

#### Attendees – TES Board members (and their substitutes):

<b>AC</b>	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	<b>JHi</b>	Cllr Julia Hilton	Hastings BC
<b>AT</b>	Alison Turner	FSB	<b>ME</b>	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
<b>CBa</b>	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	<b>PH</b>	Paul Hetherington	HIS Ltd
<b>CE</b>	Christina Ewbank	ACES	<b>SB</b>	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
<b>CS</b>	Clive Soper	Hailsham & District Chamber	<b>SD</b>	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
<b>DH</b>	Donna Harfield	East Sussex College	<b>ZN</b>	Cllr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC
<b>DS</b>	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd ( <b>CHAIR</b> )			

#### Attendees – others (officers and observers):

<b>AK</b>	Andrew Keer	East Sussex CC	<b>KTh</b>	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
<b>BK</b>	Becky Kemp	East Sussex CC	<b>KTu</b>	Kane Tudor	East Sussex CC
<b>BP</b>	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	<b>LR</b>	Lisa Rawlinson	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
<b>CBe</b>	Chris Bending	Wealden DC	<b>PD</b>	Pranesh Datta	Hastings BC
<b>CD</b>	Christine Doel	SQW	<b>RC</b>	Rob Cottrill	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
<b>DG</b>	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	<b>RD</b>	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
<b>ES</b>	Emma Smith	DLUHC	<b>RG</b>	Ross Gill	SQW
<b>JHa</b>	James Harris	East Sussex CC	<b>TV</b>	Tracy Vaks	East Sussex CC
<b>JHv</b>	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	<b>VC</b>	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
<b>JS</b>	Jo Simmons	South East LEP			

#### Apologies:

<b>DE</b>	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	<b>PS</b>	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
<b>KG</b>	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC			

## 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. **DS** welcomed everyone to the TES meeting and asked any new attendees to introduce themselves.
- 1.2. **DS** 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, 4 December 2023

- 2.1. **DS** ran through the previous actions, all of which were complete.
- 2.2. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

## 3. LEP Transition

- 3.1. **RD** provided an update on the progress made since the last TES meeting, noting that the Government has now issued guidance for all local authorities, and all of the existing contracts and grant agreements for projects funded through SELEP are being novated from Essex County Council, as the current accountable body for SELEP, to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as the new local accountable body with the establishment of a Transition Agreement.
- 3.2. There are still a few outstanding tasks and some 'unknowns' as we're awaiting formal confirmation from Government on SELEP's proposed functional economic areas, which will confirm ESCC as the local accountable body for East Sussex. We are also awaiting further clarification of assurance arrangements and the allocation of Growth Hub funding for 2024/25, plus the future of Growing Places Fund (GPF) is still to be resolved (with a final decision on the disaggregation of funds to be made by the SELEP Accountability Board next month).
- 3.3. **CE** asked about the ownership of the East Sussex Integration Plan, and **CS** queried the level of business input. **JHa** clarified that the business input/engagement inferred by **CS** is actually in reference to the county's ongoing *strategy* production, *which is a separate piece of work to this LEP transition process*. **JHa** differentiated between the two:
  - Economic Growth Strategy: Setting the strategic direction for the county to 2050. Business input is an essential part of strategy development, and so business engagement forms a critical part of the consultation (covered in agenda item 7).

- LEP Transition: The ‘process’ of transitioning the functions/services currently delivered by SELEP to the Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) of East Sussex, Essex and Kent County Council. The overall process is being managed by SELEP, in collaboration with the UTLAs, and all of the necessary steps have been set out in the SELEP Integration Plan. All partners, e.g. TES, are being kept apprised of progress. In East Sussex, to ensure we have a full understanding of the implications of the LEP Transition process, ESCC officers have considered each activity of the overarching SELEP plan and arranged them into county-specific actions, providing our own response to how the relevant roles, functions and responsibilities will be absorbed locally. This is the *East Sussex Integration Plan*, written by ESCC officers, who will be responsible for updating the ‘Action Plan’ section throughout 2024/25 as all of the actions are carried out and the new processes are implemented and embedded.

3.4. **RD** noted that the final draft East Sussex Integration Plan has been updated with only very minor ‘tweaks’ since the last version (just some of the wording where we were previously waiting for confirmations, and to the Timescales of some of the actions to make it clear which ones extend into 2024/25), but there are no fundamental changes to the content. **RD** asked the TES Board to endorse the final draft East Sussex Integration Plan.

**Decision: The TES Board endorsed the final draft East Sussex Integration Plan.**

3.5. **CE** added a note of concern about the amount of time TES Board members are given to review long or complex documents (papers are currently circulated one week ahead of meetings) and asked if consideration could be given in future to sharing them earlier.

#### **4. Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling Package**

4.1. **TV** presented a paper on the Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling Package (ESWWCP), awarded £6.6m Local Growth Fund (LGF) in 2015/16, detailing the progress and spend to date and the steps now being taken following a recent programme evaluation.

4.2. Five schemes within the overall package remain outstanding for delivery. However, following discussions with ESCC’s Highways Contractor, it has become clear that the total amount of funding required to complete the design and delivery of these schemes is significantly higher than the remaining LGF monies available. This has primarily been driven by the national rising costs in the construction sector. A full review and cost-estimate exercise on the remaining five schemes has been undertaken by consultants WSP, and based on this assessment, *three* schemes are recommended to progress within the current LGF funding envelope: Eastbourne Cycle Parking Stage 2; Eastbourne Town Centre to Seafront Cycle Route; and Horsey Way Cycle Route Phase 1b.

4.3. Ahead of submitting a project change request to SELEP (or to ESCC due to the period of LEP transition), the TES Board is asked to endorse this reallocation of the LGF funding to the proposed prioritised schemes, and to extend spend to December 2025 (to allow for the delay whilst the prioritisation process was conducted).

4.4. **CE** asked if appropriate cycle groups had been consulted, which **AK** confirmed they had, with valuable feedback provided.

4.5. **CE** also queried whether the proposed schemes are segregated cycle routes or painted signs on the road, and cited recent Transport for London research on the safety aspects of the two methods. **AK** clarified that the routes vary by scheme but do not have full segregation (some are on the road and signed, some are shared use), and assured the group that all schemes have been subject to independent Road Safety Audit and are compliant with all design standards set at that time.

4.6. **CBe** noted his disappointment that there is no longer any spend in south Wealden within this revised package, but understands the requirement for prioritisation.

4.7. **BP** flagged the breakdown of costs in the paper, specifically where some schemes appeared to have zero budget in the package’s original business case. **TV** clarified that a budget may not have been fully costed at the outset, but each scheme was properly assessed for submission to SELEP in the original business case. The key point now is that, moving forward, budgets *have* been fully costed, and benefit/cost ratios must be considered in choosing which schemes are prioritised. However, **TV** agreed to provide a greater level of detail on the budgets, and **RD** proposed that a follow-up note be circulated post-meeting to seek TES members’ endorsement by electronic procedure.

Post-meeting update: **TV** provided further detailed information, which **KT** circulated to TES Board members. **KT** asked TES Board members for endorsement, as set out in the meeting papers, by electronic procedure. On 6 February 2024 **KT** confirmed that quorate endorsement from the TES Board had been received.

**Decision: The TES Board endorsed the proposed project change request for the LGF-funded Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling Package.**

## 5. TES business member roles

- 5.1. **DS** advised that **AT** has been appointed TES Deputy Chair, effective 2 January 2024, subject to TES Board endorsement. He added that part of the Deputy Chair's role will be coordinating the activities of the subgroups on behalf of the TES Board.

**Decision: The TES Board endorsed the appointment of AT as TES Deputy Chair.**

- 5.2. In terms of TES business member representation on external boards, **PH** has agreed to be the TES representative on the *Hastings Town Deal Board* as an interim measure, and **AT** has agreed to represent TES on the *Reimagining Newhaven Board* (formerly the Newhaven Town Deal Board). TES representation on the Newhaven Enterprise Zone Board still needs to be determined.

## 6. Future TES meeting schedule

- 6.1. **DS** advised that from April 2024, TES meetings will no longer be aligned to the SELEP meeting schedule, giving us the opportunity to review our programme of meetings moving forward. **DS** proposed that future TES Board meetings be quarterly, removing the intermediate 'workshops' altogether (but with the option to add ad-hoc meetings if/when required), and all to be held face-to-face in order to encourage networking and help develop relationships. TES Board members all agreed.

**Decision: The TES Board agreed to hold quarterly, face-to-face TES Board meetings from April 2024.**

**Action: DE to draft a TES Board meeting schedule for 2024/25, for consideration at the next TES Board meeting.**

- 6.2. **AC** suggested that meetings be held in different locations across the county, which the group supported. **DS** encouraged TES Board members and partners to offer their venues to host future meetings.

**Action: TES colleagues to consider offering their venues to host future TES Board meetings, and contact DE as appropriate.**

- 6.3. The group briefly discussed the work of TES's subgroups and how they'll feed into future TES meetings. It was noted that, as part of overall strategy development (agenda item 7), we must ensure that any emerging topics/themes are covered by the subgroups, either existing or by introducing new subgroups. Examples included climate change and net zero, and Artificial Intelligence as part of coordinated business-to-business cross-county support. **DS** agreed that it is important to get the relationships between TES and the subgroups right, hence **AT** taking on a 'coordinating' role moving forward.

## 7. East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy

- 7.1. **KTh**, along with SQW consultants **CD** and **RG**, presented a progress update on the new Economic Growth Strategy, including a detailed account of the recent consultation work and the feedback generated by the engagement process, plus an outline of the draft 'storyboard' for the strategy itself, which is a high-level framework setting the intended direction of travel. The storyboard, referred to as 'East Sussex Prosperity', includes: an overall goal (definition of where the economy should be in 2050); defining principles (to underpin all activity in support of economic growth); key themes (areas of long-term focus); and areas for action (to guide activity).

- 7.2. The group discussed this in detail and provided feedback to the consultants, including the following key points:

- The cross cutting themes are fitting. Perhaps we could do more shorter-term work to understand how those themes affect East Sussex in more detail, to influence the planning.

- The framework ought to acknowledge the decline in businesses importing and exporting goods as part of the supply chain, as it's important in terms of helping the economy generate jobs and growth.
- Agriculture, farming and fishing need to be properly considered. Over the life of the strategy there will be huge challenges for the Rural, Food and Marine economies.
- A local food and farming strategy would be an important aspect of reducing food miles and would contribute to the local visitor economy, so should influence skills planning.
- Whilst it is encouraging to see the level of investment in our cultural assets, we need to invest in our Digital economy so that we are not so dependent on seasonal hospitality. There is a strong link between culture and digital clusters, and we need to use one to build on the other. We also need to bring more hi-tech businesses into the county, as this will encourage young talent to remain. Digital, Artificial Intelligence and Innovation opportunities cross over all sectors.
- Health inequalities need to be addressed. As the strategy is to 2050, improving life expectancy seems a reasonable goal. And with an ageing population, *digital* healthcare gives huge opportunities.
- Consider the impacts of flooding and how can we safeguard our economy (spatial and physical adaptations).
- Where sectors or themes appear to be missing from the framework, it may be due to insufficient notice being given for the consultation workshops. Larger businesses in particular were significantly underrepresented. Perhaps a business group directly from TES could contribute more to the framework.
- Take the learning from former economic growth strategies, i.e. measurements of what 'good' actually looks like.

7.3. **KTh** thanked colleagues for their input and ran through the next steps, which will involve working up a narrative with the Oversight Group and partners, and preparing a first draft of the Strategy to be brought back to TES. It is likely that additional engagement will also be considered, following some of the feedback from today's meeting.

## 8. Close

8.1. **DS** drew the meeting to a close at this point, as it had already run to two hours. The items cut – *TES Communications Strategy*, *Business East Sussex (BES)* and anything already submitted for *AOB* – will be picked up offline or at the next TES Board meeting.

Meeting closed at 17:00.

### Summary of decisions:

- 3.4 The TES Board endorsed the final draft East Sussex Integration Plan.
- 4.7 The TES Board endorsed the proposed project change request for the LGF-funded Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling Package. [*by electronic procedure post-meeting*]
- 5.1 The TES Board endorsed the appointment of **AT** as TES Deputy Chair.
- 6.1 The TES Board agreed to hold quarterly, face-to-face TES Board meetings from April 2024.

### Summary of actions:

- 6.1 **DE** to draft a TES Board meeting schedule for 2024/25, for consideration at the next TES Board meeting.
- 6.2 TES colleagues to consider offering their venues to host future TES Board meetings, and contact **DE** as appropriate.

### **Post-meeting addendum**

A short note from Paul Hetherington on the two items he planned to raise at the meeting (to be revisited at the next TES Board meeting in March 2024):

1. **Business East Sussex (BES):** An update on the plan to take BES meetings out across the county. A letter has been drafted, to be posted to around 200 businesses with the highest turnover, and then emailed to many more through the Chambers. This will include a schedule of dates, times and towns that BES will be visiting every month from February 2024 until January 2025.
2. **Digifest promotion:** This has been set up as a not-for-profit event to raise the profile of Eastbourne. It was incredibly successful last year and is taking place again in October this year. Given the central theme of the digital economy within the economic strategy, what could we do to give this a national profile and create a mass event/conference? Especially as Eastbourne is a conference town.