RD** commented that Scenario D was the option favoured by the East Sussex attendees at the 12 June workshop, who noted that local structures are already in place to help transition LEP functions (thanks to the federated model and ESCC's own Governance procedures), and in East Sussex we're in a very strong position to take on those functions through our well-established TES structures (including the Growth Hub which is already in-house as part of ESCC's Economic Development Team).
- 4.4. The Strategic Board will also be given an update on the proposed approach to Growing Places Fund (GPF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF). SELEP is currently holding approximately £9.6m of GPF capital loan funding, repaid by completed projects, and £2.049m of unallocated GBF capital grant funding. As the pipelines for both programmes have already been exhausted, there remains the question of how to best deploy the funding moving forward. In regard to GBF, SELEP must ensure that the available funding is reinvested in appropriate projects at the earliest possible opportunity. This is particularly important given the concerns raised by Government at SELEP's Annual Performance Review related to GBF spend extending into 2023/24 (given that Government specified the GBF programme was to complete by March 2022). SELEP is therefore recommending that a process to create a new pipeline is initiated without delay, in line with previous prioritisation exercises. For the moment SELEP will not be seeking decisions on the use of GPF, as Government advice on the future of LEPs is expected to be issued within the next few weeks (prior to the summer recess) and it is expected to cover GPF.
- 4.5. **CBa** expressed concern over the future of TES once SELEP functions have been disaggregated; **RD** reminded the group that TES has already committed to remain as the strategic economic growth board for the county beyond the life of SELEP, and that **KG** has also committed to this on behalf of the County Council. **CE** noted that when TES first started there was no funding to consider, yet we all came together anyway in the spirit of collaboration, and asked the group to confirm by a show of hands that they are all still happy to continue working together in this way – unanimous agreement. **AB** agreed that, from his SELEP perspective, the way we operate and collaborate in East Sussex has been consistently and demonstratively better than in other areas.
- 4.6. The group thanked **AB** for his work with SELEP over the past ten years, and wished him well for the future.

## 5. University of Sussex Economic Impact Report

- 5.1. Last month the University of Sussex published a report by Oxford Economics on the economic and social impact of the university. **SB** delivered a short presentation summarising some of the key points/figures of the report, and also played a 'key facts' summary video. The full report and video are available to view on the [University of Sussex website](#).
- 5.2. **CE** highlighted the statistic purporting that one-in-four graduates find work in the region, and asked whether data is available on 'the other three', so that we can consider how best to engage with them. **SB** agreed to provide the data. **DH** added that Further Education establishments also have a role to play in overall retention, by developing a pipeline of local students.

**Action: SB to share additional University of Sussex graduate retention data, specifically on the three-in-four graduates that do not stay in the region.**

- 5.3. **VC** queried the number of university 'spin-outs' (companies developed from a university's research) and whether there has been any benchmarking against the other U9 universities. **JHv** clarified that universities tend to generate just one spin-out per year on average, so the University of Sussex's figures are very encouraging. She added that the University of Brighton is looking to develop an innovation hub for the east of the county, to encourage research into that region.

## 6. Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package

- 6.1. **EM** presented a paper on the £9m LGF-funded *Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package* (HBMAP), detailing the progress and spend to date, and the steps now being taken following a recent programme evaluation.
- 6.2. Following discussions with ESCC's Highways contractor earlier this year, it became clear that the total amount of funding required to complete the design and delivery of the six remaining schemes within the overall package would be significantly higher than the remaining LGF monies available – primarily driven by rising costs in the construction sector nationally. A full scheme review was subsequently undertaken, in consultation with officers from Hastings BC and Rother DC, to determine which of the remaining schemes could be taken forward for final development and/or delivery. Accordingly, three schemes are recommended to progress within the current LGF funding envelope: Albert Road, Hastings; Station Approach, Hastings; and Bexhill Cycle Route A.
- 6.3. A revised business case is being developed, to be submitted alongside a Project Change Request (PCR) to the SELEP Accountability Board decision-making meeting in September 2023. TES is being asked to endorse the submission of this PCR and revised business case.
- 6.4. The group discussed the degree to which costs have escalated, seemingly excessively and disproportionately. **RD** clarified that the original 'indicative' costings were made six years ago in December 2017 when the business case was submitted, and since then cost escalations caused by inflation, Covid and the supply of materials have affected all construction projects. **AC** agreed that in the last three years alone we've endured the EU Exit, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis – all of which have had a huge impact on construction and supply chains.
- 6.5. **CBa** suggested that while the need to re-evaluate HBMAP is disappointing, we should look forward and seek alternative funding so that the remaining elements of the package can still be delivered. **PB** agreed, and proposed that Hastings, Rother and ESCC officers meet to discuss this further before the PCR is submitted.
- 6.6. **GP** recommended that TES endorse the approach set out in the paper, with ESCC colleagues to take into consideration where possible any additional points/comments that come out of the officer discussions when finalising the revised business case and PCR. **TES Board members endorsed this approach.**

**Decision: The TES Board endorsed the recommended approach to submitting a revised business case and Project Change Request for the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package.**

- 6.7. **CBe** suggested that, given the significant cost increases highlighted by this occurrence, colleagues might want to consider revisiting and re-evaluating any other ongoing projects to ensure they're still costed correctly.

## 7. Local success stories

- 7.1. **VC** delivered a short presentation highlighting some of the successful projects that have been delivered in Hastings recently, including the Churchfields Business Centre (featuring 29 business incubator units, with the first 12 tenants now in place) and Hastings Commons (which includes the Observer Building, 12 Claremont and Eagle House). **BH** added some Bexhill successes, including North Bexhill Access Road and Bexhill Enterprise Park North/South.

## 8. Additional updates and stakeholder reports (for information)

- 8.1. **RD** highlighted a few key updates within the reports, including the environment reports in the appendices; new updates from Borough and District colleagues; an update on electric vehicle work; and the economic profile report that provides data on growth measures.
- 8.2. **CBa** queried the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) update, and asked whether any further updates have been publicised recently, specifically in regard to evening bus services in Hastings and Rother. Post-meeting, **RD** provided links to the latest information: [Improvements to bus services, ESCC website](#) and [Rother District bus service improvements, ESCC website](#).

- 8.3. **CBe** noted the Major Road Network (MRN) update, and asked whether DfT can be urged to respond on the Outline Business Case for the A22 Corridor Package, which ESCC submitted in December 2022. **RD** confirmed that his officers meet regularly with DfT officials, so yes it will be raised again.
9. **AOB**
- 9.1. **GP** suggested the next TES meeting in October 2023 ought to be held in person as it will be **DS**'s first meeting as Chair. The group agreed; **DE** will confirm the details in due course.
- 9.2. **GP** thanked the group for the support he has received from all partners and colleagues over the last nine years. He especially thanked local authority colleagues at County, Borough and District Councils, and in particular **DE**, **RD** and **JHa**.

#### Summary of decisions:

- 3.5 The TES Board approved the appointment of **DS** as TES Chair, effective 4 July 2023.
- 3.7 **DS** to be appointed as a SELEP Director, effective 4 July 2023.
- 3.9 The TES Board confirmed its intention to appoint a new TES Deputy Chair.
- 3.11 The TES Board appointed **AT** as a TES Board business member, effective 4 July 2023.
- 6.6 The TES Board endorsed the recommended approach to submitting a revised business case and Project Change Request for the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package.

#### Summary of actions:

- 3.10 **DE** to liaise with TES business members on appointing a new TES Deputy Chair.
- 3.12 **DS** and **GP** to compile a list of the various boards where new TES representation will be required; **DS** and **DE** to liaise with TES business members on making appointments to those roles.
- 5.2 **SB** to share additional University of Sussex graduate retention data, specifically on the three-in-four graduates that do not stay in the region.