

# Minutes of the Strategic Board meeting:

## 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### Attendees:

Sarah Dance	Chair
Simon Cook	Deputy Chair
Helen Russell	CEO, SELEP
Michael Neumann	Essex County Council (s151)
Stephanie Ennis	Essex Legal Services
Lorna Norris	Essex County Council
Helen Dyer	SELEP Secretariat
Jo Simmons	SELEP Secretariat
Gregory Wilkinson	DLUHC
Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Lee Scott	Essex County Council
Cllr Lauren Edwards	Medway Council
Cllr Roger Gough	Kent County Council
David Sheppard	Team East Sussex
Clive Soper	Team East Sussex
Ana Christie	Team East Sussex
David Rayner	Success Essex
Lara Fox	Success Essex
Perry Glading	Opportunity South Essex
Liz Gibney	Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Vince Lucas	Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Andrew Metcalf	Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
David Milham	Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Jo James	Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Cllr Christine Bayliss	District/Borough/City Councils representative
Jeremy Kerswell	Further Education Representative

### Other Attendees:

Richard Dawson	East Sussex County Council	Leslie Rickerby	SELEP Secretariat
Jill Fisher	East Sussex County Council	Vivien Prigg	SELEP Secretariat
Nick Brown	Southend-on-Sea City Council	Louise Aitken	SELEP Secretariat
Paul Chapman	Essex County Council	Brian Horton	SELEP Secretariat
Sunny Ee	Medway Council	Alex Riley	SELEP Secretariat
Jessica Jagpal	Medway Council	Gary Crooks	Thurrock Council
Steve Samson	Kent County Council	Howard Davies	SELEP Secretariat
		Keri Lawrence	SELEP Secretariat (minutes)

*This meeting was held online via Zoom and a recording can be found by clicking [here](#); the timestamp of the start of the discussion for each item is indicated in brackets.*

**Item 1: Welcome and apologies for absence**

**Apologies:**

Penny Shimmin (Social Enterprise Representative), Mark Curle (Opportunity South Essex), Cllr Kevin Bentley (Essex County Council, substituted by Cllr Lee Scott), Prof. Karen Cox (Higher Education Representative), Carol Ford (Kent and Medway Economic Partnership), Cllr Andrew Jefferies (technical problems).

**Item 2: Minutes of last meeting, declarations of interest (01'07" timestamp on video)**

- 2.1. The Board agreed the minutes of the last meeting as an accurate record.
- 2.2. David Rayner asked the Board to note that Cllr Kevin Bentley's statement in item 3.6 that 'Everyone has been fully briefed and kept on board and had their say' is not accurate with respect to the Success Essex Board. Cllr Lee Scott (Essex County Council) made assurances officers would be made aware. Perry Glading confirmed that Opportunity South Essex have been briefed.
- 2.3. Cllr Christine Bayliss declared an interest with respect to Agenda Item 7 in relation to Barnhorn Green; and did not participate in the vote.

**Item 3: Governance Update (04'21" timestamp on video)**

- 3.1. Helen Russell presented to the Board.

**The Board Noted:**

- 3.2. The resignation of Graham Peters as a Private Sector Director representing Team East Sussex, effective June 2023.
- 3.3. The appointment of David Sheppard as a Private Sector Director representing Team East Sussex, effective June 2023.
- 3.4. The appointment of Mark Curle as a Private Sector Director representing Opportunity South Essex, effective July 2023.
- 3.5. The resignation of Matthew Arnold as a Private Sector Director representing Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, effective September 2023.
- 3.6. The resignation of Jo James as a Private Sector Director representing Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, effective December 2023.
- 3.7. The appointment of David Milham as a Private Sector Director representing Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, effective December 2023.
- 3.8. The appointment of Andrew Metcalf as a Private Sector Director representing Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, effective December 2023.

**Item 4: SELEP Integration Plan (07'29" timestamp on video)**

- 4.1. Helen Russell presented to the Board.

**The Board Resolved (31'58" timestamp on video):**

- 4.2. **To Agree** the final SELEP Integration Plan.
- 4.3. **To Note** the progress made, impact on the critical path and remaining key risks highlighted in this paper and the Integration Plan.

- 4.4. **To Endorse** the DLUHC LEP Integration templates, submitted to Government by East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent and Medway.
- 4.5. **To Endorse** the utilisation of uncommitted SELEP residual revenue funds for application in 2024/25 to support LEP function resourcing in UTLAs, noting this will be subject to a final decision to be made by the Accountability Board.

**Item 5: Local Authority Integration Plans Update (33'24" timestamp on video)**

5.1 Cllr Roger Gough (Kent County Council) provided an update from a Kent and Medway perspective. The DLUHC Transition Template was submitted in November. Extensive work is underway, engaging both Districts and Business partners. The Kent and Medway Economic Framework has been finalised, which covers the wider economic strategy and the LEP functions. The Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) continues to support the significant workstreams including the employment task force (Kent and Medway focused), data and intelligence, Growth Hub, and the handover of Accountable Body status. Key priorities for Kent and Medway include the transfer of staff from April and the use of potential associated residual funding to support that. Kent and Medway are comfortable that the significant level of work underway, and the close working with SELEP and Essex County Council as LEP Accountable Body to complete the necessary handover arrangements, will ensure that integration will be completed in a timely manner.

5.2 Cllr Lauren Edwards (Medway Council) endorsed Cllr Gough's update and emphasised that Medway Council are committed to working with Kent County Council to deliver the LEP functions across the economic area, which is clearly outlined in the template submitted to Government. With respect to Medway governance, a paper on the transfer of LEP functions will go to Cabinet in January 2024.

5.3 Cllr Lee Scott (Essex County Council) provided an update. In order to develop plans for integration across Essex, Essex County Council has been working with Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council to agree an integration plan for all 3 UTLA's. A partnership agreement will be entered into which will set out how LEP functions will be delivered. The partnership agreement will formalise the mechanisms and arrangements for the integration process on a Greater Essex level. The agreement will clearly articulate the functions and responsibilities assigned to each UTLA and those which will be assigned at a Greater Essex level. As outlined at previous Board meetings, Greater Essex is in negotiation with Government regarding a potential devolution deal. The outcome of those negotiations is expected prior to Christmas or shortly thereafter and will inform the Essex integration plans. If a devolution deal is agreed by Government, it will be necessary for Greater Essex UTLA's to develop an interim arrangement across Greater Essex before LEP functions move over to the proposed Combined Authority. Should a devolution deal not be agreed with Government, the interim arrangements agreed will continue. Greater Essex UTLA's are already establishing new strategic relationships with businesses and will continue to work closely with these businesses to shape future arrangements. As per Government guidelines, a full, open and transparent recruitment process will take place to create a new Board. This process will take place following the expected announcement from Government in January regarding the future role of business.

5.4 Written update from East Sussex County Council as follows:

ESCC has continued to make resource available across departments to ensure LEP Transition work is prioritised. As such we've made excellent progress in developing our East Sussex Integration Plan and have now produced a full draft version.

In developing our Plan we mirrored the SELEP workstreams, and carefully considered each-and-every activity of the overarching SELEP Integration Plan, arranging those activities into county-specific actions, and providing our own response to how the relevant roles, functions and responsibilities will be absorbed locally.

We've also ensured that the strategic involvement of the business voice is recognised in the Plan through Team East Sussex. This was also recognised in the DLUHC LEP Integration Template that we submitted to Government (last week), where we clearly set out that Team East Sussex will continue to operate beyond the life of SELEP as the business-led strategic advisory economic growth board for the county, providing the voice of business and helping to steer the economic growth agenda for East Sussex. Emma Smith (South East Area Lead at DLUHC) attended this week's TES Board meeting and was again very complementary of Team East Sussex, commenting on how well the Board fits the remit set by Government.

ESCC has provided confirmation to SELEP that it will act as Accountable Body for Growth Hub funding from 1 April 2024 (should sufficient funding be forthcoming), and that the Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub will continue to be delivered in-house.

The draft East Sussex Integration Plan was endorsed by the TES Board earlier this week. ESCC Cabinet is scheduled to approve an updated version of the Plan in March 2024 that incorporates the anticipated Government guidance and new Assurance Framework. All formal approvals are still on track to be concluded ahead of the March SELEP Strategic Board meeting.

#### **Item 6: 2022/23 Accounts (40'51" timestamp on video)**

6.1 Lorna Norris presented to the Board.

##### **The Board:**

6.2 **Confirmed** that the SELEP Statement of Accounts 2022/23 have been considered.

6.3 **Approved** the South East LEP Ltd Statement of Accounts 2022/23.

#### **Item 7: Growing Places Fund Update (1h05'23" timestamp on video)**

7.1 Helen Dyer presented to the Board.

7.2 The Board considered the proposed options 1, 2 and 3 in relation to the requested revised repayment schedule for the Sovereign Harbour project.

7.3 East Sussex County Council proposed a further Option 4:

“We would ask the Board to support and endorse the approach that good decision making involves East Sussex County Council, SELEP and Essex County Council as the Accountable Body holding further discussions on each of the options and the impacts presented. We then ask that the SELEP Strategic Board endorses the approach that decision making is agreed to sit with the SELEP Accountability Board members to determine the decisions on both the repayment plan presented for Sovereign Harbour and separately on the Barnhorn Green project to determine whether it has met the requirements to receive GPF funding.”

7.4 **The Board resolved to agree** the proposed Option 4.

7.5 **The Board Noted** that in advance of any decision by the Accountability Board in respect of the Sovereign Harbour loan repayment, East Sussex County Council will be required to confirm to the Accountable Body that the Sovereign Harbour Project will continue to comply with applicable laws, including the relevant state aid/subsidy control rules.

**Item 8: Local Growth and Getting Building Fund Update (1h40'09" timestamp on video)**

8.1 Helen Dyer presented to the Board.

8.2 Michael Neumann (s151) confirmed that from an Accountable Body perspective, due process in line with the Assurance Framework was followed by the SELEP Secretariat in relation to the Investment Panel; and the decision taken by the majority of the panel was in line with the Assurance Framework.

**Item 9: Delegated Authority for Greater South East Net Zero Hub (1h43'39" timestamp on video)**

9.1 Jo Simmons presented to the Board.

**The Board Resolved:**

9.2 **To Note** the GSENGH reviewed Terms of Reference (ToR) presented in Appendix A to this report.

9.3 **To Agree** to delegate responsibility to the SELEP CEO in conjunction with the Accountable Body for agreeing the final ToR in a form substantially similar to the ToR presented in Appendix A.

9.4 **To Agree** to the representation of SELEP on the GSENGH Board and the remit of powers defined in the reviewed ToR, including the permitting of any further delegation from the CEO to a member of the SELEP Secretariat.

9.5 **To Note** that SELEP representation on the GSENGH Board will not enable the representative to make decisions that will create, or have the potential to create, a financial liability for either SELEP Ltd or the Accountable Body without appropriate approvals having been sought in advance.

**Item 10: AOB & Close**

10.1 Sarah Dance extended her gratitude on behalf of the Board to Jo James on her retirement.

10.2 Date of the next meeting is **22 March 2024** in person, location in London to be confirmed.

10.3 Sarah Dance reminded the Board that an extraordinary meeting may need to be held before the next meeting in March but would only be done if absolutely necessary. If that was the case, attendance would be appreciated.

10.3 Sarah Dance closed the meeting.