

## Attendees

<b>AC</b>	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	<b>HK</b>	Hilary Knight	Sussex Food Network
<b>BH</b>	Ben Hook	Rother DC	<b>IG</b>	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC
<b>BS</b>	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	<b>JH</b>	James Harris	East Sussex CC
<b>CB</b>	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	<b>KG</b>	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
<b>CE</b>	Christina Ewbank	ACES	<b>KT</b>	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
<b>CS</b>	Clive Soper	FSB	<b>ME</b>	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
<b>DE</b>	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	<b>MS</b>	Martin Searle	FSB
<b>DSH</b>	Dan Shelley	East Sussex College	<b>PSp</b>	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
<b>DSp</b>	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	<b>RD</b>	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
<b>DT</b>	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	<b>RS</b>	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
<b>GP</b>	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	<b>SD</b>	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
<b>HB</b>	Hannah Brookshaw	Hastings BC	<b>SS</b>	Sally Staples	East Sussex CC

## Apologies

<b>DG</b>	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	<b>SB</b>	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
<b>KF</b>	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings BC	<b>VC</b>	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
<b>Psm</b>	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA			

*All of the papers and any presentations delivered at the meeting can be viewed on the following page of the ESCC website: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/eastsussex/selep/tesminutes/tes210719](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/eastsussex/selep/tesminutes/tes210719)*

### **1. Welcome & introductions**

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the apologies.
- 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 interests were declared.

### **2. Previous TES minutes, 22 Jun 2021**

- 2.1. **GP** ran through the actions of the previous meeting, which were all in progress or completed. Regarding action 4.5, the *Working Well From Home* project is now looking to establish focus groups, and will offer a £20 'Love2Shop' voucher for your time. If you'd like to join a focus group please contact Laura Chapman at the University of Sussex: [L.A.Chapman@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:L.A.Chapman@sussex.ac.uk).
- 2.2. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **3. East Sussex College: strategic plan and campus expansion**

- 3.1. **DSH** delivered a [presentation](#) on East Sussex College's new Strategic Plan for 2021-24, including an outline of the national context in terms of Skills, the local context based around strong partnership working and alignment with key priority areas across the county, a summary of the consultation which has recently been completed, and an overview of the new strategic objectives for the college.
- 3.2. **DSH** went on to describe the specific specialisms for the four college campuses – Lewes, Newhaven, Eastbourne and Hastings – as well as the Estates Strategy for each site. The planned estates work includes:
  - **Lewes:** a £700k investment this year to repurpose part of the main campus and a £9m funding bid to Government for the second stage of development, to be completed by Sep 2024.
  - **Newhaven:** exploring the potential of moving to an alternative location at the old UTC site.
  - **Eastbourne:** a £1.2m investment this year to move A-Level provision and redevelop Eastbourne Sports Park, and an £8m funding bid to Government for the second stage of development, to be completed by Sep 2024.
  - **Hastings:** reconfiguring Station Plaza campus to provide a conference facility and serviced office space for local businesses, and a successful £3m Towns Fund bid to create a Green Technology Training Centre at Ore Valley.

- 3.3. **CB** queried the provision of hospitality and catering, as it's not specifically listed in the slides as a specialism. **DSh** clarified that it's covered under 'Business and the Visitor Economy' in both Eastbourne and Hastings. Such courses may be better placed in a *working* environment, e.g. the college is currently in talks with Eastbourne BC about moving it into Devonshire Quarter, but hospitality and catering will continue to be offered in both towns.
- 3.4. **CB** also queried the estates plans in Hastings, and whether reconfiguring Station Plaza to offer more space to business means that the college will move out of the site altogether. **DSh** confirmed that their plans for Station Plaza are evolving and conversations with businesses are continuing – however, the college will not move out of Hastings and will definitely maintain a presence in the town.

#### 4. Rural & visitor economy projects in East Sussex

- 4.1. **GP** advised that there are several ongoing projects in the county, part-funded by the SELEP Sector Support Fund (SSF), that cover the rural and visitor economy. He wanted TES to receive an update on two projects in particular to demonstrate successful delivery in East Sussex.
- 4.2. **SD** delivered a [presentation](#) on the *Rebuilding Confidence and Demand in the Visitor Economy* project, a SELEP-wide scheme to kickstart the South East visitor economy through a series of marketing campaigns – digital marketing, billboards, PR and press coverage, and other 'organic' campaigns such as digital takeovers, crossover with the Gourmet Garden Trails campaign (another SSF project), and an end-of-summer showcase event. Sussex Modern is the delivery partner in East Sussex, closely working with ESCC, Visit Kent and Visit Essex. The project has made a very positive start and has been particularly savvy with the use of SSF monies, choosing not to overspend too early so that promotion can continue through the winter months.
- 4.3. **HK** delivered a [presentation](#) on the *Buy Local South East* project, a SELEP-wide scheme to help the food and drink sector through a renewed focus on 'local buying'. The project produced a regional website and portal, [www.buylocalfoodanddrink.co.uk](http://www.buylocalfoodanddrink.co.uk), to signpost customers to local food and drink businesses and to provide a centralised platform for the area aimed at consumers and producers. The project also delivered a marketing campaign, a series of business recovery support workshops for food and drink businesses, and a much-improved central database for food and drink businesses in the SELEP area.
- 4.4. The Buy Local website currently lists 724 businesses on the regional map, 205 of which are in East Sussex. The work is ongoing, so more businesses will continue to be added moving forward, and the website will continue to be further developed/improved. The increased database and marketing have resulted in much more engagement with local food and drink businesses in East Sussex – the project team is being approached often by *new* producers in the area. Overall a very successful project, and a definite boost to East Sussex.
- 4.5. **SD** also mentioned the 'Revi-VE' programme from SELEP, the visitor economy element of the [SELEP Covid-19 Recovery Funds Programme](#), with business grants of up to £3,000 to support visitor economy SMEs to innovate and adapt. The grants programme was open for a very short period, closing yesterday. The programme also includes the development of place-based networks and campaigns.

#### 5. Levelling Up Fund

- 5.1. **GP** confirmed that Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bids were submitted from four of our Borough and District Councils on 18 Jun 2021, with Hastings BC intending to submit a bid in the next tranche. TES members commended the officers involved for managing to submit bids within such a short timeframe.
- 5.2. **PSp** advised that the Eastbourne BC submission for £19.8m covers three key elements around the Towner Gallery, [Victoria Place](#) and links to the South Downs. The Lewes DC bid for £12.7m centres around the fishing industry in Newhaven – new landing stages, processing facility, restaurant etc so that the value of the catch is retained in the town.
- 5.3. **BH** advised that Rother DC submitted a £17m bid to transform the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill. Part of a larger £24m+ package, plans include a full public realm transformation, new community learning spaces, refurbished galleries, increased auditorium capacity and improved conference facilities.
- 5.4. **IG** shared some [slides](#) summarising the Wealden DC submission, which forms part of their 'Hailsham Aspires' scheme. The £19.5m bid is to support a new health and wellbeing hub in the town centre, with a new leisure centre, fitness suite and co-located medical centre.

- 5.5. **CE** queried the outputs of the above schemes – number of jobs created, people helped in terms of skills, particularly in deprived areas – and suggested that the lead D&B officers might consider reporting on these stats at a future TES meeting. **GP** suggested that a general progress update to TES would be appropriate, to include such stats, but only when the outcomes of the LUF submissions are confirmed and the business cases are being developed.

*[Action: GP to add “Levelling Up Fund progress update” to a future TES agenda; D&B lead officers to include reporting on output stats as part of the progress update]*

## 6. Towns Fund

- 6.1. **PSp** confirmed that the Newhaven Town Deal has finally been announced by Government, with a £19.3m funding award confirmed on 15 Jul 2021. Out of the 101 towns invited to submit to the Towns Fund, in terms of *population* the Newhaven Town Deal is actually the 13<sup>th</sup> highest offer in the country. Lewes DC has received the Heads of Terms, which acknowledges *all* of the individual programmes included in the bid submission, so the Town Deal Board will now consider how best to fund them (as the overall ask was for £24m+) over the next two months.
- 6.2. **HB** ran through some [slides](#) to provide an update on the Hastings Town Deal. The £24.3m award (from an overall ask of £28m+) was announced last month, so Hastings BC is currently around halfway through the two-month window in which to consider how its individual projects can be funded. The next step will involve developing business cases for those projects over a nine- to ten-month period.

## 7. Other matters arising

### LEP Review:

- 7.1. **GP** noted that no Government announcement has been forthcoming yet, but Ministers have assured us (via the LEP Network Chair only a couple of days ago) that they will “say more ahead of the summer”.

### Skills Accelerator:

- 7.2. **AC** and **DSH** advised that in Apr 2021 the Department for Education (DfE) invited expressions of interest for two different elements of its Skills Accelerator programme – *Local Skills Improvement Plan* (LSIP) and *Strategic Development Fund* (SDF). The successful bids were announced last week.
- 7.3. **AC** confirmed that Sussex Chamber of Commerce has been appointed as one of only eight LSIP ‘trailblazers’ in the country to be awarded a share of the £4m pot ([press release](#) on the Sussex Chamber website). Full details of the award to be confirmed shortly. LSIPs are to be created by employers and providers (with employers setting out an assessment of their skills needs, to which providers will be empowered to respond), thereby strengthening relationships and promoting ‘employer-led’ learning and training. Delivery is by the end of Mar 2022, so a very short turnaround period.
- 7.4. **DSH** confirmed that Chichester College Group was successful in its Strategic Development Fund bid, which links all the colleges across Sussex on a Green Tech Skills pilot ([press release](#) on the Chichester College Group website). The SDF bid was for £7m, but again the exact details of the award are to be confirmed. The pilot will include a number of projects, such as a ‘decarbonisation academy’ scheme to be led by East Sussex College, and ‘strategies for environmental land-management schemes’ led by Plumpton College.
- 7.5. **JH** commented that our Skills East Sussex (SES) group has been leading on employer engagement and gaining business input into curriculum development, so it’s important that the above projects *complement* this work, with no unnecessary duplication, not to confuse the landscape. **AC** and **DSH** agreed and offered to bring an update/briefing back to TES in due course, once the funding awards and individual projects have been confirmed.

*[Action: GP to add “Skills Accelerator progress update” to a future TES agenda; AC and DSH to provide briefings on their Local Skills Improvement Plan and Strategic Development Fund projects]*

### Shortages in goods, services and labour:

- 7.6. **AC** advised that the challenges introduced by EU exit/transition and the pandemic are still continuing. Impacts on international trade persist, as imports and exports are both down. The overall supply chain is affected globally – construction, steel, food and drink, microelectronics – so all are soaring in cost. The demand for skills/labour is high, particularly in construction.

7.7. **SD** added that demand for labour/staff is now also high in hospitality, as restrictions in England begin to be lifted. The challenges in hospitality are being compounded by the so-called 'ping-demic', as so many staff are having to self-isolate.

## 8. **TES round table / AOB**

8.1. **CB** noted that among the various bounce-back schemes from the Government is an interesting new strategy, [Bus Back Better](#), which sets out a long-term plan for bus provision in England. **KG** advised that the County Council, as Local Transport Authority, is already involved and is looking into becoming an 'enhanced bus partner'.

8.2. **CB** commented on the subject of rural broadband, as she recently wrote up a case study on a local company that had raised it as an issue last year (during one of her regular business consultations) but has since overcome the problem using the Government's voucher scheme. **RS** added that he is wholeheartedly behind the voucher scheme, towards which the County Council provides an element of top-up funding (£1,000 for residents and businesses on top of the Government contribution), and **KT** and the [ESCC Broadband](#) team have been promoting the scheme for a long time. **CB** advised that she is happy to share her case study with TES.

*[Action: CB to share her case study on the local business utilising the Broadband voucher scheme with DE, for circulation to TES]*

8.3. **MS** advised that the FSB's Small Business Index is due to be published on the [FSB website](#) next week. Of the 15,000+ organisations surveyed, over half think their business will improve in the next few months, with 1 in 5 intending to take on more staff. But around 40% of respondents are reporting debt at 'unmanageable levels', which is extremely worrying.

8.4. **MS** added that the FSB has launched a summer campaign aimed at leisure, hospitality and retail, [#MyHiddenGems](#), to promote small, independent tourism and hospitality businesses as they open up.

8.5. **DT** queried whether TES should provide a response to the [Rampion 2 consultation](#), which is open until 16 Sep 2021 seeking views on draft proposals for an expansion of the Rampion Offshore Windfarm. **GP** asked **DT** to come up with a draft response, which **GP** would then authorise for submission.

*[Action: DT to draft a response to the Rampion 2 consultation on behalf of TES, and provide to GP for submission]*

8.6. **RD** advised that we're still awaiting the outcome of ESCC's submission to the UK Community Renewal Fund, which is expected imminently.

8.7. **RD** also flagged the Government's new [County Deals](#), announced last week as part of the levelling-up agenda to devolve power to local communities. There's very little detail yet, but we'd expect something during the summer for us to consider in the autumn.

### Summary of actions:

5.5 **GP** to add "Levelling Up Fund progress update" to a future TES agenda; D&B lead officers to include reporting on output stats as part of the progress update.

7.5 **GP** to add "Skills Accelerator progress update" to a future TES agenda; **AC** and **DSh** to provide briefings on their Local Skills Improvement Plan and Strategic Development Fund projects.

8.2 **CB** to share her case study on the local business utilising the Broadband voucher scheme with **DE**, for circulation to TES.

8.5 **DT** to draft a response to the Rampion 2 consultation on behalf of TES, and provide to **GP** for submission.