

**Minutes of the Board meeting of Opportunity South Essex**

**Thursday 7 September 2017 at 14.00**

**Present**

**Kate Willard, Stobart Group (Chair)**

**Cllr Kevin Bentley, Essex County Council**

**Cllr Colin Riley, Castle Point Borough Council;**

**Cllr Terry Cutmore, Rochford District Council**

**Shaun Scrutton, Rochford District Council**

**Dominic Collins Essex County Council**

**Cllr Linda Allport-Hodge, Basildon Borough Council**

**Cllr John Lamb Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**

**Rhiannon Mort, SE LEP**

**Adam Bryan, SE LEP**

**David Burch, Essex Chambers of Commerce**

**Lyn Carpenter, Thurrock Council**

**Murray Foster, Southend Business Board/Partnership**

**Trevor Hutchinson, DP World London Gateway**

**Emma Cooney, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council *(for Andrew Lewis)***

**Claire Hamilton, Basildon Borough Council**

**Gunilla Edwards, Basildon Borough Council**

**Tim Rignall. Thurrock Council**

**Mark Evershed, Castle Point Borough Council**

**David Barnes, Basildon Business Group**

**Iain McNab BEIS Cities and Local Growth Unit**

**George Kieffer, SELEP Vice Chair for Essex, Thurrock and Southend**

**Alison Spackman, Career Ready**

**Alison Griffin, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**

**Suzanne Bennett, SE LEP**

**SELEP Work shop**

Prior to the Board meeting, the Board received a presentation from SE LEP on the role of the Accountability Board and the role of OSE in monitoring project funding and spend. (See attached presentation).

The Board discussed the role of OSE and the importance of the partnership to have a much more active engagement in relation to monitoring spend and identifying opportunities to take advantage of underspend. The EDM group has produced a monitoring report and for the first time the Board can get sight of the progress of the project receiving LGF funding. It was agreed that the full information of the progress of individual projects is also required ie change of circumstances as to the outcomes delivered, and for the Board to take a much more active role in approving the changes.

It was also recognised that OSE LGF projects should be featured on SE LEP website in order to promote the successes of OSE. **An action was agreed to draft a letter to SE LEP Chair confirm OSE role and commitment to monitor the LGF spend - GE**

**Also to liaise with the SE LEP new Communication Officer to ensure OSE agendas, minutes and projects were prominent on SE LEP website. IL**

KW stated that it had to work both ways ie if OSE put forward priority projects and follow the process we need to be assured that this is respected at SE LEP Board level and avoid a similar situation as that of the last LGF process when OSE independently scored priorites projects fell off the list.

The Board agreed that going forward it was important to also engage with other federated areas and also work together bilaterally. RM stated that it is for the federated areas to lead on pan LEP bids.

The engagement of OSE on SE LEP working groups were also discussed and KW requested to see a list of these groups to ensure attendance.

**Action: RM to send a list of SE LEP working groups**

The role of the federated board is also to sign off project changes for example change of scope and outputs and then recommend to Accountability Board. It was agreed that OSE need to strengthen this role and that more information of projects should be visible.

The Board also requested to see the progress of the spend of all LGF projects across SE LEP in order to identify underspend in other federated areas.

**Action: Present the report going to Accountability Board at the next OSE board, setting out the position of projects across SE LEP**

1. **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed Alison Griffin, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council’s new Chief Executive to the Board.

The Chair also thanked two former Board members Neil Bates, PROCAT and Julian Drury, c2c for their contribution to the Board.

1. **Declaration of Interest**

Declarations of interest from LC (Purfleet project), KW (Stobarts Skills Academy), GK (as Chair of Housing association). There was an agreement to send out the SE LEP declaration of interest proforma to the Board before next meeting.

**Action: Circulate project pipe line and SE LEP Declaration of interest proforma - TR**

1. **Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes were approved as a true record with two outstanding items:

**EDM group to develop a proposal for future resourcing –** will be explored once current HR issues are resolved.

**EDM group to review how OSE Branding and seal of approval could be implemented with regard to skills and business support activities –** agreement to invite organisations to present to the Board and gain the Board’s approval.

1. **Budget update**

Board received the latest budget position showing a slight underspend for 17/18 but a projected deficit of £66k by 31/03/2019 with the current spend profile.

1. **Growing Places Fund**

Two projects; Centre for Advanced Automotive Technologies and Tilbury Riverside Enterprise Centre are being submitted to SE LEP Board on September 22nd. Business cases will be further developed and submitted to SE LEP Board for review.

GK said it was important to state that Centre for Advanced Automotive Technologies could be scaled back as it asked for more than the allocation and could therefore be at risk of being refused. IL confirmed that the project was fully scalable and that the application reflected this.

1. **Local Growth Fund Capital Monitoring**

DC presented the LGF Monitoring and stated this was the first time the Board has had an overview of project progress. No projects on red and at risk but some amber projects. This format will be used to report to the Board going forward.

CH stated the Board need more information on accessing underspent funding and KW confirmed that this was covered in the workshop preceding the Board meeting and that a report of the overall LGF spend has been requested from SE LEP for the next Board meeting. The Board requested an up to date and refined project pipeline. KW noted that private sector projects were not part of the list of pipe line projects and asked for this to be included.

**Action: Circulate the Project Pipeline to the Board – TR**

1. **TfL Consultation – Draft Mayor’s Transport Strategy 2017**

TH set out the background to the Mayors transport strategy and stated that DP World has provided a response which will be circulated. The Board agreed that OSE also need to provide a response and to ask Alister Southgate, ECC to draft this. LC stated that it links in with the Vision 2050 work which sets out how we collectively can benefit from transport investments.

**Action: Alister Southgate to draft a response – IL**

1. **OSE Terms of Reference**

The Board agreed to revisit this following the Governance review. CH asked for clarification Indemnity section and for it to be tightened up.

**Action. Revise the Indemnity section -TR**

1. **SE LEP Strategic Economic Plan(SEP)**

AB set out the process for the development of the SEP and the consultation timeline. The consultation is ongoing and the timing of the report is dependent on the publication of the government’s Industrial Strategy white paper and this may delay the final SEP. A key issue is to clarify the status of the SEP as a local Industrial strategy. However SE LEP aims to have one of the first local industrial strategies. The consultation questions focusses on what the aspiration is for the local economy and key focus of the SEP is to attract more government and private investment into this area. Next step is to go to SE LEP Board September 22nd to present the evidence base and the work to date and to ask the board what to focus on and what to do now.

KW asked how the private sector had been consulted. AB confirmed a session with cross SE LEP businesses would take place in early November. MF had invited SE LEP to present to Southend Tourism and Business Partnership. KW stated we need to find the distinctive with South Essex or we will otherwise miss the trick and the opportunity to gain government support and engagement.

KB said that this is all about place and this is an opportunity to play on the Thames Gateway position. This is what makes us different and we need to focus on this. KW mentioned the new Borderlands Inclusive Growth Initiative as a new partnership arrangement which has gained government support and which could also be adopted by Thames Gateway partners.

The Board asked IM what was expected to come out of the Thames Estuary Commission report and when it is expected. IM also confirmed that no new chair has been elected for the Commission but Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid will be doing a Thames river trip launch the TE report later in the autumn. KB mentioned that Sajid Javid was expected to attend the next Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership meeting on 13th October and anticipated more information following this meeting.

**Action      Write a letter to Secretary of State Sajid Javid to request an urgent election of a new Chair of Thames Gateway Partnership.**

1. **OSE Governance Review**

Board agreed the scope of the review. DB suggested the inclusion of a Small Business Champion in the Partnership.

1. **Draft Communication Strategy**

EC requested comments to the draft and then to produce a final version end of September. KW requested KB to look at this and also requested partnership Communication Teams to also have a look.

**Action: Respond with comments September 25th latest- All**

1. **South Essex 2050**

LC set out the aim of the work which is to recognise what is unique about South Essex and what is our offer and our ask of Government. This is a unique opportunity to have a grown up conversation and the work a have political support. The Vision is beyond political timescales with long term ambitions. We need to have a conversation in the round not just with different government departments and need a joined up conversation which is not about boundaries but aspirations for the whole area. KW met with David Sturgess, Blue Marble and offered to fully support the process and will allocate a 30 min slot at each Board meeting for discussions and update. CR said this piece of work would revitalise the conversation following the devolution failure and provides a unique opportunity. JL stated the importance of having a dedicated Thames Gateway Minister and for SE LEP to work with us on achieving the aspiration for the area.

1. **BEST Growth Hub**

EC presented the Growth Hub which grew from Southend’s City Deal and to which government have funded up until now. However there is no government funding confirmed past March 2018 and OSE was asked to lobby government for future core funding. The potential loss of the Growth Hub would mean the loss of the direct conduit with government on new and existing business support programme. AB said that there are positive signs from government that funding will be forthcoming and TR said that Growth Hub is a discussion item at next SE LEP board agenda so we must make sure OSE lobbies for future funding. KB said we need to see how we can commercialise and ask for fees at the same time as we ask for government funding. EC said there has been some work around this and KB requested to see that work at next meeting. The Board agreed to receive regular reports from OSE and also to look at sending a representative to the Growth Hub working group.

**Action: Sending report of commercialising opportunities for Growth Hub – EC**

**Volunteers to sit on the Growth Hub working group – All**

1. **Career Ready**

AS set out the work of the Career Ready programme in Southend and Thurrock where businesses are going into schools to provide career advice and entrepreneurship skills. Basildon schools are also included in the project. The programme offers volunteering opportunity for businesses and OSE were are asked to help get more volunteers. TR said it is important to spread this offer to local networks such as business boards. TH said businesses need to know what initiatives are available and the role of businesses, a short brief is needed to set this out. AS was asked if there were volunteers from particular sectors needed but AS said that all sectors were welcome and that there were no volunteers who are excess to their needs.

LAH mentioned Basildon’s intention to launch a new initiative, Pathways to Success Panel focus on businesses and would welcome the inclusion of Career Ready’s work.

LC said the challenge for parents is the choice of curriculum and how do we influence that schools provide a curriculum aligned with employer needs. ME said the challenge is also that many schools have 6 the form and wanting to recruit to their 6th form rather than offering all opportunities available.

1. **AOB**

Requests from JL, LC and CH for OSE to support their HIF projects.

**Action; Send draft to GE for completion and signature by Chair – LC, CH, JL**

1. **Date and Venue of meeting**

Next meeting is on

**ACTION LIST**

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| **Action** | Whom | Status |
| An action was agreed to draft a letter to SE LEP Chair confirm OSE role and commitment to monitor the LGF spend | GE/KW | done |
| Liaise with the SE LEP new Communication Officer to ensure OSE agendas, minutes and projects were prominent on SE LEP website. | IL | IN PROGRESS |
| Send a list of SE LEP working groups | RM | DONE |
| Present the report going to Accountability Board at the next OSE board, setting out the position of projects across SE LEP | IL | IN PROGRESS |
| Circulate project pipe line and SE LEP Declaration of interest proforma  Getting feedback from private sector of their planned growth projects. | TR  EDMs |  |
| Alister Southgate to draft a response to the TfL strategy | IL |  |
| Circulate the Project Pipeline to the Board | TR |  |
| Revising the Indemnity section | TR |  |
| Write a letter to Secretary of State Sajid Javid to request an urgent election of a new Chair of Thames Estuary Commission. | GE/KW | DONE |
| Respond with comments to Communication Strategy September 25th latest | All |  |
| Sending report of commercialising opportunities for Growth Hub | EC/CB | SENT TO KB |
| Volunteers from the Board asked to sit on the Growth Hub working group | All | DONE |
| Send HIF BID draft to GE for completion and signature by Chair | LC/CH/JL | DONE |