

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE  
PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD HELD AT HIGH HOUSE  
PRODUCTION PARK, PURFLEET, AT 10.00AM ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Present:

Geoff Miles	Chairman
David Finch	Essex County Council
Matthew Balfour	Kent County Council
Rodney Chambers	Medway Council
Keith Glazier	East Sussex County Council
John Kent	Thurrock Council
Ron Woodley	Southend Borough Council
Steve Bishop	Steer Davies Gleave (Independent technical Advisers, "SDG")

Also in attendance:

Kim Mayo	Essex County Council
Stephanie Mitchener	Essex County Council
Angela O'Donoghue	Further Education and Skills
Lorna Norris	Essex County Council
Suzanne Bennett	Essex County Council
Janice Pittis	HEI's (University of Essex)
George Kieffer	SELEP Vice-Chairman
Andy Rayfield	
Richard Hicks	Medway Council
Nikola Floodgate	Medway Council
Ross Gill	Kent County Council
David Elka	East Sussex County Council
Tom Higbee	Steer Davies Gleave
Mike Rayner	SELEP
Steve Cox	Thurrock Council
Emma Cooney	Southend Borough Council
Richard Dawson	East Sussex County Council
Marion Kelly	East Sussex County Council
Dominic Collins	Essex County Council
Ian Myers	Essex County Council

## **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies were received from Kevin Bentley, substituted by David Finch, and Paul Carter, substituted by Matthew Balfour.

Members were informed that the Board was still in shadow form as not all agreements had been signed.

Angela O'Donoghue informed Members she would leave the meeting during item 5 – Skills Equipment Fund Approval.

## 2. Minutes and Actions from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

David Godfrey advised Members that a 10% variation per project would be permissible with any amendments requiring approval of this Board.

## 3. Chairmanship

The purpose of the report was to set out the background and chronology to the recent decision not to extend the Chairman's contract. It also set out the interim arrangements put in place to ensure there is appropriate leadership and governance of the SELEP in the interim and provided a suggestion for how a new chairman might be recruited in the future, once the future shape and direction of the LEP going forward is known.

Kim Mayo advised Members the report outlined the role and recruitment process for the Chairman of the LEP and was for information only.

Members discussed at length the process noting it was duly constituted and appropriate and had been approved by the SELEP Board. The Chairman stated his confidence that all procedures had been carried out correctly.

It was confirmed that a panel would be re-convened to take decisions on the Chairmanship and the matter considered further by the SELEP Board at their meeting on 25 September 2015.

## 4. Strengthening SELEP's Federal Arrangements

The purpose of the report was to present for early discussion initial recommendations to strengthen SE LEP's federal model of operation prior to the development of a fuller options paper for the SE LEP Strategic Board on 25th September, 2015.

David Godfrey informed Members the report was for information as full proposals were to be taken to the SELEP Strategic Board on 25 September.

It was agreed requested that any letters from the Secretary of State (and others) concerning the future of the LEP be circulated to the membership.

Following recommendations were discussed:

- To consider potential changes to SE LEP's operation to "*strengthen the federal model...improving local influence, local accountability and local delivery*". Potential changes may include:
  - Revising the role of Chairman to reflect the strength of the federal areas
  - Reducing the size of the Strategic Board to ensure a single focus on strategic issues as defined in the revised terms of reference

- Increasing tolerance levels to provide even greater flexibility for local capital programme management
- Re-stating pro-rata arrangements for each of the 4 federal areas for any new funding bids with clear local prioritisation within LEP-wide submissions
- Providing greater financial support to the federal Boards
- It was **AGREED** that a fuller paper should be presented on these and any wider options by the SE LEP Secretariat to the SE LEP Strategic Board meeting on 25th September, 2015.

## 5. Skills Equipment Fund Approval

The purpose of the report was to present recommendations regarding the recent Skills Equipment bidding round to inform the Board's decisions about whether or not to accept the applications for funding.

Members were informed that successful bidders to date could re-apply for the remaining funding but may lose out as it will be more competitive.

Kim Mayo advised that as the Board was not formally constituted as not all partners had signed the Joint Committee Agreement, then the decision on allocation could not be taken by the Board, but would need to be referred to the Strategic board.

The following recommendations, and as detailed in appendix A of the report, were unanimously **AGREED, in principle**:

- Approve the recommendations from the Assessment Group to allocate a total of £194,105 to the following projects:
  - South Essex College – purchase of Engineering Equipment - £73,475
  - Writtle College – Science Lab Equipment - £73,910
  - South Downs College – Science Lab Equipment - £46,720
- Approve the recommendations from the Assessment Group to allocate £508,259 of funding, subject to confirmation from the Skills Funding Agency of a robust financial plan being in place, for the following projects:
  - Colchester Institute – purchase of advanced manufacturing and fabrication and welding equipment - £161,687
  - Harlow College – purchase of Engineering Equipment - £346,572
- Note the remaining funding of £3.3m is proposed to be allocated in a further funding round in line with previous Skills Funding Agency (SFA) guidance.

## 6. Capital Programme Monitoring

The purpose of the report was to update Board Members on the capital programme monitoring process and to present the latest monitoring information.

Members discussed and noted the forward plan (Appendix 1 of the report) and monitoring arrangements agreeing the importance of the programme keeping to agreed profiles.

A dashboard report will be presented to future meetings of the Accountability Board.

The following recommendations were **NOTED**:

- The latest monitoring information.
- The implementation of the capital monitoring cycle agreed in July and the need for active programme management to ensure future funding streams are assured.
- The local capital programme changes to be presented to future Accountability Board meetings as highlighted within the Essex County Council (as Accountable Body) Forward Plan
- The arrangements in place for future programme monitoring and independent technical evaluation of schemes commencing in 2016/17.

## **7. Any Other Business**

- (i) Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP). Cllr Woodley requested a re-profile of the £720,000 with a decision required prior to the November meeting of the Board. Agreed in principle, but as Board not formally constituted the decision would be referred to the Strategic Board for consideration and approval.
- (ii) Enterprise Zone Submission – agreement details to be circulated to all Members.
- (iii) Future meetings of the Board – details of proposed dates to be circulated, with a proposal that future dates to co-inside with the Strategic board.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted the next meeting of the Board would be held on Friday 13 November 2105.