

Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) Board Meeting - 05 December 2023

Conducted via online conference.

Attendees

<p>Ben Burfoot - (Reading Borough Council) Berkshire LEP (Berks LEP)</p> <p>Nick Bell - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)</p> <p>Sheryl French – Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) – Chair</p> <p>Gerry Glover – CPCA Finance Manager for Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>Natasha Marshall – CPCA Finance Officer for Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>Genevieve Dady - Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) – Supply Chain Development Manager</p> <p>Peter Gudde – GSENZH – Local Net Zero Programme Lead (North)</p>	<p>Maxine Narburgh - Greater South East Net Zero Hub – Regional Hub Manager</p> <p>Dipna Pattni – GSENZH – Energy Efficiency Delivery Team Manager</p> <p>Alex Rathmell GSENZH – Local Net Zero Programme Lead (South)</p> <p>Helen Pollock - Hertfordshire LEP (Herts LEP)</p> <p>Nicolette Jeffreys – New Anglia LEP (NALEP)</p> <p>Sarah Gilbert – (Oxfordshire County Council) Oxfordshire LEP (OxLEP).</p> <p>Jo Simmons - South East LEP (SELEP)</p> <p>Arthur Le Geyt - South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP)</p>
--	---

Minutes

1. Apologies, Introductions

- The meeting was chaired by Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council.
- Apologies were given by:
 - Ian Barham, Buckinghamshire LEP
 - Robert Emery, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
 - Marsha Robert, Coast to Capital LEP
 - Richard Hall, Consultant for CPCA / Greater South East Net Zero Hub
 - Swapna Uddin, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)
 - Chris Burchell, EnterpriseM3 LEP
 - Marida Cable-Lewis, EnterpriseM3 LEP
 - Simon Wyke, Greater London Authority
 - Graeme Heron, Greater South East Net Zero Hub
 - Erica Sutton, Greater South East Net Zero Hub
 - Lisa Roberts, New Anglia LEP
 - Sally Andreou, Oxfordshire LEP.

- The meeting welcomed Dipna Pattni, GSENZH Energy Efficiency Delivery Team Manager, covering for GSENZH Energy Efficiency Lead Graeme Heron, and Alex Rathmell, newly-appointed GSENZH Local Net Zero Programme Lead (South).

2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes

- The minutes of the previous GSENZH Board meeting 17.10.23 were reviewed and agreed as a true account.

BOARD DECISION: The minutes of the previous GSENZH Board meeting 17.10.23 are agreed as a true account.

ACTION 1. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council is to sign off the minutes of the GSENZH Board meeting 17.10.23 as agreed.

2.2 Actions

- The actions from the previous Board meeting 17.10.23 were confirmed as complete or covered within the agenda, with the following exceptions:
- **Minutes of the GSENZH Board Meetings 18.07.23 and 05.09.23** – These have been approved by the GSENZH Board but are yet to be signed off by a GSENZH Board member.

ACTION 2. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council is to sign off the previous minutes of the GSENZH Board meetings 18.07.23 and 05.09.23 as agreed.

- **Further information about the Local Area Energy Planning Cross-Hub Working Group and Innovate UK Pathfinder Places Phase 2 bid** – Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH advised that the Innovate UK Pathfinder Places Phase 2 bid has not been successful. Peter Gudde, GSENZH confirmed that the Working Group will now consider the way forward in view of this situation.
- **Review of the scoring mechanism used for the Regional Skills Pilot bid assessments to understand what can be learned for future project assessment processes** – Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH advised that the Hub is reviewing its assessment frameworks alongside its new MOUs and that this action would be incorporated into that process. This will include consideration of a portfolio approach to address geographical disparity. An update will be given to the Board.

ACTION 3. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to update the GSENZH Board about the Hub review of its assessment frameworks once this process has been completed.

- **The need for better alignment between what is offered and what is needed in respect of net zero business support** - Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH advised that a meeting is to be arranged by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) with the Business Energy Advice Service, which is piloting a national service, to understand how the Net Zero Hubs might contribute to local support. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council, Lisa Roberts, New Anglia LEP and Jo Simmons South East LEP are to attend.

2.3 Matters Arising

- There were no matters arising brought to the attention of the GSENZH Board at the 05.12.23 meeting.

3. Finance

- A verbal update on the GSENZH financial position to 30 November 2023 was presented at the meeting by Gerry Glover, CPCA. Gerry advised that the format for the production of a regular monthly budget report is being finalised. The Agresso accounting system is being restructured. These items have taken longer than anticipated. A written paper will be circulated to the GSENZ Board after the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- **Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 (HUG1) and Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3)** - A funding repayment of £3.256 million is to be made to DESNZ. A proportion of 80% of this is to be repaid by 18.12.23. The issue of outstanding E.ON invoices is ongoing and it is estimated that GSENZH owes the company c. £6 million.
- **Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2)** – Batch payments are being worked through to balance a £2 million Administration and Ancillary (A&A) overpayment. No money will be received for batch payments until that overpayment is used. GSENZH has now made approximately eight batch payments to Cornerstone, which is delivering measures for park homes only. E.ON has signed its contract. Agility Eco is to sign its contract imminently. Capability and Capacity (C&C) grant funding agreements are outstanding from some local authorities, which are being followed up.
- **Community Energy Fund** – A £1 million funding payment is awaited.
- **Regional Skills Pilot** – A £1.5 million funding payment is awaited.
- **Financial systems, management, and reporting** - Cost centres are being restructured on Agresso to align with the new GSENZH management structure and reporting. Going forward, monthly meetings will be held by the GSENZH finance team with GSENZH programme leads to look at forecasts and under or overspends. Advance funding has been placed on the balance sheet but not yet allocated to cost centres. This task is in progress. The timesheets that GSENZH are required to complete to allocate time to projects are being reformatted. The recharges are being actioned on Agresso. From January 2024 a formal report will be provided to the Board.
- GSENZH Board members had no questions or comments about the finance update.

ACTION 4. Gerry Glover, CPCA Finance Manager for Greater South East Net Zero Hub to provide a written update to the GSENZH Board on the financial position to 30 November 2024.

4. Strategic Projects Update

- Peter Gudde, GSENZH introduced this agenda item. A paper on the 26 strategic net zero projects approved for funding and support by the GSENZH Board was provided to GSENZH Board members in advance of the meeting with the GSENZH Board Pack 05.12.23, pages 40-46. Peter Gudde highlighted the following points:
- These projects were originally requests for technical consultancy support from local authorities for accelerating investable projects.
- The paper provides a review of the 26 projects and their status and timelines agreed. Seventeen projects are on track. Four have completed.
- Completed projects include the **Net Zero Delivery Vehicle** study, from which GSENZH is keen to share learning. It was linked to an Innovate UK Pathfinder Places Stage 2 bid via EP Group, but it was unsuccessful. The project has the support of the four local authorities involved and there are 25 associate local authorities that are interested, so GSENZH hopes to find a way forward. Another completed project looked at investment for national programmes of work using institutional investor funding. This was led by Connected Places Catapult as part of the **3Ci Net Zero Investment** programme. We are looking at how we can pool and disseminate this knowledge.
- **Health and other public estate as anchors for Net Zero** – GSENZH has worked with the NHS East of England estate to map solar PV and heat network opportunities and to help the NHS build relationships with other stakeholders and develop a whole place approach. GSENZH will disseminate the learning and continue to build on this work. We have an NHS event on heat networks scheduled for 07.12.23.
- **Digital services to assist Net Zero delivery** – This project is on hold pending recruitment of the new data and analytics posts at GSENZH, which will help net zero projects get to investment case. The project will look at what tools are most useful for this purpose.

- **Community Energy Pathways** - This project is at risk. There are two interested parties, Hertfordshire County Council and Kent County Council, which were going to work with Community Energy South to help build capacity in those counties. The timescale to 31.03.24 cannot be met. We are in dialogue with Community Energy South and the county councils to understand how to move forward.
- We are making a request to the GSENGH Board to change the timescale of three projects: **Carbon Offsetting and Removals, Able-to-Pay Retrofit and Industrial Clusters**. There is a considerable amount of work being done by other parties in relation to able-to-pay retrofit, and its development is fast moving. The projects need to add value and avoid duplication, which the initial fact-finding work will support. As regards the Industrial Clusters project, we want to support industrial activity in the region and understand how this aligns with the strategies of the LEPs, especially business parks and industrial estates where communities can come together and work with the public sector. This project needs more time. There has been a lack of success in the region in bidding into the Innovate UK Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan fund despite GSENGH support. We have work around the freeports: Freeport East and Thames Gateway. We are keen to align with this work.
- GSENGH would like to re-allocate £30k funding currently allocated to solar farm feasibility and West Sussex County Council. The council now wants to align to the fleet decarbonisation project. There is no impact on the budget or timeline, and we think this is a sensible way forward, as Cherwell District Council and Sussex County Council will benefit from being able to work together.
- **The recommendations of the GSENGH Management to the GSENGH Board in respect of the strategic projects were as follows:**
 1. To note updates on strategic projects approved by the Hub Board
 2. To approve extensions to project delivery timetables where requested.
 3. To approve reallocation of up to £30,000 of funding from the Solar Farm feasibility project to the Cherwell Transport Decarbonisation project to enable West Sussex County Council to participate in the latter. If approved, any funding allocation will be subject to West Sussex County Council confirming that they can deliver to the agreed timetable.
- GSENGH Board members had the following questions and comments about the strategic projects update:
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP offered to link up Reading Borough Council with the fleet decarbonisation project, given its work in this area.

ACTION 5. Peter Gudde, GSENGH to note and pass on the offer from Ben Burfoot, Berks LEP to link up Reading Borough Council with the fleet decarbonisation project, given the work of the council in this area.

- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented on the interest in the local area energy planning work shown by participants at the recent GSENGH Board workshop 21.11.23 and asked if a best way forward could be developed for GSENGH. There are local area energy planning tools on offer from the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) UKPN and SSEN, which have been developed by Advanced Infrastructure Limited. It would be helpful to set up a GSENGH Board working group to support local authorities. Ofgem has not decided who will pay for local area energy planning, and this decision is some way off, which adds to the uncertainty, and therefore something is needed to cover the interim.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council asked for clarification about the spending timelines of the funding for the strategic projects. Some have a timeline to March 2024 and others are March 2025. Can a portfolio approach be taken if some projects are struggling to meet a March 2024 deadline?
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENGH advised that it is the DESNZ MOU that specifies that funding be committed to September, however GSENGH can ask DESNZ for extensions or for

redeployment of funding. Some projects have been able to get other sources of support, whereas others have not. GSENGH also would like to have the opportunity for a pause on the Community Pathways project, review the outputs and consider the way forward.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council highlighted the importance of the able-to-pay project, especially as bad practice was currently going on in this sector. Sheryl French emphasised the challenge of mobilising the market in this sector and the need to support the project.

BOARD DECISION: The GSENGH Board accepted the GSENGH Management recommendations in respect of the strategic projects, as follows:

1. To note updates on strategic projects approved by the Hub Board
2. To approve extensions to delivery timetables for the Carbon Offsetting and Removals, Able-to-Pay Retrofit and Industrial Clusters projects to March 2025.
3. To approve reallocation of up to £30,000 of funding from the Solar Farm feasibility project to the Cherwell Transport Decarbonisation project to enable West Sussex County Council to participate in the latter. If approved, any funding allocation will be subject to West Sussex County Council confirming that they can deliver to the agreed timetable.

5. Board Workshop Highlights

- Peter Gudde, GSENGH reflected on the recent in-person GSENGH Board and Local Authority Strategic Workshop, 21.11.23. Peter Gudde highlighted the following points:
- The attendance was good. The morning session looked at retrofit and the afternoon session looked at the strategic projects and discussed what GSENGH should work on in future. The five topics selected for discussion via three key questions were local area energy planning, community energy, place, and industrial decarbonisation, retrofit, and skills. The questions were: what GSENGH should be doing, who GSENGH should engage with and where the money should come from to fund further work.
- Notes from the discussion will be circulated to the attendees and to the GSENGH Board. The outputs will inform the strategic projects and the recruitment of the Energy Project Officers for the Local Net Zero team. Local area energy planning may be one area for future support.

ACTION 6. Peter Gudde, GSENGH to circulate to the GSENGH Board the notes from the GSENGH Board Strategic Workshop 21.11.23, once these are available.

- Key highlights from the topic discussions at the GSENGH Board Strategic workshop were as follows:
- **Local Area Energy Planning** – Understand the barriers and constraints, what is the cost, who should local authorities interact with, whether the guidance is appropriate, what is the government's position, what should GSENGH be doing.
- Peter Gudde observed that there is a need for GSENGH to establish a position as there is a lack of policy clarity, and local area energy planning is not a mandated activity. Some authorities are choosing to wait before developing a local area energy plan, due to the cost and because they want to understand more about the benefit. An action learning group may help both those who want to move quickly on local area energy planning and those who want to see what others are doing and understand the value.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council observed that the network operators must put their new business plan and funding requirement for 2028-33 together by 2026. The window to influence the DNO investment programme is therefore end 2025. If you are not doing local area energy planning, you still need to have a conversation with your DNO about where you are planning to drive net zero growth and demand, so that it can be incorporated into their network planning. There is a need to highlight this timeframe to local authorities.
- Peter Gudde, GSENGH agreed with this point and observed that there is a lack of alignment between local plans and regional network investment. There is also the introduction of the role of Regional System Planner for local authorities to be aware of. Local authorities need to understand what their role is to influence investment in the network and the need to engage with the Regional System Planner.

- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP highlighted that *local area energy planning* is a misnomer and would be better described as *local area energy data sets*. Ben Burfoot commented that there is the need to form a common data set with the DNOs so that local authority planning can plug into DNO system planning, and to develop a relationship with DNOs about this.
- Peter Gudde, GSENGH continued to share highlights from the topic discussions at the GSENGH Board Strategic workshop as follows:
- **Community Energy** – There is need for public sector support for community energy. The community energy sector needs to have commercial awareness. There is potential for a five-year plan with a sinking fund and for money to be rotated.
- **Place** – There is a desire for place-based industrial decarbonisation in the South East region, which is themed around clustering. The industry in the South East is dispersed so there are questions about what is being clustered, and there is need for a mechanism for collaboration between the public and private sectors.
- **Skills** – There is a lack of informed careers advisors and potential entrants need to know what green jobs/ skills are. Suppliers need access to a Dynamic Purchasing System for area-based training at a discount so that it does not hit their bottom line.
- **Able-to-Pay Retrofit** – Key issues are lack of funding and supply chain.
- Genevieve Dady, GSENGH added that regarding skills, careers advice is key and talks in schools would help. We need carrots and sticks to drive investment. Regarding able-to-pay retrofit, there is a lack of consumer awareness to drive demand. This impacts on the demand for skills and training. There is a need to train the trainer. Local authorities need training to support businesses.
- Alex Rathmell, GSENGH added that GSENGH has taken the outputs from the workshop retrofit session and fed these into the specification for the strategic project on Able-to-Pay Retrofit and the role of one-stop-shops as delivery bodies to facilitate retrofit funding. The Hub plans to procure advice on the design of one-stop-shops in early 2024.
- Sarah Gilbert, Oxfordshire County Council added that the council has two one-stop-shops, one aimed at private home-owners and one at SMEs enterprises. These are funded by innovation funding. The council had hoped to get financial support from the Innovate UK Pathfinder Places funding programme to look at what circumstances would enable one-stop-shops to thrive. This relates to policy and standards that local authorities could set. Unfortunately, the Oxfordshire County Council bid was unsuccessful, however the council can share the specification for this project if it would be helpful.

ACTION 7. Sarah Gilbert, Oxfordshire County Council to share the specification of the Oxfordshire County Council one-stop-shop Pathfinder Places bid with Alex Rathmell, GSENGH to inform the development of the Able-to-Pay Retrofit strategic project.

- Peter Gudde, GSENGH continued his summary of discussions at the GSENGH Board Strategic workshop with the following comments:
- Other topics important to local authorities that were suggested for the workshop discussions on the day but not run due to lack of time were: water, carbon capture and storage, and waste. Peter Gudde concluded by advising that GSENGH will take the notes of the session along with other learning and consider how this informs the Hub strategic project programme in future and its Energy Project Officer recruitment programme. Thank you to everyone who participated.

7. Terms of Reference Amendments

- Maxine Narburgh, GSENGH confirmed that the actions taken at the previous GSENGH Board meeting 17.10.23 to amend the GSENGH Board Terms of Reference (ToR) had been acted upon and the amendments had been incorporated into the ToR and circulated to the GSENGH Board. A copy of the updated ToR was provided to the GSENGH Board with the GSENGH Board Pack 05.12.23, pages 21-38.
- Other actions generated at the 17.10.23 GSENGH Board meeting regarding the ToR were to discuss the points that were to be clarified with the Monitoring Officer of the GSENGH

Accountable Body, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). Maxine Narburgh outlined the outcome of the discussion with the Monitoring Officer as follows:

- **Whether Board members would be making recommendations or decisions and how this would be reflected in the ToR and level of finance** – The GSENZH Board are making recommendations to the Executive Director at CPCA for decision. CPCA is accountable and responsible for all financial decisions. The level of finance depends on the MOUs coming to GSENZH. If the financial level is exceeded for the Executive Director, then the decision goes to the CPCA Board.
- **Board members to check their constitution and to have discussions with their legal team /monitoring officer about what is required in respect of their responsibility and delegation** – If GSENZH Board members are nominated by Executive Team/ Full Council / equivalent then it is reasonable to presume that authority has been given to make representation on behalf of that organisation. The constitution may not provide the necessary answer. The CPCA Monitoring Officer is ready to discuss the situation of each GSENZH Board member if needed.
- GSENZH Board members had the following questions and comments about the update:
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP highlighted that the South East LEP legal team has advised that LEPs that are a limited company need a director decision at board level.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council observed that local authorities have political nominations which are ratified at full council, but do not have officer representation on boards. This will have to be considered.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP advised that their CEO is nominated by the SELEP Board to be the LEP's representative. I am then an officer under our CEO. There is a need to get permission to delegate down.
- Gerry Glover, CPCA observed that when local authorities establish arms-length companies, officers are on the boards of directors. This links to the constitution of the company and the scheme of delegation of the authority's constitution.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council asked how that worked if the entity is a Board rather than a company.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH commented that it is an advisory board in that case.
- Nick Bell, CPCA advised that it would be within an authority's scheme of delegation for officers to be nominated to sit on external bodies. Even if it is not clear in the scheme of delegation, officers can still be nominated by their authorities. I would recommend that local authorities check their position with their Monitoring Officer or Head of Democratic Services.

ACTION 8. GSENZH Board members in doubt about the responsibility and delegation in respect of their role should check their position with their Monitoring Officer or Head of Democratic Services.

- **Amendment to the ToR, Section 5. Board Composition** - Jo Simmons, South East LEP advised that from 31.03.24 SELEP Ltd and its secretariat will close, and its Accountable Body will step back. The functions of the LEP will be transferred into the six local authorities in the SELEP area. The transition plan is based on the three functional economic areas within the SELEP. If there is only one seat for SELEP on the GSENZH Board this would be difficult to translate to the new arrangements. New governance would need to be put in place to draw together the six upper tier local authorities into the one seat.
- Jo Simmons proposed to the GSENZH Board that three seats be made available to the three functional economic areas in the SELEP region from 01.04.24. This amendment to the ToR would accommodate that proposal and SELEP would be grateful if the GSENZH Board is agreeable to it. SELEP believes that this issue is specific to SELEP and that other LEPs on the GSENZH Board are not affected in the same way.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council – Could other LEPs confirm whether they are similarly affected?
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP – Hertfordshire LEP only maps onto one county so we are not affected in the same way.

BOARD DECISION: To accommodate on the GSENZH Board from 01.04.24, three representatives from the South East LEP (SELEP) region in respect of its three functional economic areas, following the close of SELEP Ltd and the transfer of the LEP's function to the six upper tier local authorities in its region.

8. Governance Outputs

- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH introduced GSENZH Board members to the outputs of work carried out by consultants to GSENZH, Local Partnerships, on the development of a new GSENZH governance structure.
- Maxine Narburgh shared some presentation slides that had been provided by Local Partnerships to set out the proposed governance way forward. These had already undergone an initial review by the GSENZH team, which had resulted in some amendments being introduced to the proposals. Maxine Narburgh proposed that Local Partnerships be invited to attend the next GSENZH Board meeting 23.01.24 to provide an update on the governance proposals.
- **Proposed Governance Structure** - Maxine Narburgh presented to the Board a diagram of the new proposed governance structure and highlighted the following points.
- The sub-boards within the governance structure are now being termed *Regional Advisory Groups*.
- The responsibilities of the GSENZH Board are to:
 - Agree strategic priorities for the GSENZ Hub
 - Scrutinise and challenge performance – risk escalation/management
 - Agree resource / funding allocation (either directly or through agreed Operating Strategy)
 - Consider feedback / input /strategy proposals from RAGs and take into account where possible
 - Agree strategic priorities for the GSENZ Hub
 - Scrutinise and challenge performance – risk escalation/management
 - Agree resource / funding allocation (either directly or through agreed Operating Strategy)
 - Consider feedback / input /strategy proposals from the Regional Advisory Groups and take that into account where possible.
- The responsibilities of the Regional Advisory Groups are to:
 - Develop strategy proposals /make recommendations to Board regarding priorities/ issues to address which would have resource implications
 - Members represent their organisations and stakeholder in the geographical areas they cover.
 - Escalate regional and sectoral challenges/ opportunities to the Board
 - Identify emerging policy/ technical/ financial challenges and opportunities, and proposed Hub responses, for Board consideration.
- **Proposed Board Composition** – Maxine Narburgh presented a slide on the proposed GSENZH Board composition and highlighted the following points:
- The proposal is that the Board comprises:
 - An independent chair (as has been agreed by the GSENZH Board)
 - An independent member
 - The three chairs of the three Regional Advisory Groups (North, South and London)
 - The Regional Hub Manager now with voting rights
 - A non-voting representative from DESNZ
 - A non-voting representative from CPCA
- Maxine Narburgh observed that the new proposed GSENZH Board composition comprised too few members both for the Board's purpose and in terms of representation. A key objective of the new governance is to enable more local authorities to engage, which the Local Partnerships proposal did not fulfil.

- **Regional Advisory Group Composition** - Maxine Narburgh presented to the GSENZH Board a slide on the new Regional Advisory Groups composition proposed by Local Partnerships and highlighted the following points of GSENZH critique:
- The proposal from Local Partnerships, as initially presented to the GSENZH team, heavily references the GSENZH public sector work. Consequently, NHS representation is disproportionate. This aspect has been modified. Sufficient local authority representation has not been included in the proposals, which is needed to reflect the requirements of DESNZ. The Department is also keen for GSENZH to have academic and third sector links within its governance.
- Local Partnerships has included a recommendation for rotating members, however, the GSENZH Board has reflected the importance of consistency in membership and value of corporate memory.
- **Regional Advisory Group Structure** - Maxine Narburgh presented to the GSENZH Board a slide on the new Regional Advisory Groups structure proposed by Local Partnerships and highlighted the following points:
 - The north/south division of the region is based on having a balanced number of councils and population in each area, rather than dividing the region by county. Discussions for the London authorities are scheduled for January 2024.
- **Regional Advisory Groups - Purpose and Arrangements** – Maxine Narburgh presented to the GSENZH Board a slide on the purpose and arrangements for the new Regional Advisory Groups proposed by Local Partnerships and highlighted the following points of GSENZH critique:
 - The quarterly frequency of meetings proposed by Local Partnerships is insufficient. The GSENZH Board currently meets approximately every six weeks.
 - GSENZH Board members had the following questions and comments about the Local Partnerships proposals for the new GSENZH governance structure:
 - Jo Simmons, South East LEP asked who at Local Partnerships devised the proposal. Maxine Narburgh advised that the proposal has been developed by a working group led by Vicky Kingston who has previously presented to the GSENZH Board.
 - Jo Simmons, South East LEP asked whether the proposal is based on the stakeholder mapping work done by the GSENZH Board and whether it is the proposal for all five Net Zero Hubs. Maxine Narburgh advised that the proposal is for the Greater South East region only. Local Partnerships has referenced both the stakeholder mapping and the GSENZH public sector needs assessment to inform the governance work. Unfortunately, the work has been skewed too much towards the public sector needs assessment. Jo Simmons commented that the results of the work do not align with the stakeholder mapping outputs and that there is no private sector involvement, which is what the LEPs currently provide.
 - Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented that the proposal is a radical departure from the existing governance structure and asked how it aligns with the steer about governance from DESNZ. Ben Burfoot commented that the current structure is a sensible geographical split of the region and works well. Maxine Narburgh explained that the proposals from Local Partnerships have diverged from the brief given to them by GSENZH and from the steer by DESNZ to enable more local authorities to engage in GSENZH governance and to have the academic, business and community sectors represented. Maxine Narburgh advised that this feedback would be given to Local Partnerships. Ben Burfoot observed that despite the criticism, some aspects of the Local Partnerships proposals such as the involvement of NHS and academia were useful.
 - Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP raised concerns about the balance of the north/south divide, including the representation of local authorities, and commented that the difference between the populations and the rural areas in the north and south would be difficult to represent. The inclusion of independent business representation is important to balance the political perspective of the local authorities and it is also important to get the business representation right in such a diverse area.

- Nick Bell, CPCA commented that the composition as currently presented would not work well and that the business, community and green skills sectors were not represented. It should be noted that the skills sector will be addressed by the further education sector rather than higher education sector. The north/south division works well for the south but not the north where there are 10 upper tier authorities, so for the north there could be two subgroups to cover that area. Nick Bell agreed that the proposal should be revised by Local Partnerships.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP asked for it to be recorded that the proposal did not sit comfortably. Jo Simmons agreed that the further education representation should be included to cover the green skills sector. Jo Simmons proposed that the northern area of the region should be examined to see how the local authorities function as a functional economic area. Jo commented that for the SELEP region there are 23 members that deliberate a relative equivalent value of funding, and what the proposal sets out is too small. Business advisory boards, which are representative of individual geographies, could be used to help select private-sector representation for the Regional Advisory Groups.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH asked the GSENZH Board whether a demographic-area approach could be taken to cover the necessary representation across the geographies.
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP commented that they would be pleased to have a separate discussion with the GSENZH team about how business advisory boards could be used to cover business-sector representation. Helen Pollock commented that they would like to see what research Local Partnerships has done into similar organisations to identify what works best. The rationale for the Local Partnerships proposals is unclear. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH advised that the research sources that Local Partnerships has drawn on can be made available to the GSENZH Board. However, only one live organisation has been drawn on as a model, which is the South Downs National Park.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH concurred with the GSENZH Board that the proposal from Local Partnerships did not meet the requirements for a revised governance structure. The proposal has diverged from the specifics of the original commission. Maxine Narburgh confirmed that the feedback provided by the Board would be passed to Local Partnerships to inform the revision of the governance work.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council, highlighted the point that an annual rotation of representatives was too short a term. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH agreed that the GSENZH Board had already deliberated that a three-year period was a more suitable term for the Chair and suggested that this period could be applied to other Board members. However, there was a need to enable an extension to the term, as otherwise all members would start and finish simultaneously. Maxine Narburgh proposed that to manage succession for example, the extension could be two terms for the Chair and one or two terms for Board members.
- Maxine Narburgh asked for feedback more specifically about the proposed composition and size of the new main Board, which sets out that there would be one representative from each of the Regional Advisory Groups. GSENZH Board members had the following questions and comments:
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP commented that to have only one representative from the North area would bring the risk that too narrow a viewpoint would be brought to bear and that at least two or three representatives are needed.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that the main Board as proposed is too small a group and so would be heavily dependent on feed-in from the Regional Advisory Groups, which have not yet been created. This dependency would also raise a question about the purpose and function of the main Board. The proposal moves too far from the current arrangements without a rationale for so doing.
- Nick Bell, CPCA agreed that the size of the main Board is too small and the proposal to have the Regional Hub Manager as a voting member is unusual. If the Regional Hub Manager is excluded as a voting member, this would leave only five voting members, which is insufficient.

The main Board could be extended by having two or three representatives from the Regional Advisory Groups joining the main Board with voting rights. Business and community representatives would be needed as well as local authority representatives. The independent Chair is useful. The independent member is a moot point, dependent upon what they bring to the main Board.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council agreed that the role of the independent member was questionable.
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented that the proposal appears to start from a blank page rather than considering how to improve representation from the current arrangements, which are working well. Local Partnerships should be directed to provide enhancements rather than reinventing the wheel. The main board is too small. LEPs are broadly county scale and map across well to the counties, which have existing structures, and there is existing coordination from the counties to the NHS and other organisations and institutions. Representation should be county scale as a maximum, a single representative covering three counties would not have an adequate understanding of what is going on within all three.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP supported the comment from Ben Burfoot and reflected the difficulty that SELEP has to represent six upper tier councils.
- Arthur Le Geyt, South East Midlands LEP commented that it would be useful to include sub-national transport bodies in the Regional Advisory Groups, given that net zero is a broader challenge than just energy.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council agreed with the point from SEMLEP and observed that the sub-national transport bodies are going to be related to the Regional System Planner.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH added that it would also be important to include representation from the innovation sector, such as Energy Systems Catapult or Innovate UK.
- **Governance Transition Proposal** - Maxine Narburgh presented to the GSENZH Board a slide on the transition process for GSENZH governance, which has been provided by Local Partnerships as part of the proposals, and highlighted the following points:
 - Four stages have been set out, which includes an oversight board to work on the appointments process between GSENZH Board meetings and to report back to members.
 - Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP suggested that a lawyer be included on the oversight board.
 - Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council, asked whether being part of the oversight board would prevent participants from being part of the appointment process. Maxine Narburgh proposed that a simple appointments process might be a better approach, for example, Jo Simmons, South East LEP could nominate three people from the SELEP area to go onto the Board under specific categories, such as skills, business, etc. Jo Simmons, South East LEP agreed and commented that much of the governance transition work proposed has already been done by the LEPs, which could be used, and is unnecessary to repeat.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH asked the GSENZH Board to confirm whether they wanted Local Partnerships to present an amended version of the proposal at the next GSENZH Board meeting 23.01.24, or whether she should undertake a quality check prior to the meeting date and take a view on whether the proposal was aligned with requirements.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council, asked whether Local Partnerships would have something different to bring to the GSENZH Board at the meeting 23.01.24 and whether GSENZH would continue with Local Partnerships.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH confirmed that Local Partnerships would bring an updated proposal to the meeting 23.01.24. Maxine Narburgh agreed that GSENZH would reflect on whether to continue working with Local Partnerships given that the outputs of the work had diverged from the brief. Maxine Narburgh suggested that an alternative way forward would

be for the GSENGH Board to complete the work. However, Local Partnerships should be given the opportunity to revise their current proposals.

- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented that the output of the governance work reflected that Local Partnerships had not engaged sufficiently with the GSENGH Board during its development.

ACTION 9. Maxine Narburgh, GSENGH to feed back to Local Partnerships the comments made by the GSENGH Board on the new draft governance proposals and arrange for Local Partnerships to make a presentation to GSENGH Board members on an amended version of the proposals at the next GSENGH Board meeting 23.01.24.

9. Regional Hub Manager Report

- An update from the GSENGH Regional Hub Manager, Maxine Narburgh, was provided in advance of the meeting to Board members with the GSENGH Board Pack 05.12.23 pages 56-64. Key points highlighted were as follows:
- **Project Pipelines** - There are 28 projects on the Net Zero pipeline shortlist with a total value of c.£0.5 billion. There are 69 projects in the public sector pipeline with a value of c.£90 million, which are being supported by the OnGen tool.
- **Local Area Energy Planning** - The bid to the Innovate UK Pathfinder Places funding programme for the Local Area Energy Planning strategic project has not been successful.
- **Recruitment** – Three programme leads have been appointed: Peter Gudde and Alex Rathmell for the Local Net Zero programme, and Graeme Heron for the Energy Efficiency programme. Four Project Managers have also been appointed. Gerry Glover has been appointed as Finance Manager. A PMO analyst is now on seat for the Energy Efficiency programme. A Head of Operations has been recruited and will join GSENGH in January 2024. An Energy Efficiency Contracts Manager and an Energy Efficiency Data Analyst are the most recent appointments, also joining in January 2024. The Energy Project Officer recruitment is being developed by Alex Rathmell and Peter Gudde to ensure strategic fit. Recruitment is being refreshed for the data roles and Regional Project Manager.
- In January 2024, a recruitment campaign will be launched for a Strategic Stakeholder Manager, a second Hub Support Coordinator, an LGA graduate, and several new roles to support the new Local Net Zero Accelerator programme. An updated organogram is provided in the 05.12.23 GSENGH Board Pack.
- **Data and Information Manager** – Heather Stevenson who joined GSENGH in 2018 and has been a great asset to the organisation has given in her notice so that she can spend more time with her family. We are very sad to lose her. We will be recruiting a full-time post to replace her.
- **Community Energy Fund** – We are still waiting for the formal launch of the Fund. We have a draft MOU from DESNZ. Application documents will be posted on the GSENGH website 08.12.23. An expression of interest form is already available. The five Net Zero Hubs have £5 million funding to deliver by March 2024. We are working with DESNZ to understand whether there is any flexibility around in-year spend. There is not enough time for an assessment cycle of applications to take place to enable funding approvals at the next GSENGH Board 23.01.24. An update on the Fund will be provided at that meeting.

ACTION 10. Maxine Narburgh, GSENGH to provide an update on the Community Energy Fund at the next GSENGH Board meeting 23.01.24.

- **Local Area Energy Demonstrator** – The pilot projects are now mobilised and have gone through their first reporting cycle. There have been some challenges to work through with DESNZ reporting requirements, which have changed at short notice and are not realistic.
- **Regional Skills Pilots** – Three projects have been approved for funding by DESNZ, which are East Sussex, South London and Hertfordshire LEP. GSENGH lobbied for the Buckinghamshire Council and Surrey County Council projects to also be funded, which has been successful. GSENGH has £550k for Phase 1 work. Draft plans will be reviewed during December 2023. The timescale is challenging. Energy Systems Catapult is being

contracted to provide support and to provide the reporting synopsis for DESNZ. The expression of interest process has enabled GSENZH to gain more than double the funding of other Net Zero Hubs.

- GSENZH Board members had the following questions and comments about the Regional Hub Manager report:
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP supported the approach to push back on DESNZ timelines for funding where these are unrealistic, due to the risk of the focus being on getting money out of the door rather than being on quality.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that concerning funding applicants, there is a need for those organisations without much capacity and who are most in need of funding to be given sufficient time to apply to funding programmes, whereas it is organisations that are better resourced and able to be ready in time that are getting the funding. This issue needs to be recognised by government.

10. Local Net Zero Accelerator

- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH explained that the purpose of the recently announced DESNZ Local Net Zero Accelerator programme is to go beyond the 3Ci project and to take a place-based approach to net zero, which may also include air quality and biodiversity, and look at how this approach can be used to get place-based finance. The Accelerator covers three areas: West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority, which will receive up to £7 million and York Combined Authority, which will receive up to £2 million for a replication of the [Bristol City Leap](#) model.
- GSENZH will support the programme with independent programme management, act as the grant funding body, and manage a £3 million green finance package, which is about financial support services for local authorities to take forward investment in place-based proposals. This will be a good learning opportunity, but it is anticipated that managing the programme to be challenging.
- The MOU for the programme was taken through the CPCA Board for approval as it was over the Director delegation threshold, and this was agreed. A copy of the paper presented is included in the GSENZH Board Pack 05.12.23, pages 62-64.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council commented that the investment packages in the programme are for cities, and that it would be helpful to understand how commercial models work in rural areas and to know whether there will be opportunity for that. Maxine Narburgh acknowledged that there is a gap in county-based models and commented that this was what the Net Zero Delivery Vehicle project was to look at. Alex Rathmell, GSENZH added that the Hub is looking at how to transfer the learning from the Net Zero Delivery Vehicle project, which covered mixed geographies, into the day-to-day delivery of projects supported by GSENZH, as well as how to take the project forward and to understand how it fits with the Local Net Zero Accelerator programme.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP asked whether the team to be recruited for the Local Net Zero Accelerator programme would be able to contribute to the Net Zero Delivery Vehicle work given the timescale available. Maxine Narburgh confirmed that the timescale was tight, with recruitment to be undertaken in January 2024 and the team to be in place by April 2024.
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP queried why GSENZH was running programmes outside the South East region and whether there was sufficient benefit from the learning from the programme for the South East region, given the additional strain that it would put on GSENZH resources. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH advised that the Hub has been asked to do the work because it is located outside the regions directly involved in the programme and would therefore be able to act independently. The programme team would be ring-fenced so that it would not drain resources from other GSENZH work and the Hub would directly benefit from the learning from the green finance package element. Nick Bell, CPCA affirmed that learning was expected as a beneficial outcome to GSENZH and assured GSENZH Board members that he had raised the same questions and challenges prior to taking the

programme to the CPCA Board for approval and was satisfied that it was appropriate for GSENZH to take on.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council suggested that net zero financing gave the opportunity to expand into the finance sector and to join the energy-finance piece. There is an opportunity to understand how to build a bridge between the energy-transport divide. As part of the GSENZH work on this programme, could the Hub work out how the Department for Transport can be engaged more strategically into this type of programme. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH advised that governance is part of the work that GSENZH will do on the programme and agreed that this point would be taken back to DESNZ.

ACTION 11. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to raise with DESNZ how the Department for Transport can be engaged more strategically into the Local Net Zero Accelerator and other similar programmes.

11. Forward Plan and Horizon Scanning

- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH confirmed that the standing items on the Forward Plan are to feedback on the performance of the funded programmes and governance, and that Local Partnerships is to present an updated version of the governance structure proposal at the next GSENZH Board meeting 23.01.24.
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP proposed that updates on the progress and learning from the Local Net Zero Accelerator and green finance package, and how that can be incorporated into the work of GSENZH, should be included on the forward plan, to ensure that it can be commonly understood and that people who can communicate effectively are recruited for the programme.

ACTION 12. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to include updates on progress and learning from the Accelerator and green finance package in the GSENZH Forward Plan.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council proposed that it would be informative for a presentation on the plans developed for the Regional Skills Pilots to be shared as these become available. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH suggested that this be added to the Forward Plan and brought to the 05.03.24 meeting.

ACTION 13. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to include a presentation on the plans developed for the Regional Skills Pilots in the GSENZH Forward Plan and add to the meeting agenda of the GSENZH Board 05.03.23.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council proposed that key learning from the fleet decarbonisation strategic project would also be helpful to share with the Board at some point in future. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH proposed to discuss a way forward with the GSENZH Local Net Zero Programme Leads and revert.

ACTION 14. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to discuss with the GSENZH Local Net Zero Programme Leads how to share learning from the Fleet Decarbonisation strategic project and update the GSENZH Board.

BOARD DECISION: The following items to be added to the GSENZH Forward Plan: Updates on development /learning from Local Net Zero Accelerator programme and green finance package, Regional Skills Pilots and Fleet Decarbonisation strategic project.

12. Any Other Business

- No other business was raised.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council thanked the GSENZH for their work in preparing for the Board meeting.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

BOARD DECISION: The next meeting of the GSENZH Board is scheduled for 23 January 2024, 10:00-12:30. The meeting is to take place virtually. The chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.

- Subsequent Board meetings are scheduled to take place virtually, 10:00-12:30 on the following dates:

- 05 March 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 23 April 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 04 June 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 16 July 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 03 September 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 15 October 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 03 December 2024 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.
- 21 Jan 2025 - A meeting chair is to be confirmed and a volunteer is needed.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record by Sheryl French (Cambridgeshire County Council) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

SIGNATURE

DATE