

## Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) Board Meeting - 25 January 2022

This meeting was conducted via online conference.

### Attendees

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

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

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

**Matt Wragg** - Coast to Capital LEP (C2CLEP)

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

**Simon Wyke** - Greater London Authority (GLA)

**Sam Bosson (SB)** – Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Energy Project Manager

**Michael David (MD)** – Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Energy Efficiency Programme Manager

**Peter Gudde (PG)** – Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Energy Project Manager

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

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

**Erica Sutton (ES)** - Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) – Hub Support Coordinator

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

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

**Sarah Gilbert** - 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)

### Minutes

#### 1. Apologies, Introductions

- Apologies were given by Alan Downton and Robert Emery, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), 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, 07.12.21, were agreed as a true account. HertsLEP volunteered to sign these off.

**ACTION 1.** HP to sign off the minutes of the GSEEH Board meeting 07.12.21 as agreed.

## 2.2 Actions and Matters Arising

- **Actions from previous GSEEH Board meetings** – These were confirmed as complete or covered within the agenda, with the following outstanding:
- **Heritage Property (action ref: 07/09/2021 A8)** – BB confirmed that he would take this action forward, which is to provide an outline to HP of the heritage property requirements/ issues for retrofit and HP is to approach BRE to seek a solution/highlight the issue.
- **LEP Support for Green Skills – Board Workshop (action ref: 19/10/2021 A11)** - MN advised that GSEEH is commissioning a supply chain and skills study, the LEP workshop could be incorporated into this as part of the stakeholder engagement. MN proposed that the output would be aligned with the Board's own aspiration to support skills. MN also proposed that a session could be run for the LEPs with The Retrofit Academy at a future Board meeting.
  - HertsLEP advised that HertsLEP and EM3LEP have already had a session with The Retrofit Academy. The key need is to understand the issues and problems that exist around skills development.
  - NALEP asked about the evidence base on the scale of the opportunity and whether the work that has been done by Energy Systems Catapult could be shared. MN confirmed that this would be looked at and advised that a relevant report by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation was due to be released.

**ACTION 2.** MN to look at whether the evidence base developed by Energy Systems Catapult on the scale of the opportunity can be shared.

- C2CLEP offered their experience that The Retrofit Academy provided an off-the-shelf package of support which was too highly priced for the LEP. C2CLEP suggested that it was difficult to find out what government opportunities existed, and that Energy Systems Catapult could have role in accessing that information.
- MN proposed that a summary could be developed of the different needs of the LEPs and of the different skills development activities currently in play, to help inform the LEPs about what was going on. This was welcomed by the Board. HertsLEP proposed that the LEPs need an evaluation of the skills required, to take this to colleges to provide the information needed to make decisions. VA advised that CPCA was using incentives from Innovation Funds to help colleges develop courses and agreed that colleges also need time and evidence for the purpose. VA noted that to provide courses for September 2022 colleges would need to start preparing now.
- GLA advised that London has produced reports on green skills and adult education skills. The capacity of colleges has been examined along with the ease of access to them for students (such as travel distance) types of occupations needed, opportunities, barriers, and the shortfall. The reports are [Green Skills Adult Education Provision in London - London Datastore](#) and [Identifying Green Occupations](#).
- VA made an offer that CPCA would help support other LEPs by sharing its capacity and resources.
- NALEP proposed that all LEPs share whatever information they currently hold about skills to avoid duplication.

**ACTION 3.** Board members to share reports/insights/information on supply chains and skills with ES for resharing with the Board.

**ACTION 4.** MN to share the supply chain and skills study specification for housing retrofit across the region with the GSEEH Board for comment. The specification will include current supply chain capacity, future need and includes an evaluation of the skills required, and summary of the different activities currently in play.

- **LEP Review** – Board members provided interim updates as follows:
  - EM3LEP advised that the 'Value of the Board to GSEEH' paper for BEIS that had been discussed by the GSEEH Board has not been completed. SELEP observed that the paper as originally conceptualised had missed its moment and that it would require an evolution if taken forward.
  - SELEP confirmed that the expected letters to LEPs from BEIS on the outcome of the LEP review were pending the publication of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper, which was expected in February 2022. SELEP advised that the LEP has prepared to

downsize by 45% from April 2022 to accommodate the lack of confirmation of core funding. This has resulted in capacity issues and a rethink of priorities going forward.

- C2CLEP observed that it is difficult for LEPs to plan in the current situation. C2CLEP addressed the situation with a restructure to repurpose the LEP in July 2021. While waiting for the Levelling-Up White Paper, there is to be a C2CLEP Board discussion during w/o 24.01.22 to look at opportunities, funding scenarios and what partners could be offered.

**ACTION 5. MN to retain the LEP review as an item on the next GSEEH Board agenda 08.03.22.**

- **GSEEH Board representation – EM3LEP** – JP provided an update that she would be leaving EM3LEP to join Test Valley District Council in a net zero economic development role. JP's replacement on the GSEEH Board is still to be confirmed. The Board congratulated JP on her new role, expressed regret that she was moving on, and thanked her for her contribution to the Board.

### 3. Finance Update

- A finance update for GSEEH programmes to 31 December 2021 was provided with the GSEEH Board Papers 25.01.22. Vanessa Ainsworth (VA), CPCA, GSEEH Finance Manager highlighted the following elements of the finance report to the Board:
  - A copy of the finance paper to the CPCA Board, for its meeting 26.01.22, which covers the reprofiling of the GSEEH budget, has been included with the GSEEH Board papers 25.01.22.
  - The BEIS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Home Upgrade Grant and Sustainable Warmth domestic retrofit funding was received and the grant offer accepted by CPCA in December 2021. The spending proposal contained in the CPCA Board paper is to be presented for approval 26.01.22.
  - CPCA will approve the return of ~£25 million Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 2 (LAD2) funding to BEIS. The scheme will not be able to use this money due to lack of supply chain capacity. Capital and revenue spending has been reprofiled and the capital spend will be mostly in the current financial year.
  - The Public Sector Decarbonisation budget, which was received by CPCA in 2021, has been reprofiled to reflect the timeframe allotted by BEIS, which provides two years in which the funding can be used. GSEEH is now recruiting staff for the scheme.
  - A further BEIS MoU is in place, which corresponds to ~£2 million extra revenue funding provided by BEIS for core GSEEH activities and for a net zero investment design and scoping programme.
- The Board offered the following comments and questions:
  - TVBLEP asked what the Public Sector Decarbonisation support comprised and how it would help local authorities to make applications for funding. TVBLEP highlighted that a key challenge was readiness for funding applications. MN advised that GSEEH does not get any foresight on the scope and guidance for the funds. MN provided further detail that GSEEH is recruiting roles in the specialisms of clean heat, building decarbonisation, and surveying and that job descriptions for these have been developed. This recruitment is to support local authorities that lack capacity and to develop estate-based decarbonisation plans. The next funding rounds may continue to focus on supporting building energy-efficiency and low carbon replacement of end-of-life heating systems. GSEEH will help local authorities to work on plans for such projects rather than getting bids ready.
  - TVBLEP asked about the level of variance in the GSEEH budget. MN clarified that the CPCA Board 26.01.22 will be asked to approve the reprofile of the Public Sector Decarbonisation budget over the coming year. This will fund the recruitment of five GSEEH staff for the programme. It will also fund the costs of a recruitment consultant, Paul Woods, who was used by GSEEH to engage staff for the RCEF and energy efficiency programmes. The reprofile overall for the Public Sector Decarbonisation programme breaks down as £180k for this financial year, £975k for 2022-23 and £222k for 2023-24.
  - VA further explained the situation that GSEEH was being given funding by BEIS for multiple programmes, which came with short deadlines for acceptance and

administration. This stretched CPCA capacity, as the Accountable Body had nonetheless to go through all its standard procedures and processes.

- TVBLEP asked for confirmation that the funding was all revenue with no capital funding. MN confirmed this was so.
- MN highlighted to the Board that ~£195k mobilisation funding is being provided by BEIS as an additional resource so that GSEEH can get the appropriate mechanisms in place to support the organisation as it expanded.
- EM3LEP commented on the LAD2 financial underspend and highlighted the potential for funding to go back to BEIS while other funding came forwards. The underlying issues of supply chain and local authority capacity would remain and therefore the problem would repeat itself, as the consequent challenge of getting the funding used would remain. MN acknowledged this situation and advised that this has been identified by GSEEH as a major risk. LAD1B is being extended and Sustainable Warmth will overlap, after which the capacity issue will reduce. To counter the risk, and in the absence of any national supply chain capacity development programme, the GSEEH procurement mechanism has been established to drive supply chain growth. VA emphasised the critical role of skills development to support this measure.
- HertsLEP highlighted the risk that the Energy Hub could start to mobilise for delivery, but due to timescale constraints, might need to return funding to BEIS. This could result in less BEIS future funding coming forward. A scenario might arise that GSEEH could be left with a larger organisational structure and with fewer programmes to deliver. HertsLEP proposed that GSEEH give priority to activities that were best placed to use the most funding. MN clarified that much of the supply chain was booked out until June 2022. MN offered to spend more time on this topic and how the Board could support it.
- TVBLEP noted that local authorities have the opposite problem. They have no staff to make things happen and no money. TVBLEP asked whether a bridge to funding for local authorities was possible where activity was taking place. MN explained that to equitably distribute funding with so many local authorities in the region, it would not provide them with sufficient money to be beneficial. This is the BEIS rationale for funding the Energy Hubs rather than the local authorities. GSEEH is looking into other ideas such as peer-to-peer support and that other ideas offered by the GSEEH Board would be welcome. VA added that government procurement rules constrained what was feasible operationally. It was not possible to respond instantly to need, and innovation was required to address the situation.

**ACTION 6.** MN to include a look at activities to support local authorities on the next GSEEH Board agenda 08.03.22.

## 7. Operational Update

- An update on the various elements of the GSEEH Programme of Work was set out in the GSEEH Board Papers 25.01.22. MN highlighted the following points:
  - **Projects Overview** – The project pipeline is currently static at £446 million. GSEEH Energy Project Managers are reviewing it. The GSEEH BEIS Tracker is being rewritten in layman terms to make it more useful and understandable.
  - **New projects** – These include the University of Sussex CHP hydrogen replacement. There are four new areas to the local authority capacity support programme. These are:
    - ❖ **Net Zero Investment Design & Scoping Programme** – GSEEH is passporting funds for this project, a place-based approach to delivering Net Zero at scale, and a partnership between Core Cities, Connected Places Catapult and London Councils. Hounslow Council is the lead. There are opportunities for local authorities to be involved.

**ACTION 14.** MN to provide an update on Net Zero Investment Design & Scoping Programme at a future GSEEH Board meeting.

- ❖ **Cleaner & Greener Sustainability Hub** – A three-year community net zero hub in a shopping centre to support the residents of Bromley, including a retrofit advice centre for the able-to-pay market. It is hoped that this will be replicated going forward.

- ❖ **Community Energy Pathways** – Led by Community Energy South in Surrey and Hampshire. The aim is to expand the community energy framework/support across England.
- ❖ **Mobilisation funding for GSEEH** of £195k to aid recruitment and provide additional resource to the Energy Hub to compensate for that expended on LAD2.
- **Sustainable Warmth** – An implementation plan is being developed which the CPCA Board is to approve. This is the two delivery routes of Warmworks as Managing Agent and local authority grant funding agreements. As a contingency arrangement alongside this plan, a Dynamic Purchasing System is being set up for roles such as Managing Agent services and Retrofit Coordinators, to provide a secondary source of supplier.
- **Climate Action Plans Explorer** - The organisations [mySociety](#) and [Climate Emergency UK](#) have built an online resource, the [Climate Action Plans Explorer](#), which collects and shares local authority climate action plans in a single data base.
- **COP26 Domestic Campaign** - GSEEH has produced its COP26 Domestic Campaign report. There is a £21k legacy underspend. Interviews are being undertaken with the Regional Roadshow hosts to identify how GSEEH can work with them to capitalise on the legacy of the events.

**ACTION 15.** Board members to share any ideas they have for the COP26 Domestic Campaign legacy work.

- **Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas Scheme (ZEBRA) Bid** – This project to deliver 30 electric double-decker buses in Cambridgeshire is now moving into delivery with GSEEH acting as the technical lead for the charging infrastructure.
- **Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) – Multi-Storey Car Parks Information Exchange (IX)** – Scoping sessions have identified two challenges to develop multi-storey car parks as energy centres and as spaces for net zero targets.
- **East West Rail (EWR) Electrification** – GSEEH Energy Project Managers are working with DNOs to look at the feasibility of opportunity charging at eight station sites. A key issue is the land take required to accommodate the supporting battery and distribution equipment.
- The Board had the following questions and comments on the Programme of Work update:
  - NALEP asked whether the KTN IX work would feed into the EV, solar and battery storage model work. MN confirmed this was so.

## 8. Chairing of GSEEH Board

- The Board had agreed to discuss the role of the GSEEH Board Chair at its previous meeting 07.12.21.
- BucksLEP proposed that the role of chair should be taken by someone on a regular basis for consistency and that this could be for a 6-12 month commitment. A deputy for the chair should also be identified so that the role is fully covered.
- SELEP agreed with the BucksLEP proposal, observing that the GSEEH Board had been required to manage with a chair acting on a voluntary basis for over three years. While all volunteers had done a good job, a permanent independent chair would be welcome. It would be fairer on the GSEEH team and helpful given the uncertainty of the LEP review and associated LEP capacity.
- TVBLEP agreed that it would be helpful to have the same person in the role for consistency. TVBLEP observed that since the work of GSEEH was so wide ranging, dynamic and continued to grow, it was very challenging for a volunteer chair to keep up-to-date and have full oversight of its activities.
- MN suggested that a governance review and continuity plan might be needed, and that the GSEEH mobilisation resource could be used for this. The review could look at how the Board informed and shaped the work of GSEEH.
- EM3LEP noted that the need for GSEEH advocacy was increasing so that having a chair that MN can work with between meetings and take a strategic view would be useful.
- C2CLEP asked whether there was any update on the thoughts of Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy, BEIS, about local authority involvement in the Energy Hub Boards and whether this was a separate strand to the Levelling Up White Paper.

**ACTION 16.** SU to follow up with Patrick Allcorn, whether any further thinking has emerged about local authority involvement in the Energy Hub Boards.

- SELEP suggested that bringing in local authority representation to the Energy Hubs would need to wait for the White Paper and that LEPs might be more reflective of local authorities going forward. SELEP also raised the idea that there might be some linkage to the ADEPT Working Groups or interim Chair opportunities. BucksLEP advised that while there was some cross-over between ADEPT and the Energy Hubs there were no district councils represented.

## 9. Forward Plan

- A copy of the GSEEH Board Forward Plan was included with the GSEEH Board Papers 25.01.22.
- MN proposed that in addition to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grid constraint issue, and the Transport Study items already listed, the plan would include core areas of work such as LAD2, the Climate Action Plans Explorer, budget reprofiles and redefining priorities and delivery models.
- TVBLEP proposed that plan should include a showcase of emerging projects coming up from local authorities and other public sector organisations.

**ACTION 17.** MN to add to GSEEH team meeting agenda the identification of activities that could be shared to enable replication.

## 10. Any Other Business

- No other matters were raised by Board members.

## 11. Dates of Future Meetings

**BOARD DECISION:** The next GSEEH Board meeting, **7 March 2022**, will be an additional one-hour meeting to approve the RCEF Funding Panel recommendations for Round 11. The subsequent meeting, **8 March 2022**, will follow the usual agenda pattern and timing of 10:00-12:30. Both meetings will 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:
  - 26 April 2022
  - 7 June 2022
  - 19 July 2022
  - 6 September 2022
  - 18 October 2022
  - 6 December 2022
  - 24 January 2023

**Minutes approved by Ed Barlow (Buckinghamshire Council) – Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, as a true and accurate record.**

**SIGNATURE**

**DATE**