

Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) Board Meeting - 14 July 2020

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, this meeting was conducted via an online conference facility.

Attendees

Ed Barlow (Buckinghamshire Council) - Buckinghamshire LEP (BucksLEP) – **Board Chair**
Domenico Cirillo, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)
Matt Wragg – Coast to Capital LEP (C2CLEP)
Gary Sturgeon - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
Jennie Pell – Enterprise M3 LEP (EM3LEP)

Maxine Narburgh - Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH)
Erica Sutton - Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) - Secretariat support
Simon Wyke, Greater London Authority (GLA)
Ahmed Goga Oxfordshire LEP (OxLEP)
Ben Burfoot (Reading Borough Council) - Thames Valley Berkshire LEP (TVBLEP)
Arthur Le Geyt - South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP)

Minutes

1. Introductions, Apologies

- Apologies were given by **Paul Witcombe** – Hertfordshire LEP (HertsLEP), **Chris Starkie** - New Anglia LEP (NALEP), **Sarah Gilbert** (Oxfordshire County Council) – Oxfordshire LEP (OxLEP) and **Jo Simmons** - South East LEP (SELEP).

2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes

BOARD DECISION: The minutes of the previous GSEEH Board meeting, 02.06.20, were agreed as a true account.

ACTION 1. EB to sign off as approved, the minutes of the GSEEH Board meeting of 02.06.20.

2.2 Actions

- MN advised that an update on action points from previous Board meetings was contained in the GSEEH Board papers, 14.06.20, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- MN is waiting for the CPCA Monitoring Officer to sign off the outstanding Declaration of Interests form, which will then be circulated to the GSEEH Board by email for signature and return within 28 days.

2.3 Matters Arising

- MN introduced the matter of the recent £3bn government energy efficiency grant funding announcement. This includes £2bn energy efficiency grant funding for homes, plus £1bn for public sector buildings, for which the Energy Hubs will provide support to local authorities. There is to be a considerable increase in funding for the fuel poverty/home upgrade scheme. The announcement was set out in more detail by MN and given examination by the Board at a later point in the meeting (see section 5 of these minutes).
- AG raised a query about whether projects that LEPs identified in response to the recent MHCLG local growth fund call-out were included within this funding. MN clarified that the MHCLG fund will be a separate funding stream and there was no double counting.

ACTION 2. MN and AG to have separate discussion for clarification concerning how projects are allocated for the MHCLG and energy efficiency funds.

3. Finance Update

- A finance update on the Local Energy Capacity Support Programme and Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) for June 2020 was circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting with the GSEEH Board papers 14.06.20.
- MN confirmed that the budget is on track. MN highlighted that the technical consultancy funding now allocated is awaiting payment, and that the RCEF recharge for the GSEEH Operations Team is higher than anticipated, due to the amount of work that had been required in assessing and supporting applications. A re-evaluation of the RCEF recharge is therefore intended.
- In response to questions from the Board about the stage the projects had reached, MN clarified that the Essex-based project was in the process of contracting and had yet to submit its claim and the Suffolk-based project was in the process of procurement.
- The Board did not raise any concerns about the RCEF recharge amount.

5. Regional Hub Manager Report

- A full report on the GSEEH programme of work was provided by MN with the Board Papers of 16.07.20, which were circulated in advance. Further exposition and an opportunity for discussion were provided at the Board meeting on specific areas as follows:

5.3 Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) Project

- MN provided an update about a recent discussion with the KTN team for a way forward on the GSEEH energy challenges. The work is to focus on grid constraint and decarbonisation of larger engines. KTN have advised that larger engines will be easier to tackle first as a challenge and the intention is to do this in a virtual way.
- An initial learning day will involve local authorities, supply chain, KTN and experts. The aim will be to share information and pick out key challenges. It will cover park and ride, fleet buses, taxi fleet, EV infrastructure and focus on place-based decarbonisation of fleet and infrastructure. GSEEH has gone out to local authorities that are working on these issues and shared that information with KTN. KTN will focus on the innovation side and provision of experts. The GSEEH will focus on the business case and financing. The output of the challenge is to be scalable and applicable across the Hub area.
- KTN are to come back with the cost. Next steps will be to identify the focus of the challenge approach.

ACTION 14. MN to share with the Board the more detailed challenge approach once this is worked up.

- The Board gave the following feedback on the KTN way forward:
 - EB agreed that a place-based approach, looking at the grid as well as the mobility aspect is a good way forward. EB noted that the challenges are ones that need local authority political commitment because of the difficulty and the cost to develop this.
 - BB cautioned against ‘talking shop’ and urged that there should be a focus on outcomes, and to consider how ‘wicked’ the problem is. BB raised the need to bring out specific barriers quickly for those who want to move forward in real life. BB advised that the issue aligns with the local authority’s ambition in Reading, where taxi-rank charging and how technology will solve it is a real problem. Funding provision and development of business case are big issues.
 - SW also cautioned that, concerning capacity of charging infrastructure, not all chargers need to be superfast, it is not needed everywhere and doing so will impact on grid infrastructure. The need is to seek an optimal approach to charging infrastructure, by looking at who, what, when it is needed. London is doing a spatial approach for both building and transport and how it fits in the wider energy system. It is not just about transport, so avoid compartmentalisation.
 - JP advised that EM3LEP have a local growth fund project which is to pilot EV charging across Surrey in both urban and non-urban areas, which the LEP can share information about. Also, EM3LEP is doing a project about last mile deliveries.

ACTION 15. JP to share information about Surrey EV charging pilot to help inform the Board as well as the KTN work.

- EB suggested that a sub-group of the Board might be helpful to support the project.

5.4 Accountable Body Transfer

- MN advised the Board that the Accountable Body transfer is still going through due diligence, due to the impact of Covid on capacity. MN explained that there are lots of legal documents that need to be reviewed and a need to bring senior managers together to progress matters, which is more challenging at the current time.

6. Forward Plan

- A copy of the latest version of the Board’s Forward Plan was included with the Board Papers 16.07.20, which were circulated in advance of the meeting. MN and EB highlighted the following points:
- The next GSEEH planning workshop is planned for the Board meeting of 04.09.20. MN recommended that this date is moved back so that it follows the spending review, so that the meeting can be used to provide information about the spending review to local authorities. It was agreed to move the workshop item to the Board meeting of 20.10.20. EB observed that it would be best to run the workshop on an in-person basis.

ACTION 16. MN to move the GSEEH Workshop to the Board meeting of 20.10.20.

- MN proposed to move the review of GSEEH Terms of Reference, as had already been discussed, to the Board meeting 01.12.20. This was agreed

ACTION 17. MN to move the GSEEH Terms of Reference to the Board meeting of 01.12.20.

- The Independent Chair role was scheduled for discussion at the next Board meeting, 04.09.20. EB observed that capacity for developing the way forward for the role is limited, so suggested that Board members contribute ideas for this as a short-cut. EB noted that the Board is getting by currently without an independent chair, although it had considered there to be a need for independent capacity for the role. EB's suggested options were to wait for the long-term vision for the GSEEH, to come back to the recruitment of the independent chair after the spending review, or to move the issue to the 20.10.20 Board meeting.
- The Board made the following comments on the scheduling of the Independent Chair item:
 - JP noted that at the time of the original discussion of the independent chair, Board opinion was split about the need for it, and that the current time is not the right time to address it.
 - BB observed that space on the current Board agenda had been overtaken by the recent government spending initiatives and that space would continue to be required on the agenda for the funding grants.
 - MW considered that the LEPs need to focus on the Local Industrial Strategies and the task at hand.
 - EB proposed that the need for an independent chair, as well as what it is, is a low need and so should slip to the 01.12.20 Board meeting. This was agreed by the meeting.

ACTION 18. MN to add the government energy efficiency funding /summer economic statement funding pots as a standing item to the Board agenda.

ACTION 19. MN to move the independent chair item to the 01.12.20 Board meeting in the Board's Forward Plan.

BOARD DECISION: Adjust the Board's forward plan so that: the next workshop is moved to 20.10.20, the review of GSEEH Terms of Reference and the independent chair is moved to 01.12.20, and the government energy efficiency funding is a standing forward item.

7. Risk Register

- MN asked the Board to note that the Accountable Body transfer delay and the consequent impact on delivery of recruitment was on the risk register, but CPCA has now given its approval for recruitment, so the risk has been mitigated already.

8. Any Other Business

- The following two points were raised:

8.1 Board Communications

- MN asked the Board whether, given the tight timescales, members would like updates on the grant funding streams to be communicated via Board email communications, plus one-to-one as needed. The Board responses were as follows:
- EB expressed contentment with the current arrangement: circulation to all and approach one-to-one if more is needed.
- BB requested that liaison should be ongoing with individual authorities in Berkshire and periodically with himself directly.
- MN requested that the key thing to communicate to the Board was about what actions, if any, were expected of them.

ACTION 20: MN to establish whether/how the Communications Working Group might be wrapped into future communications about the energy efficiency grant funding streams.

8.2 Note of Thanks

- On behalf of the Board, EB thanked MN and the GSEEH team, for doing a really good job, managing a huge amount of communications and high speed of turning activities around. EB noted that the RCEF Panel process is also very smooth and thanked the GSEEH team behind that.
- EB was thanked for chairing the meeting.

9. Next Meeting

BOARD DECISION: The next GSEEH Board, 4 September 2020, will meet virtually, using the Microsoft Teams software facility.

- Subsequent Board meeting dates are:
 - 4 September 2020 – Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
 - 20 October 2020 (Format TBC)
 - 1 December 2020 (Format TBC)
 - 19 January 2021 (Format TBC)

Minutes approved by Board Chair, Ben Burfoot (Reading Borough Council) – Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, as a true and accurate record.

SIGNATURE	DATE
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