

Attendees

<b>AA</b>	Andy Arnold	East Sussex CC	<b>JW</b>	Jon Wheeler	East Sussex CC
<b>ACh</b>	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	<b>KF</b>	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings BC
<b>ACo</b>	Alex Colbran	East Sussex CC	<b>KG</b>	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
<b>BP</b>	Brett Pearson	Locate East Sussex	<b>KT</b>	Katy Thomas	East Sussex CC
<b>BS</b>	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	<b>MC</b>	Matthew Chenery	East Sussex CC
<b>CE</b>	Christina Ewbank	ACES	<b>ME</b>	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
<b>CS</b>	Clive Soper	FSB	<b>MT</b>	Michael Turner	Environment East Sussex (EES)
<b>DE</b>	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	<b>PSm</b>	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
<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>FM</b>	Fran Meeten	University of Sussex	<b>RN</b>	Rebecca Newby	East Sussex CC
<b>FO</b>	Faith Orchard	University of Sussex	<b>RS</b>	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
<b>GP</b>	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	<b>SBa</b>	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
<b>IG</b>	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	<b>SBe</b>	Suzanne Bennett	South East LEP
<b>JHa</b>	James Harris	East Sussex CC	<b>SD</b>	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
<b>JHi</b>	Joe Hill	Towner Gallery	<b>SH</b>	Cllr Stephen Holt	Eastbourne BC
<b>JM</b>	Cllr James MacCleary	Lewes DC	<b>VC</b>	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC

Apologies

<b>CB</b>	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	<b>DT</b>	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC
<b>DG</b>	Diana Garnham	Skills East Sussex (SES)	<b>MS</b>	Martin Searle	FSB

**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, 19 Jul 2021**

- 2.1. **GP** ran through the actions of the previous meeting, which were all completed aside from action 8.5 (drafting a response to the Rampion 2 consultation on behalf of TES); **GP** will follow this up separately with **DT** to see if it was completed, as the consultation closed on 16 Sep 2021.
- 2.2. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3. Matters arising**Locate East Sussex

- 3.1. **BP** introduced himself as the new Service Director of Locate East Sussex, and provided some background to his various roles to date. TES members welcomed him to his role.

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

- 3.2. **ACh** provided an update on the successful LSIP bid, announced in Jul 2021 as part of DfE's Skills Accelerator programme. Sussex Chamber of Commerce was appointed as one of only eight LSIP 'trailblazers' in the country to be awarded a share of the £4m pot. So far none of the Chambers have actually received any funding, even though it needs to be fully spent by the end of Mar 2022; it's hoped that a grant letter will be forthcoming early next month so that activities can begin in earnest.
- 3.3. Despite the delay, *Clare Witz* has been appointed as Project Director (from today, 27 Sep 2021). Clare has a huge amount of experience in the learning, skills and business landscape, and was most recently Skills Manager at Coast to Capital LEP. Agreements are also being finalised with social enterprise NESTA to develop a 'skills taxonomy' for the county's key sectors, and to develop a website.
- 3.4. A timetable of activities has been produced, including stakeholder engagement events and workshops. The next virtual event is arranged for 6 Oct 2021, at which stakeholders will establish the Board structure, aims, scope, priorities etc.

## Strategic Development Fund (SDF)

- 3.5. **DSH** provided an update on the SDF programme, announced alongside the above LSIP in Jul 2021, and also still awaiting its funding award. The £7m bid is made up of five projects that will accelerate the development of Green Tech skills across Sussex:
- Establishing carbon literacy and sustainability awareness centres of excellence, led by BHASVIC;
  - Establishing four hybrid/electric vehicle technology training centres of excellence, led by GB Met;
  - Alternative energies and hydrogen technologies, led by Chichester College Group;
  - Transitioning land management towards the zero-carbon agenda, led by Plumpton College;
  - Establishing a network of decarbonisation academies in Sussex to support retrofitting and green energy installation, led by East Sussex College Group.
- 3.6. For each workstream, the lead colleges have begun the process of meeting with DfE for guidance on the completion of project documentation, and the group as a whole has continued discussions with Sussex Chamber to ensure strong linkages with the LSIP project.
- 3.7. **BS** asked **ACH** and **DSH** to please ensure our non-coastal regions in the north of the county are properly considered in all of these programmes.
- 3.8. **JHa** observed that the funding delays referred to above are being experienced in other programmes too (such as UK Community Renewal Fund), and suggested that TES send a letter to the various Government agencies – MHCLG, DfE etc, copying in MPs – to urge them to resolve these funding hold-ups as a matter of urgency.

*[Action: GP to liaise with JHa on drafting a letter from TES to Government departments, urging them to resolve their funding delays]*

## **4. Funding programmes: updates**

- 4.1. **RD** advised that there is still no update from Government on the *UK Community Renewal Fund* (UKCRF), to which we submitted a £5m bid in Jun 2021 for 11 East Sussex projects. Government had previously suggested a mid-Sep announcement, but we're now expecting this to be made towards the end of Oct 2021 – most likely to coincide with the Chancellor's mid-year Spending Review and Autumn Budget on 27 Oct 2021. We've repeatedly asked MHCLG (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – LUHC) to consider extending the delivery period for the fund, currently still end-of-Mar 2022, and we're ready to work with partners on grant agreements just as soon as the announcement is made.
- 4.2. **ACo** advised that work across the *Getting Building Fund* (GBF) projects has continued, and the most recent reporting cycle (end of Q1) showed a combined spend of approx. £2.9m across all eight projects. The Charleston Access Road project received an additional £240k from the GBF reserve list to add to their existing award, and are due to have completed spend of both sums by the end of this quarter. The Lewes Creative Hub and Sussex Innovation Falmer projects are also expected to complete over the next quarter. The Riding Sunbeams project has reached a major milestone in receiving its planning permission from Wealden DC.
- 4.3. Regarding *Growing Places Fund* (GPF), an additional £1.6m GPF funding has been awarded to the Observer Building to support further development of the project.
- 4.4. In terms of *Local Growth Fund* (LGF), detailed design for the Eastbourne Phase 2a scheme has been signed-off by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment, with the Traffic Regulation Orders to be advertised this autumn and construction planned to start Mar 2022. Public consultations will be undertaken over the coming months on the various projects that form the Eastbourne and South Wealden Movement and Access Packages. For the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access schemes, work is complete on the Battle Road/Old Harrow Road pedestrian crossing, as well as the work on Bethune Way/Elphinstone Road.
- 4.5. **SBe** advised that there are no *Sector Support Fund* (SSF) projects to consider at the moment, as SELEP is recommending putting the programme on hiatus (see agenda item 5 below), to be confirmed at this week's SELEP Strategic Board meeting. There is a project change request coming forward for an existing project (extending the timetable for the Creative Open Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus project), also to be considered at this week's SELEP Board meeting.

- 4.6. The six *Covid-19 Recovery Fund* programmes are all underway – three supporting skills development and three providing SME business support. The £4.4m fund was officially launched on 27 May 2021, and each of the 12-month programmes are expected to conclude in quarter 1 of 2022/23. There is a full detailed update provided in the papers for this week’s SELEP Strategic Board meeting, available to view on the [SELEP website](#), and all of these projects will be a feature of this year’s SELEP AGM on 3 Nov 2021, for which the theme will be clean growth.

## 5. LEP Review 2021

- 5.1. **GP** confirmed that there is still no word from Government on their latest review of LEPs, which is now linked to (and so will report alongside) the Government’s Levelling Up White Paper. We’re expecting this to be published towards the end of Oct 2021, most likely to coincide with the Chancellor’s mid-year Spending Review and Autumn Budget on 27 Oct 2021. **GP** observed that this is an appalling situation for our SELEP colleagues, each of whom are continuing to work tirelessly while their future role remains completely unknown. We desperately need clarity and certainty from Government.
- 5.2. **SBe** explained that SELEP is currently facing a significant financial risk, as this year’s core funding settlement from Government has been changed *in-year* to a reduction by half, and there is no certainty around next year’s funding at all. In order to present a balanced budget for next year, SELEP needs to scale back its whole operation, including downsizing the staffing base and the work undertaken. A full list of activities will be presented at this week’s SELEP Strategic Board meeting, with a view to *prioritising* them and potentially cutting back on non-essential work (e.g. pausing the SSF programme).
- 5.3. **JHa** queried whether capital funds could be used to support staff in the interim (with Government agreement). **SBe** replied that the risk would still continue until the reserves can be properly replenished, but confirmed that they are exploring every opportunity.
- 5.4. **GP** remarked that SELEP is supposed to be recruiting a new Chair and electing/re-electing its Directors over the coming months, and alongside this TES is also due to conduct its recruitment process for TES Board members – all to be completed by Mar 2022 (the end of the current two-year tenure). However, with so much uncertainty, it would be completely irrational to consider such tasks at this time.
- 5.5. The group discussed this in detail and decided that the most appropriate course of action is to *extend the tenure of TES Board members for another year*, so we can at least continue functioning unimpeded.  
**[Decision: the current two-year tenure of TES Board members is to be extended by one year to the end of Mar 2023]**
- 5.6. Once we have more clarity on the role of LEPs moving forward, we can then choose whether to keep the same TES members as SELEP Directors, or put forward different representatives. This can be discussed at the next full TES meeting in Dec 2021. In regard to the SELEP Chair, we would implore Chris Brodie to consider remaining in-post as a short-term solution, again until the period of uncertainty is over. Our SELEP Directors will propose this at the upcoming SELEP Strategic Board meeting. If it’s not possible then the backstop suggestion of asking federated board Chairs to share the role, as proposed in the Board papers, would be the most sensible interim arrangement.  
**[Action: SELEP Directors to propose that Chris Brodie consider remaining in-post as SELEP Chair in the short-term at the SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 1 Oct 2021]**
- 5.7. **CE** cautioned that extending the tenure of TES Board members will have a knock-on effect on our efforts to address diversity, as it’s something we would have factored into our next recruitment drive. We at least need to demonstrate that we’re reaching out to communities and are on top of the matter. **GP** agreed, and noted that the first meeting of SELEP’s new Diversity Group, which was due to take place earlier this month, had been cancelled. When it’s rescheduled, we’ll need to ensure that TES is involved and properly represented on the group.

## 6. Climate Change Roadmap

- 6.1. **AA** delivered a short presentation on the draft Climate Change Roadmap (circulated separately to the group), describing why it’s been produced and providing an overview of the content, both in terms of its strengths and the challenges it presents. Any comments on the draft should be fed back by the end of Oct 2021 before a final version is published in Nov/Dec 2021.

*[Action: TES members to provide any comments on the draft Climate Change Roadmap to AA by the end of Oct 2021; AA to share the final version Roadmap with TES during Nov/Dec 2021]*

- 6.2. **ME** asked whether methane is considered in the Roadmap. **AA** confirmed that it is (mostly under the agriculture and land use section), and that the term ‘carbon’ is used throughout the document as general shorthand for all of the emission gases, including methane.
- 6.3. **SH** queried the dissemination of information to businesses (such as hints/tips and any lessons from the current fuel shortage). **AA** advised that the LoCASE programme covers support to SMEs, although the pace and scale could be scaled-up in the longer term. **RD** added that the [BES Growth Hub](#) should be the first point of call for all businesses, and they can provide information and signposting.
- 6.4. **GP** referred to the ‘strategic oversight’ function of TES and suggested it would be useful for TES to continue to receive regular updates, perhaps quarterly as part of the stakeholder reports, or a short-form version that can be shared further. **KF** suggested that if the ongoing action plan is regularly updated and published online, then a simple link could be shared. **RS** recommended that the update highlights any successes and momentum, as that encourages everyone to take notice, and perhaps also some of the challenges and bottlenecks that this forum could help address.

*[Action: AA to liaise with RD and DE on providing a regular update to TES on the Climate Change Roadmap]*

- 6.5. **ACh** advised that the Sussex Chamber of Commerce has partnered with the British Chambers on a campaign to tackle the climate challenge, and has developed an online [Green Sustainability Hub](#). They’re also hosting a [Green Sustainability and Climate Challenge Conference](#) on 2 Nov 2021, to coincide with the COP26 conference in Glasgow.
- 6.6. **FO** added that the University of Sussex is arranging a workshop on 10 Nov 2021 as part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Science, titled “How to create a generation of environmental activists – what psychology can teach us”. It’s primarily targeted at young people, but everyone is welcome. Details will be published on the [Festival of Social Science website](#) in due course.

## **7. South East Creative Economy Statement of Intent**

- 7.1. **JHi** delivered a presentation on the new ‘statement of intent’ from the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), providing some background to the creative industries and their contribution to the economy and growth, and noting that the SECEN group has been critical in supporting creative businesses across the whole SELEP region, and has actually grown in strength during the pandemic.
- 7.2. While the original SECEN Prospectus was an extremely successful document, the SECEN group wanted to update it as it’s now several years old. They felt however that now wasn’t the right time to create something brand new, so decided to create an up-to-date statement of intent instead, with more of a focus on people and communities. You can view the SECEN Statement of Intent on the [SELEP website](#).

## **8. Working Well From Home**

- 8.1. **FM** and **FO** provided an update on the Working Well from Home project, which stemmed from an idea originally discussed by TES in the wake of the pandemic due to the immediate impact on working practices. The first phase of the project was to gather evidence, and the second phase will involve using that data to develop a ‘best practice toolkit’ specific to the needs of local businesses.
- 8.2. All of the survey work has now been completed. Focus groups were planned for the summer, but that proved too difficult to implement so in-depth interviews were conducted instead. All of this background data is now being written-up into a report. The initial guidelines are also being drafted, currently structured into two main areas covering the things employers should be aware of and things they can actually do. Further updates will be presented to TES in due course.
- 8.3. **ACh** noted that mental health and wellbeing is also an area of focus for the Sussex Chamber, and they’re launching a new platform to help businesses support their employees. A [launch event](#) is taking place on 5 Oct 2021.

## 9. SELEP Strategic Board, 1 Oct 2021

9.1. **SBe** ran through some of the other items on this week's SELEP Strategic Board meeting agenda, including: the SELEP Ltd statement of accounts for consideration; Growth Hub update; Sector Support Fund (SSF) update; and updates on Growing Places Fund (GPF), Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF) – to include our Bexhill Enterprise Park North (LGF), Riding Sunbeams (GBF) and UTC Maritime and Sustainable Technology Hub (GBF) projects seeking to extend their spend periods. Everyone is encouraged to look through the Board papers, already circulated, for all of the details.

## 10. Additional updates & stakeholder reports (for info)

10.1. **BS** queried the Strategic Economic Infrastructure report, specifically whether the A27/A21 reference groups have continued to meet, and if not whether they'll be reconvened anytime soon. **KG** confirmed that no meetings have taken place recently, and we're expecting an update soon.

## 11. TES round table / AOB

11.1. **SD** advised that Hastings-based [Project Art Works](#) has been nominated for the Turner Prize 2021. Nominated for their practice of "*celebrating and raising awareness of the contribution neurodiverse communities make to art and culture*", the Turner Prize jury praised their continuing work through the pandemic, both online and in residency. The winner will be announced on 1 Dec 2021 at an award ceremony at Coventry Cathedral.

### Summary of decisions:

5.5 The current two-year tenure of TES Board members is to be extended by one year to the end of Mar 2023.

### Summary of actions:

3.8 **GP** to liaise with **JHa** on drafting a letter from TES to Government departments, urging them to resolve their funding delays.

5.6 SELEP Directors to propose that Chris Brodie consider remaining in-post as SELEP Chair in the short-term at the SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 1 Oct 2021.

6.1 TES members to provide any comments on the draft Climate Change Roadmap to **AA** by the end of Oct 2021; **AA** to share the final version Roadmap with TES during Nov/Dec 2021.

6.4 **AA** to liaise with **RD** and **DE** on providing a regular update to TES on the Climate Change Roadmap.