

**Local Enterprise Partnership for East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock
Business Networking Event – 08:30-11am, Wednesday 27th April 2011**

Greater Essex		Kent and Medway		East Sussex	
Gary Sullivan Businesses	Wilson James / South Essex	John Grafik Steve Gobbi	K College Peel Ports	Tom Sanderson Louise Crowe	General Dynamics Sussex Downs College
George Kieffer	Interim Chairman of LEP	Douglas Horner	Trenport Investments		
Keith Brown	Essex FSB	Jo James	Kent Invicta Chambers		
John Dalloway	Essex Chambers	Geoff Miles	Maidstone Studios		
Mike Worboys	BAE (to cover Heart of Essex)	Jon Regan	Hugh Lowe Farms		
Trevor Cross	e2v	Paul Winter	Wire Belt Co Ltd		
Mike Bish	Essex Chambers	Andrew Metcalf	Kent Economic Board		
Clare Avery	University of Essex/Insight	Tom Barnes	University of Kent		
East					

Officer support: Simon Neilson, LEP Secretariat, Essex County Council

ACTION LOG

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send EOI for Enterprise Zones to this group electronically. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that SN would prepare a joint letter from Business and Politicians across the LEP to submit to Government, following submission of the EOI. Businesses asked that this be blunt and to the point. Action: Simon Neilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was further suggested that a bespoke letter to MPs be drafted to illustrate the EOI long-list of sites and to enable MPs to lobby on our behalf. Action: Simon Neilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat to inform Board members of RGF Roadshow details and to seek dates for an RGF EOI conversation. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the LEP ought to write to BiS to secure feedback to its unsuccessful RGF1 applicants. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat to organise its own LEP RGF Roadshow. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share A12 Inquiry documents. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan in Thames Estuary Airport discussion at appropriate Board meeting. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share note of Jeremy Hunt/Broadband meeting. Action: George Kieffer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat to update work programme (actions listed in section 5). Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Task and Finish group on LEP communications. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SN will attend the CLG Enterprise Zone workshop on 4th May and report back. Action: SN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share LEP contact database with members of this group. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat to share the governance one page note, and prepare an RGF2 flow diagram. Action: Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat to produce periodic concise briefings on developments within the LEP and external influences on LEPs. Action: Secretariat

1 Introductions

- George Kieffer highlighted the purpose of the meeting – for the businesses across the LEP to discuss their priorities and the draft work programme – arising from the 2nd Interim Board meeting.
- Simon Neilson attended to represent the LEP Secretariat
- A total of 21 attended the meeting

2. Enterprise Zones

- GK introduced the item and asked SN to update Board members on progress
- To date, 9 separate sites were under consideration for EZ status: 4 in East Sussex, 3 in Greater Essex, and 2 in Kent/Medway
- The process requires an expression of interest to be submitted by the end of April, detailing sites under consideration
- Independent Board member discussions with CLG had validated that Government were open to suggestions and might not be as prescriptive as the Prospectus indicated; this backed up briefing discussions held with BiS and CLG via the Secretariat
- The table and draft letter to send to CLG was tabled and SN agreed to send to the full group electronically - **Action:** SN
- Discussion soon moved to active lobbying in support of sites and that our LEP ought to be offered the chance to secure more than one owing to our size
- It was agreed that SN would prepare a joint letter from Business and Politicians across the LEP to submit to Government, following submission of the EOI. Businesses asked that this be blunt and to the point. **Action:** SN
- It was further suggested that a bespoke letter to MPs be drafted to illustrate the EOI long-list of sites and to enable MPs to lobby on our behalf. **Action:** SN
- SN illustrated the next stage – namely that once the EOI long-list is submitted, Government will then send revised criteria on which

they will make their decision on the next 10 EZ sites; it is for the Board to prioritise which site or sites are the preferred candidate to meet the deadline of end of June for detailed submission of an EZ bid(s). Board timings would reflect this timeline.

- The Group felt that the Pfizer site in Sandwich had been acknowledged by Government through the Sandwich Task Force and it was felt that Government should be urged to look at Sandwich and the solutions proposed by the Task Force, which may include EZ status, and that the LEP should stress the exceptional situation so as not to disadvantage other sites bringing forward EZ proposals.
- The group noted the timing connection between the EZ submission and RGF round 2, given the latter has a 1st July deadline.

3. Regional Growth Fund

- Board members had received briefing in advance on both RGF1 and the RGF2 application process
- Trevor Cross, of e2v technologies, spoke to their successful bid, the only in the East/South East of England (£6m)
- Trevor offered a view on lessons learned and how their bid had achieved success: broadly their gearing ratio of £2 of spend to every £1 sought from RGF (in effect match-funded by e2v); collaboration with Nottingham University; unlocking real jobs and new facilities; the green credentials of the bid; its export focus; and that the free nature of the revised RGF application form had allowed for a complete narrative to be submitted alongside the technical parts of the bid.
- Trevor advised that Government had issued jobs numbers with press releases based on the 10 year time horizon – over the period of the grant itself, this would unlock directly 126 new jobs principally in Chelmsford plus new jobs in its broader supply chain; in total 427 jobs would be created over 10 years.
- Trevor was thanked for his summary and answering questions of other businesses
- SN spoke to the timeline and process for RGF round 2 and gave highlights of discussions thus far on opportunities for our LEP in R2 – BiS indicating that thinking big across the LEP in terms of a bid to kick-start an Evergreen fund and/or a focus on Coastal Areas being the most advantageous routes to pursue; BiS have also offered to give feedback to unsuccessful RGF1 bidders – as yet this has not happened though; in addition BiS would like to hold a one-off RGF2 Expression of Interest Conversation with our LEP and the Secretariat will make arrangements; BiS will hold an RGF Round 2 Roadshow in Margate, 25th May 10:30
- Secretariat to inform Board members of Roadshow details and to seek dates for an RGF EOI conversation. **Action:** Secretariat
- Members of the Board moved quickly to discuss the LEP's potential role in that process. After a number of contributions the discussion is summarised as:
 1. The LEP Board's businesses ought to have a role in exciting and stimulating good quality bids from across the LEP area; hold a 'Business Leadership position' and seek to add value to bids, not to police them (which would give a sense of bureaucracy and RDA-type approach which we seek to avoid)
 2. That the LEP needs to be seen to be on the side of wider business and available to help, implying the need for coordinated communications – this was a recurring theme throughout the discussion, that the LEP needs to be seen externally as existing and having a role
 3. That the South East got the rough end of the stick and the LEP should champion funding coming to the South East in RGF2, to put 'oil in the engine'
 4. That the LEP ought to write to BiS to secure feedback to its unsuccessful RGF1 applicants. **Action:** Secretariat
 5. That, owing to timings for RGF R2, the LEP needs to be tactical in the absence of much time to construct bids
- Following discussion, it was agreed that our LEP ought to hold its own RGF2 Roadshow for our businesses and to invite BiS to speak at the event, support EOI conversations with bidders, and do so in advance of the 25th May Heseltine Roadshow. It was felt that this partly helps to put the LEP on the map for our businesses; shows a positive intent to support those businesses to secure money to support growth; and it also allows for the LEP to form a considered lobbying plan based on real bids. Trevor Cross kindly agreed to speak as the only successful bidder in the LEP area to such an audience. It was suggested that in communications of the event our LEP should put out a managed call for proposals, particularly those that meet our key strategic themes (see item 4 and 5)
- **Action:** Secretariat to quickly make arrangements for an appropriate event, venue and agenda/papers.

4. Priorities for Business

- A number of priorities emerged throughout discussion on items 2 & 3 – this part of the agenda allowed for a focus to ensure they are captured and to inform future work and Board planning
- It was much discussed that the LEP needs a 'key strategic themes' document as a public expression of what is important to the LEP – this would also help the public face of the LEP with businesses across our geography
- Food and energy security emerged as key themes for all in the discussion, and from which other priorities can fall out
- Maritime and Logistics sectors, including airports also emerged as key themes
- Our interface with London was illustrated as thus far absent from debate; this needs to be corrected
- Infrastructure to support growth, regeneration and skills was recognised as a universal priority
- The March OECD report on the UK economy was quoted to Board members as illustrating two particular issues preventing UK economic growth: planning and (school level) skills. Both were recognised as key issues for all.
- Discussion then moved to two specific schemes: 'Boris Island' Estuary Airport and the Lower Thames Crossing. Board members felt both deserved LEP Board level attention. On the former, businesses respected the local authority opposition to the idea but wished to see balanced evidence which was currently absent from the debate (with the only public report that of the Mayor of London) and requested that the word 'opposition' is dropped from the LEP Work Programme text pending a debate; on the latter business recognised that planning issues associated with a major piece of infrastructure such as the LTC and the link with maximising the

existing crossing capacity being the more immediate priority.

- Regarding the Thames Estuary Airport proposal, Board members expect a preferred site to be advanced by the Mayor in 2-3 months time. With this in mind the Board wished to programme in a session to look at the evidence on both sides of the debate – similar to an inquiry calling witnesses to advance their cases. Mention was made of the successful ‘A12 Inquiry’ approach used in Essex and how it might give rise to a way of working on such issues in the future. Board members wanted to see the final report and the Terms of Reference for this. Such an enquiry would also need to take account of the impact on the regional airports, such as Manston, Southend. Gary Sullivan declared an interest as BAA is a significant customer of Wilson James and abstained from expressing views. **Action:** Secretariat
- The Secretariat were asked to come forward with proposals on how the Board might approach the Estuary Airport in its meeting cycle and with an ‘inquiry’ style approach. **Action:** Secretariat. It was also suggested that we ought to focus also on maximising our existing and growing airports in this context.
- It was suggested that an alternative case to HS2 (London to Birmingham) might be a more medium term issue to consider along the lines of the above, linked to the 15 year franchises for which Government will be seeking intentions to bid by early next year.
- The last priority that was discussed was how business can best influence politicians at a national and sub-national level. A number of questions were posed around what ‘business led LEPs’ really means, and the capacity that business had versus that of local government. It was agreed that whilst the facilitative role played by local authorities to date and ongoing through the Secretariat was welcome, that a degree of independence and business capacity support might be advantageous. It was again suggested that the LEP ought to consider seconding in business-people from its constituent businesses to work alongside the local authorities and the business members of the Board. It was considered helpful to describe the role not as ‘business led’ but as ‘enterprise led’ i.e. seeking an outcome, not implying a hierarchy of importance. The meeting acknowledged the democratic mandate held by elected members and did not seek in any way to undermine this, although it was recognised that this required the building of trust over time between business and local government.

5. LEP Work Programme

- The debate moved on to the contents of the draft work programme which had not received much attention at the last Interim Board meeting
- It was agreed that the work programme needs to be mapped against those priorities as articulated under item 4. **Action:** Secretariat.
- On Broadband it was accepted that much has moved on since the work programme was drafted, however two key roles remain for the LEP: one, to ensure that we get requisite funding through BDUK into the LEP area (and to actively support/lobby); two, to keep an eye on post-2015, recognising that the UK will still have sub-standard broadband as compared with other countries. GK had met with The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, SoS DCMS, together with Cllr Peter Jones and others in East Sussex and has reinforced the importance of broadband to the LEP. GK agreed to share his note of the meeting with the Business Board members. **Action:** GK via Secretariat.
- On Infrastructure it was recognised that the list was comprehensive in terms of major roads, save for no mention of J10 or 10a of the M20 to unlock Ashford; it was recognised however that since drafting the rail franchising picture has become clearer and this deserves focused LEP attention. Mention was specifically made of issues with London Bridge station causing a bottleneck and the lack of mention of the A22 in east Sussex. **Action:** Secretariat to amend work programme accordingly and come back on specific roads/station issues.
- On Investment and Funding models it was recognised that this ought to remain a key focus for the LEP, particularly with regard to our reach in Europe and possibilities of securing EU funding. SN briefly updated that active officer level conversations are happening in this regard and committed to sending a briefing update to Board members – particularly with respect to post 2014 funding. **Action:** SN to update via electronic briefing. It was also recognised the work programme is virtually silent on other private sector funding (sovereign funds, pension funds/institutional investors, and the Green Investment Bank). This needs to be corrected in future versions. Finally mention was made of DMOs (Destination Management Organisations) and their potential stray into LEP or Inward Investment service territory.
- Business asked that Strategic Planning be given a specific workstream and tied to the Localism Bill, with the potential role for LEPs to play a stronger role in the planning system, with regard to consultations on major developments. **Action:** Secretariat
- On Opportunities in Growth Sectors it was agreed also that the LEP needs a ‘sectors statement’ to show which sectors are ripe for growth and those which fit out key strategic themes when articulated. It was also mentioned that many professional services (lawyers and accountants) have not expanded into the LEP area to a degree comparable with other areas of the country (relying on servicing clients from London), and that our school level skills warrant attention with regard to future sector growth opportunities.
- It was agreed that the Secretariat will amend the draft work programme ready for the next cycle of Board meetings. **Action:** Secretariat.

6. AOB

- As **Communications** had been a recurring theme of discussion, a task and finish group of the Secretariat/officer group together with Andrew Metcalf, Jo James and Keith Brown, should form to consider a LEP wide ‘message menu’. **Action:** Secretariat to establish group
- George Kieffer updated on the Ports Roundtable to take place on 10th May, including colleagues in the New Anglia LEP (Norfolk/Suffolk) with Mike Penning, Minister for Shipping and Roads
- SN will attend the CLG Enterprise Zone workshop on 4th May and report back. **Action:** SN

- SN updated that the generic LEP address of lep@essex.gov.uk was now live and for use in any publications, emails and contact with businesses. SN also reported that a comprehensive database of members of the board and contact details was in place – it was requested that this is circulated to board members so they can contact one another. **Action:** Secretariat.
- The future of business support was mentioned in respect to the closure of Business Link – SN reported that each area of the LEP is considering the future of such services and would work with the Board on options. Jo James was keen to assist this work.
- It was felt important to keep information concise – therefore the one page LEP Governance document will be circulated together with a one page RGF2 process flow diagram to assist businesses. **Action:** Secretariat to share the governance one page note, and prepare an RGF2 flow diagram
- It was also agreed that the Secretariat will circulate periodic newsletters to all Board Members to make sure that they are kept up-to-date with developments. **Action:** Secretariat.