

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Monday 10th May 2017**

**Tindal Board Room, Anglia Ruskin University**

**Attendees:**

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| Simon Brice | Chairman of GEBB, Country Land and Business Association |
| Dominic Collins | Essex County Council (minutes) |
| David Burch  | Essex Chambers  |
| David Rayner | Birkett Long, Heart of Essex |
| Fiona Bodle | Anglia Ruskin University  |
| Anita Thornberry | Haven Gateway Partnership |
| George Kieffer | Essex Vice Chair of SELEP, Haven Gateway Partnership |
| Haydon Yates  | West Essex Alliance  |
| Murray Foster  | Southend Business Board , Deputy Chairman of GEBB |
| Cllr Kevin Bentley | Essex County Council |
| Cllr Gagan Mehendra | Essex County Council |
| Chris Newenham | Wilkins and Sons |
| Neil Gulliver | Chelmsford, Heart of Essex |
| Simon Brice | Chairman: Farmer, Country Land & Business Association |
| Vanessa Cuthill  | University Of Essex |
| Julian Drury | C2C, Opportunity South Essex |
| Duncan McKenzie | Essex independent Economic Commission |
| Adam Bryan  | SELEP |

**Apologies:**

Peter Williams, Williamsgroup Kate Hilyard, CRL
Christopher Barnes, Marks and Spencer Keith Rowling, Firstdata
Marcelle Day, Ford Michael Lawrence, LV
Cllr Butland, Braintree Council Mike Gilbert, Leonardcompany
Cllr Cutmore, Rochford Council Deborah Hunt, ifdsgroup
Travis Bowles, Msamlin Ian Morehouse, flaktwoods Xavier Woodward, DPWorld Ian Vipond, Colchester

Cllr John Lamb, Southend-on-Sea Tim Burrows, CRL

David Burch, Essex Chambers of Commerce

1. **Introductions & Apologies**

Murray Foster (Deputy Chairman of GEBB) opened the meeting at 18:00 and took introductions from around the table. Simon Brice joined the meeting shortly after its opening.

Apologies were noted as above.

1. **Review of last meeting minutes**

Minutes from the last meeting on 5th December 2016 were noted and agreed.

1. **Essex Economic Commissions**

Duncan McKenzie offered a summary of the Commissions work to date including its first report. A video summarising the report was also played (available at <http://www.deadlinecommunications.co.uk/essex_economics_commission.htm> and <http://www.deadlinecommunications.co.uk/ecc_economic.htm>)

Duncan referenced the pieces of work that the Commission would now be focussing on subsequent to the release of the report: commercial space and business premises, skills (in consultation with the Employment and Skills Board) and coastal communities. The remaining issues highlighted by the Commission, key sectors and transport infrastructure, will be largely left for partner and stakeholders to engage with through the Commissions first report.

Cllr Bentley raised the issue highlighted within the report that for its size in geography and economy, Essex is missing 100 businesses of 250 employees and above. The availability of suitable economic and business space was highlighted as a key issue that has led to this reduced business location, and as such should be a key focus for GEBB future work. Cllr Bentley also noted the importance of the London Plan and the implications within it for a potential opportunity for Essex to offer locations for London businesses.

Vanessa Cuthill suggested there was an important link to be made between key sectors that need encouraging within Essex and the government’s industrial strategy, which would offer the link to government monies in future.

Chris Burr asked whether GEBB should be concerned about productivity, which Duncan McKenzie agreed was an issue – productivity is directly linked to economic growth, with skills having a central role in its improvement.

Through discussion, GEBB agreed that the Commissions work should be central to driving its future agenda. It was noted that the report offered a great insight into the current state of the Essex economy, however there was a need for further analysis of what actions should be undertaken to support the resolution of weaknesses within the economy. There was a suggestion of exploring whether any of the Commissioners would like to sit on GEBB either now or subsequent to its work to ensure the sustainability of action to the Commissions existing and future findings.

***Action – GEBB secretariat to discuss with secretariat of the Economic Commission.***

Kevin Bentley also suggested that the work of GEBB and the commission also needs to be consistent with the London Plan

**Action – *GEBB secretariat to arrange a future item on the GEBB agenda to discuss the London Plan***

Chris Wilkins identified that they are a small to medium business and are trying to grow at present. Whilst they are receiving a lot of good will from ECC and borough they feel it is very supportive but it’s very difficult to do anything….Planning process is a bottleneck (stuck between parish and borough)

Anita Thornberry raised the issue that we have a lot of home grown businesses in Essex that we should support to grow. Whilst skills are important we should also have a good understanding of our sectors (not just the broad brush headings in the Commission report). Also, the sectors are bleeding into each other – e.g. engineering into healthcare.

Anita also noted that a productive economy is about connecting businesses up and supporting the innovation that that inspires, and therefore resulting supply chains. Whilst acknowledging this is true George Kieffer suggested we also need to understand what businesses are experiencing to understand what we should be doing to support them.

David Rayner and Murray Foster suggested that the current GEBB task and finish group should help establish what GEBB should be focused on delivering and hence attracting businesses to the GEBB table before establishing what actions it should be proposing or supporting as a result of the Commission’s report.

**Action: Next GEBB meeting to receive proposals on future operation, membership and terms of reference for the board.**

1. **South East LEP update**

Adam Bryan offered a presentation on the current key SELEP activity:



George Kieffer noted that he is working with the OSE as their Vice Chair as well as GEBB’s. Would be keen to bring together the two memberships more formally before SELEP meetings.

In discussion about how we sell the ‘Essex Story’ members offered significant input as to what should set our story apart, Haydon Yates specifically identified the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine and how we justify our return to the treasury in its investment to us. Exploring this point Anita Thornberry identified that we need to articulate our story to be compelling – not compare us to North and Midlands – show what the business case for investment in the South is. Our story could be that we provide a return to the exchequer that they can invest in the north, so invest in us to give you the cash to spend elsewhere.

Vanessa Cuthill identified that collaboration through the recent Science and Innovation Audit (SIA) is a good way to ‘sell’ the Essex Story. That will provide a basis of information that the government will use to make its funding decisions through. Sector work and the SIA will help inform government on how it should distribute its money.

In terms of actively working to raise the profile of GEBB, Cllr Bentley noted that the Board needed to be more active with MP’s to tell their story, with Simon noting he had never been asked to lobby for GEBB in the 2 years as chairman. Dominic Collins identified the opportunity of Growing places Funding.

1. **Future of GEBB**

Dominic Collins provided feedback from the Task and Finish Group, including suggestions for future structure and Chairmanship.

There was much discussion regarding the future role and function of the Board that will feed into a further task and finish group and revised terms of reference. Murray Foster suggested that GEBB needs to provide additionality beyond just being a function of the LEP, which was agreed by the Board

**Action: A further working group meeting to be had to move this activity forward**.

Simon Brice suggested that this was the appropriate time for him to step-down as Chairman having served in the post for over two years. Simon noted that he remained passionate in supporting Essex and the Board in its new form, suggesting that a new Chairman should be selected in due course and that they should take up one of the SELEP Board seats to offer a robust link between SELEP and GEBB.

Whilst a new substantive Chair is sought, Simon suggested that an interim Chair is chosen so support the transition to a new Chair and that having held initial discussions with David Rayner, Simon proposed that David Rayner should step in as interim Chairman. This proposal was accepted by the Board with David to take on the role of interim chair from the next meeting.

Kevin Bentley led thanks from across the Board for Simon’s support and commitment to GEBB from its initial set up to date.

There was active discussion regarding the role and function of GEBB including what a future chair should offer. George Kieffer noted that we should take a lesson from OSE in appointing a businessperson to relate to the businesses of Essex as a permanent Chair; Haydon Yates agreed suggesting that the role of the Chairman will need to be more accountable and ready to invest the time. Kevin Bentley also noted the need to go for a wide selection process given the opportunity afforded GEBB with a new government in place. Kevin suggested that local authorities shouldn’t appoint that person and that there needs to be a business led selection panel.

There was also significant discussion in regard to ensuring the Board is effectively resourced with Murray Foster noting that there can no longer be a reliance on ECC to provide the only resourcing. Anita Thornberry identified that we can use the universities, Haven Gateway Partnership and other organisations to support this work.

1. **AOB**

**Science and innovation audit**

* An update on the work of the Eastern regional Science and Innovation Audit was provided by Dominic Collins.

**Growth Hub**

* It was noted that an update on the Growth Hub should be taken at the next meeting

**Capital: LGF programme update**

* An LGF programme update will be taken at the next meeting.