



## **SOUTH EAST BUSINESS HUB**

### **Minutes of the South East Business Hub Steering Group held on Monday 7 March 2022**

<b>Attendees:</b>	Adam Brian	South East LEP
	Amy Bernardo	Essex County Council/Accountable Body
	Andy Stevens	Kent & Medway Growth Hub
	Ellie Clow	South East LEP
	Ian Smallwood	Business East Sussex Growth Hub
	Ioni Sullivan	Business East Sussex Growth Hub
	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer	South East LEP
	Jacqui Stimson	BEST Growth Hub
	James Wilkinson	South East LEP
	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
	Julian Gibbs	Anglian Ruskin University (U9)
	Kane Tudor	East Sussex County Council
	Susan Berdo	Kent County Council
	Tudor Price	Kent & Medway Growth Hub

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

The attendees were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Chris Seamark, Emma Lindsell, Emma McCulloch, Kazadi Mwamba, Lorna Norris, Louise Aitken, Rachel Evans, Saliha Cinar, and Zoe Gordon.

Jo Simmons was driving and therefore was unable to participate fully in the discussion.

#### **2. Approval of the minutes and matters arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 December 2021 were approved by the steering group members as a true record.

The action points arising from the meeting of 14 December 2021 were cleared and noted below:

- There were no questions raised around funding and future of the LEP/Growth Hub following the last steering group meeting. It was noted that Adam Brian was in attendance and would be providing an update on the current Government position.
- Kent & Medway Growth Hub would provide feedback on emerging findings from the work undertaken by the decarbonisation adviser under agenda item 5.
- Information on how the Growth Hub referrals for ADW and BSS programmes were measured by the programme delivery partner was provided in writing to the steering group members.
- An update on the website optimisation project would be provided under the agenda item 8.
- The Skills update was shared after the last steering group meeting.

### 3. LEP Update

Adam Brian, SELEP Chief Executive Officer, joined the steering group meeting to provide an update on LEP/Growth Hub position for Levelling Up White Paper. The following main points were noted by those present:

- The Levelling Up White Paper was positive about the Local Enterprise Partnerships and inevitably the Growth Hubs, too
- Further details would be provided in a form of letter outlining funding for both the LEPs and Growth Hubs
- Originally the letter was anticipated to arrive in the first week of March, its delay caused continued consternations across the LEP community
- A meeting of six regional Chairs and six regional Chief Executive Officers together with the representatives from CLGU and BEIS taking place on 9 March 2022
- LEPs and Growth Hubs would have to regain their influence and, in our case, move a sustainable model
- Paper to be presented to the Strategic Board later in March 2022
- Due to continued uncertainty Adam Brian advised that any correspondence received from the Government concerning the LEP/Growth Hub funding would be shared with the steering group members as a matter of urgency

**Action:** *To share future Government correspondence around LEP/Growth Hub funding with the steering group members.*

Adam Brian left the meeting at this point.

### 4. Communications

Ellie Clow provided a short update on the current comms. The main points raised were as follows:

- Covid-19 Business Support Fund coming to an end on 30 June 2022 – press release being worked on [the press release can be located on [SELEP website](#)]
- SELEP Newsletter due out soon
- Website optimisation – discussed later in the agenda
- Removal of Peer Networks information from the website following the closure of the programme

### 5. Net Zero

A verbal update on the work undertaken by the Decarbonisation Adviser was provided by Tudor Price and Andy Stevens.

- The primary objective of the role was to undertake a mapping exercise to establish what business support was currently available in the South East especially around decarbonisation as well as engaging with the SMEs to provide advice and support and where possible to encourage them to sign up to the Government pledge on the SME Climate Hub
- Most learning achieved by the decarbonisation adviser was around SMEs journey to decarbonisation, their motivation, and needs

### **Issues/challenges**

- Becoming more sustainable and their position with the customers/consumers
- Impact of bigger players within the supply chain (i.e. Tesco – potatoes supplier)
- Increase in energy cost resulting in aim to lower the energy consumption
- Specific issues such as water sport business looking into replacing their current boats' engines with electric ones
- Holistic view of their emissions (scope 1,2 and 3)
- Solar installation and electric vehicles
- Carbon offsetting

### **Barriers**

- Lack of knowledge
- No time to read through the vast amount of information available
- Confused with too much technical information
- Finance – what's on offer and where to find it

### **Business support perspective**

- Scope 1 and 2 easily achievable (1-2h of initial support + further 2-3h to complete scope 2 and write up a report)
- Scope 3 – time consuming especially when business involved in a supply chain and pressured to comply with scope 3 (up to 5 days of support)
- Triage i.e. scope 1 and 2 to be provided as a free of charge support
- Community Renewal Funding to be used for the more time-consuming activities and signposting to University of Kent for those involved in scope 3
- Should scope 3 be delivered by private sector? Grant funding towards the cost of scope 3?
- Value of the project so far – highly beneficial, meeting demand around need for information, high appetite for this kind of support – could be accelerated with an addition of a grant
- Keeping on top of grant schemes and other support coming on stream

### **Comments from steering group members**

**BRONZE project** <https://angliaruskin.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/bronzeproject>

The **Business Resilience Opportunities for a Net-Zero Carbon Essex (BRONZE)** project is an Essex County Council and Anglia Ruskin University research partnership. Created to understand the barriers and opportunities businesses face in transitioning to Net-Zero Carbon and how public sector organisations can adapt so more local businesses can provide goods and services to them.

**South East New Energy Project (SENE)** <https://www.uel.ac.uk/our-research/sustainability-research-institute-sri/south-east-new-energy-project>

**Eastern New Energy Project (ENE)** <https://www.uel.ac.uk/our-research/sustainability-research-institute-sri/eastern-new-energy-project>

**Colbea** – Low Carbon Sustainability Training <https://colbea.co.uk/learn/low-carbon/>

A request was made by the steering group members for the Kent & Medway Growth Hub to share a copy of their mapping exercise.

**Action:** *To share a copy of the mapping exercise undertaken by the Growth Hub.*

## **6. Funding update**

- a) FY2021-22 Core Growth Hub Funding – on target, all claims made, reporting for Q4 in April 2022
- b) Peer Networks Programme 2.0 – on target to completion on 31 March 2022, 15 cohorts delivered, programme closure meeting took place already
- c) Growth Hub Annual Report – awaiting final template before commencing the exercise

## **7. SELEP COVID-19 Business Support Fund**

Due to Jo Simmons' inability to join the meeting fully a written update would be provided after the meeting.

**Action:** *To provide a written update on COVID-19 Business Support Fund.*

## **8. Growth Hub Website Optimisation**

Due to Jo Simmons' inability to join the meeting fully a written update would be provided after the meeting.

**Action:** *To provide a written update on the website optimisation project findings.*

## **9. Cluster and BEIS Working Groups Update**

Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer provided an outline of the work undertaken in collaboration with the South East Cluster and updated the steering group members on BEIS Working Groups.

- All working groups meetings had been cancelled apart from the Delivery and Development Working Group that dealt with the Annual Report template
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework had not been finalised yet
- Social media campaign in train – challenging due to the current funding situation

## **10. Skills update**

A brief update on Skills and Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) was provided by Jim Wilkinson.

- Major Projects Leads meeting which was joined by the Careers Enterprise Company agreed a *Skills Action Plan* that would be shared with stakeholders via a webinar

- ESF national event – 17 March 2022 – Louise Aitken would be speaking at the event
- DWP issued an update on the number of people supported by the ESF being around 45,000 – overview of the ESF delivery would be issued by SELEP
- DSP – uncertainty remains, business for funding in Year 4 submitted to DCMS

#### **11. Future Meetings**

The suggested future dates for steering group meetings were shared with the participants. It was noted that the diary invitations would be sent out in the coming days.

- 6 June 2022 – 10am
- 5 September 2022 – 10am
- 5 December 2022 – 10 am
- 6 March 2023 – 10am

#### **12. Any Other Business**

There was no AOB to discuss.

The steering group meeting closed at 11:15am.

### Action points arising from the steering group meeting – summary

Minute	Action	Completed by
Minute 3	To share future Government correspondence around LEP/Growth Hub funding with the steering group members.	Adam Brian
Minute 5	To share a copy of the mapping exercise undertaken by the Growth Hub.	Tudor Price
Minute 7	To provide a written update on COVID-19 Business Support Fund.	Jo Simmons
Minute 8	To provide a written update on the website optimisation project findings.	Jo Simmons