

Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) Board Meeting - 7 September 2021

This meeting was conducted via online conference.

Attendees

Swapna Uddin (SU) - Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Ed Barlow (Buckinghamshire Council) - Buckinghamshire LEP (BucksLEP)

Domenico Cirillo - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA),

Matt Wragg – Coast to Capital LEP (C2CLEP)

Jennie Pell (JP) – Enterprise M3 LEP (EM3LEP) - **Chair**

Maxine Narburgh (MN) - Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH)

Erica Sutton - Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) - Secretariat support

Simon Wyke - Greater London Authority (GLA)

Helen Pollock (HP) – Hertfordshire LEP (HertsLEP)

Ahmed Goga - Oxfordshire LEP (OxLEP)

Jo Simmons - South East LEP (SELEP)

Arthur Le Geyt - South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP)

Ben Burfoot (BB) - (Reading Borough Council) - Thames Valley Berkshire LEP (TVBLEP)

Minutes

1. Apologies, Introductions

- Apologies were given by **Robert Emery**, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), **Ellen Goodwin** and **Chris Starkie** - New Anglia LEP (NALEP).

2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes

BOARD DECISION: The minutes of the previous GSEEH Board meeting, 13.07.21, were agreed as a true account, subject to non-material clarifications by C2CLEP to comments attributed to C2CLEP on pages 4, 9 and 11, and a non-material amendment by EM3LEP to a comment attributed to EM3LEP on page 5.

ACTION 1. JP to sign off the amended minutes of the GSEEH Board meeting 13.07.21 as agreed.

2.2 Actions and Matters Arising

- The following updates on actions from the previous GSEEH Board meeting, 13.07.21, were highlighted:
- Board members were reminded of Action 2: to advise MN of any further relevant contacts (in addition to iConsult and LOCASE) for the new GSEEH supply chain engagement team to connect with.
- MN advised that concerning Action 3: the preparation of a staff structure and budget for additional core staffing to employ a programme manager and four specialist project managers for 18 months, the job roles are still to be profiled.
- Concerning Action 5: to clarify the BEIS question points on GSEEH future role and governance, MN presented these points to Board members via a screenshare at the meeting, and they are now included in these minutes.
- Regarding Actions 6 and 7, Board members confirmed that the LEP review is now linked to the levelling-up agenda and to the Spending Review, anticipated for October 2021, so there has been no further LEP working group activity on the LEP Review.
- MN advised that concerning Action 9: the involvement of the Reading Climate Festival in COP26 local events, there is no additional funding, but any activity can be co-branded if desired.
- Concerning Action 11, MN advised that all details of the [Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund](#) are now in the public domain.
- MN advised that concerning Action 14: to provide further information on the Public Sector Skills Fund programme, confirmation of staffing and job roles are awaited.

ACTION 2. MN to find out whether the LEP Network and Energy Systems Catapult meeting has gone ahead, and if so, pass on any information available about the discussion and outcome to the Board.

3. Finance Update

- A finance update for July 2021 on the Local Energy Capacity Support Programme, Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) and Green Homes Grant Sourcing was provided in advance of the meeting with the GSEEH Board Papers 07.09.21.
- MN advised that the finances are to profile with some exceptions:
 - The costs of GSEEH operations team new job roles are to be confirmed.
 - The Social Housing Technical Assistance has a surplus of £7k for which additional work is to be confirmed.
 - The Council Tax Pilot has a £45k underspend, however there is a plan for Milton Keynes to expand on their project, with a focus on the commercial sector, and working in conjunction with Local Partnerships.
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
- TVBLEP queried the Technical Consultancy outturn figure and asked what was in the pipeline. MN advised that the figure reflected that the funding has been utilised but that around £50k of invoices for consultancy work were awaited by GSEEH.
- MN also advised that the RCEF staff profile for September 2021 is expected to be met when a new RCEF Coordinator is to start. A brief is shortly to be issued to engage an interim RCEF Programme Manager.
- Finally, MN advised that GSEEH is now using the CPCA's Agresso accounting system. This has been used to present the Green Home Grant financial reporting. MN asked the Board to consider what financial information they would like to see presented in future and how.
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
- TVBLEP and SELEP advised that the presentation of committed spending in the financial reports would be useful as this would provide information that the pipeline is healthy.
- MN advised the Board that the GSEEH Finance Manager has offered to attend a Board meeting to provide information about GSEEH financial management. This offer was accepted by the Board.

BOARD DECISION: The Board agreed that the GSEEH Finance Manager should attend the next GSEEH Board meeting to provide information about the GSEEH financial management.

ACTION 3. MN to invite the GSEEH Finance Manager to the next GSEEH Board meeting, 19.10.21.

4. COP26 Domestic Campaign

- **Planet Mark Zero Carbon Tour** – Three of the four Flagship Events in Cambridge, Ipswich and Canterbury have successfully taken place. The fourth in Oxfordshire is due to take place on 07.09.21. Financial claim forms and outputs are awaited from the Events.

ACTION 4. MN to provide an update to the GSEEH Board at its next meeting 19.10.21 on the outcomes of the Planet Mark Zero Carbon Tour Flagship Events.

• **Regional Green Zone Events** –

- The Board provided the following feedback:
- OxLEP supported the recommendation for using the residual funds for the streaming platform, given the importance of providing a link to Glasgow. Raising the Greater South East regional profile also provided better value for money than squeezing in an extra project. EM3LEP also supported this recommendation, given that the possibility of funding both projects would be too late notice for the events to be put into place and given the option of streaming to Glasgow added most value.
- C2CLEP requested further information about the basis for assessing the options for the residual funding: to fund a platform for live streaming, to fund the lower cost project, or to fund both fifth-placed projects. MN advised that no scoring had been undertaken. The rationale was that the two submissions placed fifth had scored a significantly lower mark (a seven point difference), that the streaming platform would increase the impact of the four top-scoring projects, and that adding further events to the Green Zone programme would impact on deliverability.
- EM3LEP asked whether any of the four projects had the capability to stream the events independently. MN advised that the funded platform would provide a superior product than individual contributors could offer, which would be via basic commercial platforms such as YouTube. The funded platform would be a branded Greater South East facility, be more professional, be enabled to be participatory and be available for the whole day of the events. There was also scope for the platform to include elements such as exhibition space with pre-developed digital content.
- SELEP noted that it would be important to showcase activity locally as well as to Glasgow as this would help to promote local conversations about climate action. This was also a rationale for aiming to have as many local Green Zone events as possible. However, if four events could have more impact locally by being supported with professional streaming, that would be supportable.
- EM3LEP asked what the BEIS requirements were concerning the funding and whether use for the streaming platform was eligible. MN advised that all the three options were within the objectives of the Green Zone funding and were eligible.
- SEMLEP proposed that if the decision was within the gift of the Board and was the right thing to do then it should be done. SEMLEP considered the four top-scoring submissions to be very good examples, and in line with BEIS expectations.
- C2CEP offered support for the streaming idea but highlighted that it was essential that there was transparency about how the decision was reached, especially if a potential project was to be put aside.
- OxLEP offered to speak on behalf of the Board with any submitting organisation that might raise a concern about the decision and how it had been arrived at.
- CPCA observed the difficulty that there was a tight tie between the two submissions.
- SELEP noted that if the lower-cost project were selected for funding as the option, then its funding requirement of £2.5k would still leave £4k funding for streaming. The rationale for

selecting the lower cost of the two fifth-placed submissions would be affordability and getting as many events funded as possible.

- EM3LEP questioned, should the lower-cost fifth-placed submission be funded, whether the remaining funding would be enough to cover the cost of professional streaming. MN advised that the platform would need to be facilitated and that it is likely to cost around £1k per day.
- SEMLEP asked whether there was a cost/benefit criterion in the scoring, noting that the streaming was affordable and value for money. SEMLEP observed that if a platform was deployed that this would enable recording and sharing of the events with business contacts and leave behind a product post-COP26.

BOARD DECISION: The Board noted the declarations of interest concerning the EOI submissions. The Board then unanimously agreed that the four top-scoring submissions would be funded. There were no conflicts of interest identified concerning the three options for use of the residual funds. The Board agreed that MN will confirm the streaming platform costs and come back to the Board to confirm its price. If the platform costs allow, then the lower cost fifth-placed submission will also be funded.

ACTION 5. MN to confirm the costs of the professional, facilitated streaming platform for the Green Zone events and to then advise the Board of the way forward for the residual funding.

- **Case Studies** – MN advised that copywriting for case studies has been secured, plus an online platform, with support from the company Carbon Copy. This is a national platform and will include case studies from the Planet Mark Zero Carbon Tour.
- HertsLEP advised that business are being filmed to a set format at the Planet Mark events to provide mini case studies of company activity.

ACTION 6. Board members to put any suitable case studies forward for inclusion in the COP26 Domestic Campaign (if they have not done so already) including any work with the community energy sector.

5. Green Home Grant, Local Authority Delivery, Phase 2 (LAD2)

- MN provided an update on LAD2, highlighting the following key points:
- **Supply Chain Development** – MN advised that Round 6 of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) has just closed. Of the applications, 23 passed and 18 failed, of which 15 were net fails. The latter are being contacted to see how their applications can be improved. There are also 100 companies that have registered an interest on the DPS but have not yet applied. The case study template on the DPS has been modified to make it easier to complete, but those applying must still have the right competencies. Seven local authorities have put forward preferred installers. The Managing Agents have been asked to add their supply chain contacts to the DPS, but they have not yet done so.
- MN also advised that there are a broad range of measures now represented on the DPS, however, more ventilation suppliers are needed. External wall insulation has a materials backlog due to supply chain issues. Supply chain issues also appear to be a concern for heat pumps; however an evidence base is being gathered to confirm the position.

ACTION 7. Board members to advise MN of any SME contacts for communications and marketing.

- MN also advised that concerning the promotion of green skills and retrofit, GSEEH is talking to MCS and other accreditation bodies to get a list of courses that they value and mapping this against training centres. The aim is to put a proposal to consultancy services to improve provision.
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
- TVBLEP asked whether there were any studies on the heritage implications of retrofit concerning properties that are breathable. MN advised that there are various relevant reports on the websites of Trustmark, the Supply Chain Sustainability School and The Retrofit Academy. The baton and fibre approach to insulation is a breathable option, however, for internal wall insulation there are no breathable materials currently certified to PAS 2035. HertsLEP offered to engage BRE about this topic to see what new materials might be available and/or highlight the gap in what is available.

ACTION 8. BB to provide an outline to HP of the heritage property requirements/issues for retrofit and HP to approach BRE to seek a solution/highlight the issue.

- TVBLEP also highlighted the carbon impact of the production and installation of insulation materials. MN advised that this issue has been flagged to BEIS and that embodied energy has not yet been considered by the Department.

6. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Review

- As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, consideration is being given to the role of the Regional Energy Hubs and the remit to deliver net zero and provide technical assistance. This includes the level of resource and breadth of support being channelled through the Energy Hubs versus individual local authorities.
- Patrick Allcorn, BEIS has requested feedback from the GSEEH Board, on an individual LEP basis, on the following points:
 1. **GSEEH size and scale** - The GSEEH is large and may benefit from being split into two Energy Hubs. Given the discussions around the OxCamb Arc as a sub-regional organisation, what impact and representation will that group have going forward. Views are sought from LEPs on the geographical boundary options and the role of London.
 2. **Levelling up, the future of LEPS and Energy Hub governance** - If the role of LEPs shifts to a business and growth function and funding is directed to local authorities, what is the role of LEPs in the Local Energy Hubs and the levelling-up agenda
 3. **Governance** - BEIS would like the Local Energy Hub Boards to have delegated authority for all investment decision making, utilising subregional partnerships with governance processes that are robust and auditable. How could the LEPs on the GSEEH Board meet these requirements, and are there any other subregional partnerships that have developed decision making?
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
- GLA and EM3LEP considered that concerning point 1, the split of the GSEEH would not necessarily provide a benefit. Although the geography is large, it is a recognised region. Concerning point 3, having a blend of LEP and local authority partners benefits the conversations about how funding is used, and it also provides a relationship to business, so this should be retained.
- GLA added that having a London level Energy Hub would be a suitable approach, however, the connection with the rest of the Greater South East was essential to be able to grow a low carbon economy and should not be broken. Furthermore, a north and south split of the region was not a sensible approach.
- SELEP reflected that it is difficult for LEPs to respond in advance of clarification from BEIS on LEP function and funding as part of the LEP review. Concerning point 2, it requires LEPs to make a leap of knowledge about the outcome. It is difficult to respond without knowing the direction of government and may also contradict other conversations. The GSEEH Board is not the right route for such questions, which should instead be channelled through existing LEP working groups. Concerning point 3, it should be noted that LEPs have managed capital funding for years.
- TVBLEP noted that concerning point 3, that the Board brings a range of parties to the table. It is not a constituted organisation, so it is difficult for the Energy Hub to get delegations another way. TVBLEP agreed that the questions from BEIS pre-empt the LEP review and it is difficult to comment ahead of that. As an alternative TVBLEP suggested that the Board provide an objective consideration of the options, to give BEIS a steer on the relative merits of the points set out, without pre-empting other decision-making processes. MN clarified that BEIS were seeking an individual response from the LEPs
- TVBLEP, C2CLEP, BucksLEP, SELEP and HertsLEP confirmed that it was not possible for them to provide an individual response at Board level. A response would need to come from colleagues with the appropriate remit, and this would best be done as part of the LEP review process.
- HertsLEP suggested that the Board present to BEIS a collective response about the value of having LEPs on the Board, and the importance of local authority involvement, and so go back to Patrick Allcorn with a positive message. C2CLEP supported this idea and noted

that setting out the positive value of LEPs could also inform each of the organisations involved and feed into LEP review responses. C2CLEP also suggested that the cost of LEP involvement should be included. SELEP proposed that the response should be accompanied by the caveat that until LEPs know about future funding, it is not possible to commit to what they will do in future. TVBLEP proposed that the response should encompass the perspective of local authorities that represent LEPs, local authorities that host LEPs, as well as that of the LEPs per se.

- TVBLEP asked for confirmation about how Patrick Allcorn would use the Board's response and whether this would be treated informally or whether there would be a formal basis under which responses would be used or quoted.

ACTION 9. SU to ask Patrick Allcorn how the response from the LEP Board would be treated and whether this would be used informally or what under what formal basis would responses be used or quoted.

BOARD DECISION: There is no desire from the Board to go back to BEIS with individual responses to the questions posed by Patrick Allcorn on the future of the Energy Hubs, their governance, and the role of LEPs. Instead, EM3LEP is to lead a sub-group on behalf of the Board to produce a one-page, factual statement for BEIS, setting out the added value to GSEEH of the Board, and explaining that the outstanding LEP review is the reason for not being able to provide individual comments as requested. EM3LEP is to cover the LEP perspective and will seek input from BucksLEP and TVBLEP to cover the local authority perspective.

ACTION 10. JP to prepare a one-page document for BEIS setting out the added value of the Board to GSEEH and explaining that the outstanding LEP review is the reason for not being able to provide individual comment as requested. JP to seek input from BucksLEP and TVBLEP to cover the local authority perspective.

ACTION 11. BB to table with TVBLEP the matter of providing input on TVBLEPs behalf to the GSEEH Board's one-page document, to be given to BEIS which will set out the added value of the Board to GSEEH.

7. Operational Update

- An update on the various elements of the GSEEH Programme of Work was set out in the GSEEH Board Papers 07.09.21, which were circulated to Board members in advance of the meeting. In consideration of time constraints at the meeting, MN highlighted the following:
- **Modernising Energy Data Application: U:Smart:Zero** – The Energy Hub is involved in a research project, funded by Innovate UK, which aims to support fuel-poor households through data integration and AI.

8. Forward Plan

BOARD DECISION: Given that the Forward Plan indicates a full agenda for the next GSEEH Board meeting 19.10.21, the matter of the LEP Review should be dealt with as an update/action item.

ACTION 12. MN to include the LEP Review as an update/action item on the next GSEEH Board meeting agenda for 19.10.21 2021.

9. Any Other Business

- JP was thanked by the rest of the Board for chairing the meeting, and MN was thanked by the Board for all her work for GSEEH.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

BOARD DECISION: The next GSEEH Board meeting, **19 October 2021**, 10:00-12:30, is to take place virtually, using the Microsoft Teams software facility.

- Subsequent Board meeting dates are scheduled 10:00-12:30, to take place virtually, on the following dates:
 - 7 December 2021
 - 25 January 2022

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

SIGNATURE

DATE