

## Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) Board Meeting - 19 October 2021

This meeting was conducted via online conference.

### Attendees

**Swapna Uddin (SU)** – Local Energy, Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

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

**Vanessa Ainsworth (VA)** - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) – GSEEH Finance Manager

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

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

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

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

**John Taylor** – Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Rural Community Energy Fund

**Karen Nankwanga** – Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Rural Community Energy Fund

**Helen Pollock (HP)** – Hertfordshire LEP (HertsLEP)

**Ahmed Goga (AG)** - Oxfordshire LEP (OxLEP)

**Jo Simmons (JS)** - South East LEP (SELEP)

**Arthur Le Geyt** - South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP)

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

### Minutes

#### 1. Apologies, Introductions

- Apologies were given by **Robert Emery**, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), **Matt Wragg**, Coast to Capital LEP (C2CLEP), **Simon Wyke**, Greater London Authority (GLA) and **Ellen Goodwin** and **Chris Starkie**, New Anglia LEP (NALEP).
- The meeting welcomed Vanessa Ainsworth, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, who attended the meeting as the GSEEH Finance Manager to present a finance report to the Board, and **Karen Nankwanga**, Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH), the newly appointed Rural Community Energy Fund Project Coordinator, who attended the meeting to hear the Board's decisions on the recommendations of the Rural Community Energy Fund's Assessment Panel.

#### 2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

##### 2.1 Minutes

**BOARD DECISION:** The minutes of the previous GSEEH Board meeting, 07.09.21, were agreed as a true account.

**ACTION 1.** BB to sign off the amended minutes of the GSEEH Board meeting 07.09.21 as agreed.

## 2.2 Actions and Matters Arising

- **Actions from the previous GSEEH Board meeting 07.09.21** – These were confirmed as in progress or complete with the following exceptions:
  - Action 2 - Update: HP advised that the LEP Network and Energy Systems Catapult green skills meeting took place 14.10.21. Rob Hargreaves of the Catapult presented to the LEP Network about the Green Jobs Taskforce.
  - Action 7: Board members with information still to share are to advise MN of any domestic energy-efficiency SME contacts that GSEEH Supply Chain Engagement Officers could approach to join the GSEEH's Dynamic Procurement System for Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2).
  - Action 8: BB is still 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.

**ACTION 2.** Board members as relevant to note that Action 7 and Action 8 (as above) from the GSEEH Board meeting 07.09.21 are outstanding.

- **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Review**– As actioned at the previous GSEEH Board meeting 07.09.21, EM3 LEP drafted and circulated to the Board a one-page document, which is intended for Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy, BEIS, and sets out the Value of the Board to the GSEEH in the context of the LEP review. The following points were raised:
  - DC offered to share with the GSEEH Board, the outcomes of the CPCA Board meeting 07.12.21, which will itself deliberate the outcomes and implications of the LEP review.
  - EM3LEP advised that C2CLEP will separately provide further input to the Value of the Board one-page document.
  - BEIS clarified that the document from the Board would be regarded and used as informal input by Patrick Allcorn.
  - SELEP proposed that a point be added to the one-pager, that the Board provides access to LEP networks and has a role in awareness-raising. In addition, SELEP questioned the idea that Board members are a free resource and proposed that this statement should be amended. SELEP proposed that a related point be included that if the GSEEH issues are also a priority for LEPs then LEPs will commit the resource to the GSEEH Board.
  - OxLEP urged that the one-pager should be aligned with the LEP Network Board Strategic Review submission, that it should be consistent across all the Local Energy Hubs and not just GSEEH, and that it should contain a proposition that sets out what the Board aims to achieve, rather than mere statements. SELEP agreed that the one-pager should focus on purpose. TVBLEP asked whether OxLEP had a copy of the LEP Network papers to share to this end.
  - SELEP suggested that a point be added to the paper's preamble that the Board is providing informal feedback. SELEP raised the question of how net zero will interact with the LEP review and the future role and remit of LEPs.
  - MN advised that the other Local Energy Hubs were getting information from their LEPs about the LEP Review and offered to share the GSEEH Board's one-pager once it had been agreed. MN suggested that the governance element should be emphasised in the paper, the point being that the Board currently comprised 11 LEPs rather than over 140 local authorities.
  - SELEP agreed that the Board's convening power and ability to represent local authorities was important. SELEP observed that LEPs are losing capital funding, which places strategic economic planning in the role, so that net zero and clean growth are front and centre.
  - OxLEP observed that the situation was fluid and at a formative stage, and that there was an effort to get core funding released. The Levelling-Up white paper is delayed beyond the Spending Review and all answers will not be forthcoming by 27.10.21. There is little detail about the Shared Prosperity Fund, though Whitehall workshops have taken place. OxLEP asked whether Patrick Allcorn had been invited to these workshops. OxLEP observed that the way in which the Local Energy Hubs take forward the net zero agenda would give an opportunity to develop a more strategic framework.

**ACTION 3.** JP to liaise with AG and JS so that they can provide input to a further iteration of the Value of the Board to GSEEH one-pager, which JP will then recirculate to the Board.

### 3. Finance Update

- A finance update to 31 August 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 19.10.21.
- Vanessa Ainsworth (VA), CPCA has been working closely with GSEEH for six months since CPCA was confirmed as the Accountable Body. VA highlighted the following elements in the finance report:
  - There is extra funding for GSEEH core work.
  - The forecast includes additional staffing for the RCEF programme.
  - Regarding the delays to the LAD2 programme, funding has been spread and a contingency is in place to provide safety for the staffing of the programme, which is on a 12-month contract basis. The delays have been caused by supply chain limitations, a situation which has been compounded by competition from LAD1A and LAD1B. The CPCA Board is to consider how they can support the expansion of the supply chain and MN is to attend this meeting.
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
  - TVBLEP queried the August 2021 commitments with revenue of £4.4m and spend of £593k.
  - VA advised that the Public Sector Decarbonisation funding is a key item and still in process. Other commitments related to grant funding and were in place. The RCEF staffing was also now in place with Karen Nankwanga joining the GSEEH operations team.
  - Concerning the Public Sector Decarbonisation funding, MN further explained that staff would be recruited and that specialist consultancy commissions would be provided to focus on target areas where extra support was needed. This would develop internal expertise in the team and is the preferred delivery model for BEIS, rather than outsourcing. However, recruitment was challenging. In the current employment market, public sector salary rates are lower than potential staff can command elsewhere. To address this issue, discussions are underway with Energy Systems Catapult to look at how people with core skills could be recruited and then developed.
  - TVBLEP asked what impact this barrier to recruitment was having on operations. MN advised that the operations team were still able to deliver on outputs and the GSEEH was able to carry it forward. VA added that treasury management was given careful consideration so that money will be available as soon as it is needed.

**ACTION 4.** MN to provide an update on progress with recruitment for the Public Sector Decarbonisation programme at the next Board meeting 07.12.21.

- VA explained that the current method of financial reporting presented revenue income and expenditure, and capital income and expenditure. VA asked the Board to advise whether any alternative format for the finance report was preferred going forward. TVBLEP requested that a commitments column be added so that the underspend is visible. HertsLEP proposed a flag system be included to highlight risks and what is likely to be spent.

**ACTION 5.** VA to incorporate in the financial reporting for the next Board meeting 07.12.21, a commitments column so that underspend is visible and a flag system to highlight risks and what is likely to be spent.

- The Board thanked VA for the input provided.

**BOARD DECISION:** VA is to attend all future GSEEH Board meetings to provide regular updates to the Board.

**ACTION 6.** Board members to advise ES if they have any other observations or requirements concerning financial reporting.

## 5. COP26 – Net Zero Tour Events, Regional Roadshow & Case Studies

- MN provided a presentation to the Board on progress with GSEEH activities that are part of the BEIS-funded COP26 Domestic Campaign initiative. MN highlighted the following points:
  - An online COP26 platform for the Greater South East region and a contribution to the NALEP Regional Roadshow online event have been supported with the underspend from the Net Zero tour funding.
  - Marketing of the Regional Roadshows will commence next week. MN reminded the Board of the dates, lead organisations, titles, and themes of the five Regional Roadshow events:
    - 3 November 2021, Camden Council, COP26 Celebration event (Finance)
    - 4 November 2021 – NALEP, Hypothetically Hydrogen (Energy)
    - 9 November 2021 – OxLEP, Billion Tonne Drop (Energy/Science & Innovation)
    - 10 November 2021 – Surrey County Council, Delivering Net Zero Transport (Transport)
    - 10 November 2021 – Green Wheels in Motion (Transport)
  - Consultants The Marketing Smith (case studies, web content and marketing) and Cue Media (livestreaming of events) are supporting the development of the COP26 activities.
  - The GSEEH regional platform showcases the events and case studies, and will remain live for three months after COP26. Community energy case studies will also be included as part of the platform.
  - Meetings with the COP26 unit have established that no live streaming to Glasgow will go ahead due to lack of budget, and lack of space at the conference. Information is now awaited from BEIS concerning alternative marketing routes for the Regional Roadshows.
  - MN acknowledged the disappointment of those leading on the Roadshows who had predicated their involvement (as had their sponsors) on the ability to stream live to the Glasgow conference and confirmed that the issue had been raised with BEIS.
- The Board had the following comments on this update:
  - Board members agreed that the lack of a livestreaming facility to Glasgow was unacceptable and that the effort that had been expended on the events did not have a 'home' without it.
  - TVBLEP advised that the [Reading Climate Change Partnership](#) are screening local events and MN proposed that Board members provide any information about any other local platforms that could market and/or stream the Regional Roadshows.

**ACTION 8.** Board members to advise about any other local platforms that could market and/or stream the COP26 Regional Roadshows.

- SELEP commented that the importance of the regions was crucial to showcasing action against climate change and that this had been pointed up as a keystone of the Regional Roadshows.
- BucksLEP advised that Buckinghamshire County Council, as a lead organiser of one of the Regional Roadshows, had been left in an awkward situation, as they had gained the involvement of corporate partners, based on the livestream to Glasgow. BucksLEP proposed that the promise of the livestream should be honoured, since the current situation presented a reputational risk to the LEPs and to BEIS and observed that the livestream would have been extremely beneficial to the events.
- OxLEP added that part of the challenge of developing the events had been to find a suitable venue with the facility to accommodate the livestreaming to Glasgow.
- MN assured the Board that while there would be no screen for the event at Glasgow, the events would still be livestreamed on the GSEEH Regional Roadshow platform and that this would be marketed and promoted to COP26 delegates, and the content would be kept for three months following the conference.
- TVBLEP proposed that there should be a mitigation plan to engage with the infrastructure of COP26 to give the regions visibility and asked that opportunities be explored to this end.

**ACTION 9.** MN to update the Board with information about the channels and plans for promotion of and access to the COP26 Regional Roadshows.

**ACTION 10.** MN to express to BEIS on behalf of the Board how unhappy members are with the lack of a livestreaming facility to Glasgow.

- OxLEP wanted to identify the leaders of the COP26 unit at BEIS, since they wanted to explain directly to them the consequences of the lack of livestreaming, including the disappointment of stakeholders who had committed based on the facility being available.
- BEIS explained that the matter had been raised internally by the Local Energy Team and that they would identify the leaders of the COP26 unit in BEIS.
- MN reminded the Board about the offer of Ministerial attendance at the events, which would give some assurance as to the influential nature of the events. Attendance is to be advised once the Ministerial diaries are settled.
- MN advised the Board that the Planet Mark, Net Zero Tour would be holding its final events in the coming weeks and that [registration details](#) for these would be published shortly. The events in the Greater South East region are:
  - 15 November 2021 - London Borough of Sutton
  - 16 November 2021 - London Borough of Hillingdon
  - 16 November 2021 - London Borough of Brent
  - 18 November 2021 - Zero Carbon Tour Grand Finale, at the Institute of Directors, Pall Mall

## 7. Operational Update

- An update on the various elements of the GSEEH Programme of Work was set out in the GSEEH Board Papers 19.10.21, which were circulated to Board members in advance of the meeting.
- In consideration of the limited time remaining for further exposition and discussion, MN advised the Board to review the reports provided in the Board Papers, which set out the considerable progress being made by GSEEH in other key areas of work, including the impact of its technical consultancy funding. MN also advised the Board to review the Programme Dashboard for October 2021, circulated in advance of the meeting with the Board papers, which provides detail on all projects being undertaken by the GSEEH team.

## 8. Forward Plan

- No changes to the GSEEH Board Forward Plan were proposed.

## 9. Any Other Business

- OxLEP asked about the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP hydrogen initiative and whether engagement could be facilitated with LEPs in the GSEEH that are similarly interested.

**ACTION 13.** MN to liaise with the South West Energy Hub (SWEH) to join up LEPs interested in hydrogen in the GSEEH and SWEH regions.

## 10. Dates of Future Meetings

**BOARD DECISION:** The next GSEEH Board meeting, **7 December 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:
  - 25 January 2022

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| <b>Minutes approved by Board Chair, Ben Burfoot (Reading Borough Council) - Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, as a true and accurate record.</b> |             |
| <b>SIGNATURE</b>   | <b>DATE</b> |
|  |             |