

Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) Board Meeting - 7 December 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 – Enterprise M3 LEP (EM3LEP)

Paul Kemp (PK) – Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Energy Project Manager

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

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

Helen Pollock (HP) – Hertfordshire LEP (HertsLEP)

Ellen Goodwin (EG) - New Anglia LEP (NALEP)

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 **Chris Starkie**, New Anglia LEP (NALEP).
- MN volunteered to chair the meeting on behalf of Board members.

2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes

BOARD DECISION: The minutes of the previous GSEEH Board meeting, 19.10.21, were agreed as a true account.

ACTION 1. BB to sign off the minutes of the GSEEH Board meeting 19.10.21 as agreed.

2.2 Actions and Matters Arising

- **Actions from the previous GSEEH Board meeting 19.10.21** – These were confirmed as complete or covered within the agenda, with the following additional updates:

- **Development of the retrofit supply chain** - The Board was thanked for the provision of retrofit supply chain contact details from their LEP areas to the GSEEH Supply Chain Engagement Officers, Genevieve Dady and Steven Eshiet. In addition:
 - A workshop is to be arranged by MN for the GSEEH Board in early 2022 to consider the opportunities and way forward for development of the retrofit supply chain and the [UK Training Retrofit Network](#) offer provided by The Retrofit Academy.
 - GSEEH is to commission the development of an evidence base to understand what the capacity is of the retrofit supply chain to deliver measures and what is needed to meet 2030/2050 net zero targets.

ACTION 2. MN to arrange workshop for the GSEEH in early 2022 to deliberate the opportunities and way forward for development of the retrofit supply chain and the [UK Training Retrofit Network](#) offer provided by The Retrofit Academy.

- **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Review** – The following updates were provided:
 - OxLEP has shared the LEP Network Board Strategic Review submission document with GSEEH Board members, so that the *Value of the Board* one-page document, which is being prepared by the GSEEH Board for Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy, BEIS, has alignment with this paper. JP is still to update the one-page document, seek input to it from AG and JS, and recirculate it to the Board.
 - OxLEP highlighted that the White Paper covering the LEP review has been delayed to January 2022. In the interim, the Secretary of State for BEIS has met with the LEP Network Board, and the LEP Network’s LEP analysis has been shared with Government. The second half of the LEP grant funding has been released, which has been of relief to smaller LEP organisations.
 - OxLEP, SELEP and NALEP all observed that recent comments by Michael Gove to the County Council Network have been misrepresented in the local government press and that no decisions on the LEP review have yet been made.
 - OxLEP highlighted that the delay to the White Paper is due to outstanding issues that require resolution, such as Levelling Up and the need for funding to support its delivery.
 - SELEP raised the issue that LEPs are reviewing resources for the next financial year and that the participation of LEPs in Energy Hub work is part of those considerations.

ACTION 3. Board members are to keep MN updated about any withdrawal of their LEP or reduced capacity to support the Energy Hub.

ACTION 4. MN to keep the LEP review on the GSEEH Board agenda going forward until the matter is resolved.

- **GSEEH Board Representation - OxLEP**
 - Ahmed Goga, GSEEH Board representative for OxLEP, advised the GSEEH Board that he is leaving his role as Director of Strategy and moving to the CBI as UK Director of Regional Policy and Cluster Development.
 - Sarah Gilbert of Oxfordshire County Council will lead for OxLEP on the GSEEH Board going forward, with support from Robert Panting, OxLEP’s communications lead and with proxy from Nigel Tipple, OxLEP Chief Executive.
 - On behalf of the GSEEH Board, MN thanked Ahmed for his work and support.

3. Finance Update

- A finance update to 31 October 2021 for GSEEH programmes was provided with the GSEEH Board Papers 07.12.21. Vanessa Ainsworth (VA), CPCA, GSEEH Finance Manager highlighted the following elements of the finance report to the Board:
 - A commitment report is now included in the reporting, as requested by the GSEEH Board.
 - Revenue income and expenditure has been updated to reflect that additional core funding has been provided to GSEEH by BEIS in respect of the extension to the operating period of the Energy Hubs.
 - The grant payments for RCEF are fully covered by funding. There is no overspend and this budget line will be reprofiled.
 - Public Sector Decarbonisation will be reprofiled to reflect the programme’s status concerning timescale and staff recruitment.

- Capital expenditure variance for LAD2 is due to delays to the programme as reported to the GSEEH Board. The figures reflect a recovery scenario with an extension of the programme to June 2022, of which £22m may go back to BEIS. Spend of the LAD2 top-slice will be restricted in case it needs to be returned.
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
 - TVBLEP observed that the commitment and outturn figures are not very different and asked for clarification of the outturn position. VA advised that staffing could not be committed, hence the discrepancy. The RCEF forecasts reflected that future funding had not yet been awarded. Some figures are based on original budgets not yet on the CPCA Agresso system, for example, travel and subsistence, which has reduced.

4. Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) Multi-Storey Car Park Information Exchange (IX)

- Paul Kemp (PK) Energy Project Manager for GSEEH, provided an update to the Board on an emerging activity being supported by KTN and their IX process. Key points from the update were as follows:
 - KTN is supporting the development of innovative zero carbon opportunities for multi-storey car parks, using the IX process, which has been deployed previously for the GSEEH Big Engine decarbonisation work. This involves the soft-market testing of low carbon solutions with the aim of translating these into zero carbon projects.
 - Feasibility studies are currently in progress with five local authorities for solar PV and lighting replacement for their multi-storey car park assets. Beyond this, more creative futures are being sought for car parks to maximise their potential following the pandemic. Car parks have the potential to be energy centres and charging hubs. Many car parks are linked to shopping centres. There is significant potential for replicability if zero carbon opportunities are identified. The scope could be widened beyond the public sector to privately owned car parks, and to rail and airport interchanges.
 - The next step in the process is to select stakeholders for the IX process. This will be run by KTN, with the only resource required from GSEEH being staff time.
- The Board had the following questions and comments on this update:
 - HertsLEP suggested that the NHS be included as part of the IX process. HertsLEP observed that many local authority car parks are in a bad condition. Funding is being sought to make them safe, and this needs to be factored into the solution. PK confirmed that two NHS car parks are already in the view of the project and agreed that raising the safety issue as part of the IX process is a good idea.
 - BucksLEP observed that EV canopies, batteries and lighting upgrades are not hugely innovative and asked what is different with the KTN feasibility process. PK clarified that the IX process is about using technology in a more innovative way. It is intended to draw out things that are not being done currently, including the use of car park structures to incorporate technology, for example for energy generation.
 - TVBLEP cautioned that peak loading onto the grid would need to be avoided as part of any solution. TVBLEP asked whether, if a project is abortive, GSEEH would be able to underwrite that. MN advised that the project's replicability criterion would cover that eventuality.
 - NALEP highlighted the CPCA and NALEP alternative fuel strategy, and the NALEP Challenge Fund for rural mobility, and the need to be aware of other projects and avoid duplication or replication. PK confirmed that conversations would be undertaken with relevant stakeholders and other projects mapped. NALEP offered to put PK in touch with a Suffolk Sustainability representative in the NHS.

ACTION 5. EG to put PK in touch with a Suffolk Sustainability representative in the NHS for the Knowledge Transfer Network Multi-Storey Car Park Information Exchange process.

BOARD DECISION: The Board confirmed that it is supportive of the Knowledge Transfer Network Multi-Storey Car Park Information Exchange to go ahead.

ACTION 6. MN to arrange for PK to provide the GSEEH Board with updates on the Knowledge Transfer Network Multi-Storey Car Park Information Exchange.

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

- MN presented an update to the Board on the GSEEH activities that are part of the BEIS-funded COP26 Domestic Campaign. A copy of the slide deck was provided with the GSEEH Board Papers 07.12.21. MN highlighted the following points:
 - Five Regional Roadshow events took place in the Greater South East region in November 2021. Recorded highlights are available until end of February 2022 via the [online platform](#) that GSEEH has developed as part of the COP26 Domestic Campaign.
 - The legacy content of the Campaign is still to be determined by BEIS. The Energy Hubs are required to report to BEIS on the outcomes of the Campaign by mid-December 2021. A meeting with the consultants Cue Media and The Marketing Smith, who respectively provided and supported the delivery of the online platform, is to take place 10.12.21 for a report on the level of audience engagement with the platform.
 - The case studies being developed by GSEEH and generated during the Planet Mark Zero Carbon Tour as part of the COP26 Domestic Campaign are expected to be complete by end of December 2021 with a combined target total of 125. These are being made available on the [Carbon Copy](#) website and on the [GSEEH COP26 platform](#).
- The Board had the following questions and comments on this update:
 - OxLEP advised that its Regional Roadshow, *The Billion Tonne Drop*, had 100 in-person attendees, with an additional audience online. A post-COP26 programme is being developed for technology and innovation in Oxfordshire to take on the challenge raised. OxLEP is also planning a sustainable construction event in March 2022 and Science and Technology Facilities Council and International Atomic Energy Agency events are also planned.

ACTION 9. AG to supply GSEEH with additional video material from *The Billion Tonne Drop* Regional Roadshow event.

- EB advised that the Buckinghamshire Council Regional Roadshow, *Green Wheels in Motion*, had 50 in-person attendees, with an additional audience online. Hosts Lunex had used the event as an opportunity to make the announcement about their new line of work in recycling vehicles by converting them to low carbon electric power. A learning point from the event had been the preference for a calendar appointment by those registering, which was not automatically supplied by the online platform.
- NALEP confirmed that its Hydrogen-focused online event had also run successfully, with 100 participants.
- MN proposed that outcomes from the Regional Roadshows could be promoted as part of the COP26 legacy and for OxLEP, BucksLEP and NALEP to advise of any content for that purpose.

ACTION 10. Board members to advise MN of any outcomes or outputs from the Regional Roadshows so that they can be promoted as part of the COP26 Domestic Campaign legacy.

8. Operational Update

- An update on the various elements of the GSEEH Programme of Work was set out in the GSEEH Board Papers 07.12.21. MN highlighted the following points:
 - **Projects Overview** - GSEEH has a new dashboard and short-list that it updates for BEIS. This has 59 short-list projects amounting to £464m. MN encouraged the Board to come forward with any queries about this. GSEEH has 25 completed projects with a value of £108m.
 - **New projects** – These include a school Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme project, and the KTN multi-storey car park Information Exchange. GSEEH is contract managing two other projects: [My Society](#) is developing a database of local authority climate emergency action plans, which will help to inform how GSEEH targets its activities for the future. The current contract for the Social Housing Retrofit Accelerator, which provides technical assistance for Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund applications, closes in March 2022. A new online platform is out for procurement, which will include the development of knowledge toolkits. A scope from BEIS is awaited.
 - **Sustainable Warmth** – The successful GSEEH bid for £118m BEIS funding involves 64 local authorities, of which £84m is LAD3 and £34m is Home Upgrade Grant.

- Stakeholders are now being engaged on the way forward. This will be done on a one-to-one basis or with groups where possible. A consortia approach is not envisaged.
- **Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF)** – The Fund has now provided grants for 29 projects and a further five applications have been made to funding Round 10. Recommendations will be put forward for the decision of the GSEEH Board at its next meeting, 25.01.22.
- GSEEH activities through the KTN Big Engines programme includes work on the Department for Transport [Zero Emissions Bus Regional Areas \(ZEBRA\)](#) funding scheme.
- There were no questions from the Board on this update.

9. Forward Plan

- BucksLEP asked whether the strategic transition that BEIS intends for the Energy Hubs to become Net Zero Hubs will result in any material and/or funding changes. MN advised that this is not expected. However, an internal review by BEIS is still to take place, so whether the Net Zero Hub allocation will be for core activities only or include extra activities is still to be confirmed. In future, public as well as private sector investment will be taken account of in the reporting metrics for Net Zero Hubs. An evaluation of the Energy Hubs will be undertaken to feed into the new strategy. The evaluation will be procured, with the specification for it to be agreed.
- TVBLEP commented that the capacity building of the GSEEH was enormous and its leadership by MN was much appreciated. TVBLEP proposed that a horizon scanning item be added to the GSEEH Board agenda to increase visibility on what issues and opportunities might be forthcoming.
- BucksLEP highlighted that the business plans of DNOs impact on grid connection costs, and that if projects do not have to cover grid-reinforcement then they become more affordable. MN proposed that GSEEH Energy Project Manager, Peter Gudde, should present to the Board on this topic. GSEEH is working with DNOs to overcome grid restrictions experienced by projects that have been successful in obtaining funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
- BucksLEP requested that the role of GSEEH Board Chair be discussed at the next meeting. BucksLEP has frequently taken the role of Chair in the past but cannot guarantee to attend all GSEEH Board meetings in their entirety going forward.

BOARD DECISION: The Board agreed that horizon scanning is to be included in the Forward Plan as a standard item on the GSEEH Board agenda. GSEEH Energy Project Manager, Peter Gudde, is to present to the Board about working with DNOs to overcome the grid restrictions experienced by projects with funding obtained from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The role of GSEEH Board Chair is to be discussed at the Board's next meeting 25.01.22.

ACTION 11. MN to add horizon scanning to the GSEEH Board Forward Plan as a standard item on the agenda, to be discussed before AOB.

ACTION 12. MN to arrange for Peter Gudde to present to the Board about working with DNOs to overcome grid restrictions experienced by projects with funding obtained from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

ACTION 13. MN to add the role of the GSEEH Board Chair to the 25.01.22 GSEEH Board meeting agenda.

10. Any Other Business

- MN thanked Board members for their time and support.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

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

- 8 March 2022
- 26 April 2022
- 7 June 2022
- 19 July 2022
- 6 September 2022
- 18 October 2022
- 6 December 2022
- 24 January 2023

Minutes approved by Helen Pollock – Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, as a true and accurate record.	
SIGNATURE	DATE