

## Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) Board Meeting - 23 January 2024 Conducted via online conference.

### Attendees

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| <p><b>Ben Burfoot</b> - (Reading Borough Council) Berkshire LEP (Berks LEP)</p> <p><b>Nick Bell</b> - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)</p> <p><b>Sheryl French</b> – Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) – <b>Chair</b></p> <p><b>Gerry Glover</b> – CPCA Finance Manager for Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p><b>Natasha Marshall</b> – CPCA Finance Officer for Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p><b>Swapna Uddin</b> - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)</p> <p><b>Simon Wyke</b> - Greater London Authority (GLA)</p> <p><b>Kudirat Garuba</b> – GSENZH – Energy Efficiency Programme Management Office</p> <p><b>Peter Gudde</b> – GSENZH – Local Net Zero Programme Lead (North)</p> | <p><b>Graeme Heron</b> - Greater South East Net Zero Hub- Energy Efficiency Programme Lead</p> <p><b>Maxine Narburgh</b> – GSENZH - Regional Head</p> <p><b>Alex Rathmell</b> GSENZH – Local Net Zero Programme Lead (South)</p> <p><b>Erica Sutton</b> – GSENZH - Hub Support Coordinator</p> <p><b>Joe Winter</b> – GSENZH - Head of Operations (Net Zero)</p> <p><b>Helen Pollock</b> - Hertfordshire LEP (Herts LEP)</p> <p><b>Ed Barlow</b> - Local Partnerships</p> <p><b>Tom Fourcade</b> - Local Partnerships</p> <p><b>Alyson Hall</b> - Local Partnerships</p> <p><b>Vicky Kingston</b> - Local Partnerships</p> <p><b>Sarah Gilbert</b> – (Oxfordshire County Council) Oxfordshire LEP (OxLEP).</p> <p><b>Jo Simmons</b> - South East LEP (SELEP)</p> |
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### 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
  - Chris Burchell, EnterpriseM3 LEP
  - Marida Cable-Lewis, EnterpriseM3 LEP
  - Nicolette Jeffreys, New Anglia LEP
  - Lisa Roberts, New Anglia LEP
  - Sally Andreou, Oxfordshire LEP
  - Hilary Chipping, South East Midlands LEP

- The meeting welcomed **Joe Winter**, newly appointed as Head of Operations (Net Zero) for GSENZH.

## 2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

### 2.1 Minutes

- The minutes of the previous GSENZH Board meeting 05.12.23 were reviewed and agreed as a true account.

**BOARD DECISION:** The minutes of the previous GSENZH Board meeting 05.12.23 are agreed as a true account.

**ACTION 1.** Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council is to sign off the minutes of the GSENZH Board meeting 05.12.23 as agreed.

### 2.2 Actions

- The actions from the previous GSENZH Board meeting 05.12.23 were reviewed and the following updates provided:
- **05.12.23, Action 3: Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to update the GSENZH Board about the Hub review of its assessment frameworks once this process has been completed –** This work is ongoing.
- **05.12.23, 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 –** A written update to 31 December 2024 has been included in the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24.
- **05.12.23, Action 5: Peter Gudde, GSENZH 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 –** This action is to be carried forward.
- **05.12.23, Action 6: Peter Gudde, GSENZH to circulate to the GSENZH Board the notes from the GSENZH Board Strategic Workshop 21.11.23, once these are available –** These are included in the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24.
- **05.12.23, 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, GSENZH to inform the development of the Able-to-Pay Retrofit strategic project –** This has been discussed and will be followed up. This action is to be carried forward.
- **05.12.23, 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 -** The CPCA Monitoring Officer will be pleased to discuss any queries about this with GSENZH Board members. This action is to be carried forward.
- **05.12.23, Action 9: Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to feed back to Local Partnerships the comments made by the GSENZH Board on the new draft governance proposals and arrange for Local Partnerships to make a presentation to GSENZH Board members on an amended version of the proposals at the next GSENZH Board meeting 23.01.24 –** This is included as a key item on the GSENZH Board agenda 23.01.24.
- **05.12.23, Action 10: Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to provide an update on the Community Energy Fund at the next GSENZH Board meeting 23.01.24 –** This is included in the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24.
- **05.12.23, 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 -** The Department for Transport will be included in the Local Net Zero Accelerator programme board.

- **05.12.23, Action 12: Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH to include updates on progress and learning from the Accelerator and green finance package in the GSENZH Forward Plan** - This is included in the GSENZH Board Forward Plan. The programme is still in the stage of mobilisation.
- **05.12.23, 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** – This will be included on the agenda for the GSENZH Board 05.03.23 if time allows, otherwise it will be brought forward to a future meeting.
- **05.12.23, 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** – This is to be included on the GSENZH Board Forward Plan and brought forward when there is enough to share.

**ACTION 2. Maxine Narburgh to include learning from the Fleet Decarbonisation strategic project in the GSENZH Board Forward Plan.**

### 2.3 Matters Arising

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

### 3. GSENZH Governance Review

- A presentation was provided to the GSENZH Board by a team from central/local government consultancy, Local Partnerships, which has been commissioned by GSENZH to develop a proposal for the future governance arrangements for the Hub. A set of related briefing papers, including a slide deck on the GSENZH governance transition and the updated GSENZH Board Terms of Reference 05.12.23, was circulated to GSENZH Board members in advance of the meeting.
- The presentation set out a proposal for the formation of Regional Advisory Boards (RABs) within the Greater South East region as a mechanism to enhance GSENZH governance and enable a wider range of stakeholder views to feed into the main GSENZH Board. Local Partnerships also captured the views of GSENZH Board members in response to each section of the presentation from their commentary and via online polls.
- **RAB Purpose** - Local Partnerships advised that the main purpose of the Regional Advisory Boards (RABs) is stakeholder engagement to understand the views and needs of the Hub's clients and to enable these to feed into the main GSENZH Board in a more structured way. The chairs of each of the RABs would sit on the main GSENZH Board and represent the views of their sub-region. The RABs would also make a formal statement/response to the GSENZH annual delivery plan.
- The GSENZH Board members had the following questions and comments on the purpose of the Regional Advisory Boards:
- Nick Bell, CPCA commented that there should be a two-way flow of communications. In addition to the flow of information from local authorities on the RABs to the main GSENZH Board, key issues should also flow down from the main Board. Nick Bell also questioned whether the chair's role would be sufficient representation on the main Board. A chair plus one would help with consistency of representation as people could not guarantee to be available all the time. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that the intention was to have a chair with a deputy for each of the RABs. To have an additional person would affect the size of the RABs. Maxine Narburgh, Regional Head, GSENZH advised that there are three size options proposed for the RABs. Maxine Narburgh recommended that the meeting consider firstly what the RABs will do and then consider the size of membership.
- Simon Wyke, GLA asked whether the chair of a RAB would necessarily have to be the main GSENZH Board representative, or whether the person could be nominated by the RAB membership. Simon Wyke agreed that a two-way flow of information, including a flow up to the main GSENZH Board was important and asked how it was envisaged that the RABs

would influence the main GSENH Board and how this could influence DESNZ policy and funding streams. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships confirmed that there would be a two-way flow of information and that this would in turn flow up to DESNZ. The RAB chairs would have the responsibility to sit on the main GSENH Board as part of their role. That could be reconsidered, though to have one person as chair and then another to sit on the GSENH Board do that might be rather complicated from an operational perspective.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council asked about the flow of communication between RABs, for example issues could arise in one RAB region that are relevant for another. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that this had not been designed in, but it could be an option. Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships advised that there should be sufficient Hub representatives to share information between RAB chairs to ensure continuity and feedback of issues into GSENH. Hub representatives would be responsible for cross-sharing information between RABs. Simon Wyke, GLA agreed that interplay between the RAB regions was very important, given the fact that the range of environments across these sub-regions was so diverse, and thus there would be commonalities between regions that it would be useful to share. Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP agreed and proposed that there should be a more formal mechanism to feed between Regional Advisory Groups, otherwise information could be lost, or issues neglected due to other priorities.
- **RAB Geography** – Local Partnerships advised that there were the options of a north-south divide of the Greater South East region, which was more balanced but resulted in two larger areas, or a northeast-northwest-south divide of the region into three areas which were smaller, but would put a greater requirement upon GSENH to manage.
- The GSENH Board members had the following questions and comments on the geography of the Regional Advisory Boards:
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP, referred to existing synergies between regions such as the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership and suggested that discussions in the RABs would be rooted in existing regional relationships, which should be mapped out. Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships clarified that stakeholder mapping had been carried out and various groupings within the regional had been examined. Inevitably, as the region is divided up, there will be some geographical or project/programme boundaries cut. There could be the option for some replication or duplicate attendance possible if that is necessary and appropriate. Jo Simmons, South East LEP highlighted that there are strong relationships between Kent and Essex and that the boundary line currently proposed between the northeast and south sub-regions would more beneficially be moved below the Thames to enable Kent and Essex to be in the same area. Nick Bell, CPCA agreed that the dividing lines between the RAB regions could be cut in different ways. Three RABs had the benefit that it would allow for more local working, which was helpful, although it did make drawing up the boundaries more difficult. Jo Simmons, South East LEP confirmed that they were in favour of three RABs as this better represented local delivery although drawing the dividing lines between them was difficult.
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP asked for clarification that there were four RAB areas in total including London. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships confirmed that this was so and that the areas under discussion were those outside London. Helen Pollock advised that the north-south divide was preferable for Hertfordshire as it has good relationships with Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.
- Sheryl French, CPCA asked whether Local Partnerships had considered regional transport areas and Regional Energy Strategic Planner areas to inform the RAB geography. Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships advised that transport areas and major infrastructure projects were looked at, but the future arrangements should be informed about feels most appropriate to the Board. Sheryl French, CPCA commented that both energy and transport were key areas for Cambridgeshire and alignment with them was helpful.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENH Regional Head observed that there might be potential for Hertfordshire to move into the northwest area to align with the regional transport area if there are three RABs and a London RAB.

- Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships noted the importance of communicating the rationale for the divisions and being able to demonstrate that this is justified.
- Nick Bell, CPCA asked if the three groups were transport-based whether Hertfordshire could move into the northwest RAB and then to have an east rather than northeast RAB area to include Kent, which might give a more even distribution of the population. Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP agreed it would be interesting to see how these changes affected the numbers. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships commented that three RABs outside London seemed to be more popular with the Board however, the way the region was split to enable this could be reviewed.
- Simon Wyke, GLA asked how the RABs mapped against existing structures or whether new structures were being created. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that some structures would be split, whichever way the region was divided up. Simon Wyke suggested that it was better to align the RABs to strategic structures than individual projects.
- Maxine Narburgh, Regional Head, GSENGH advised that GSENGH had had meetings with the London authorities and an ongoing conversation was underway. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships asked the meeting whether there should be a RAB for London. Simon Wyke, GLA commented that it was not about GLA in isolation as there was a lot of overlap between London and other areas. However, London did create a discrete geography, with a 9 million population and had specific challenges. GLA will look at existing boards and how these could integrate with the GSENGH RABs rather than create new ones. Alex Rathmell, Local Net Zero Lead, GSENGH, advised that at the next GLA meeting with GSENGH, the Hub would map out how it can complement support for London. The case for the London RAB will depend on that. Simon Wyke commented that the amount of funding and opportunity flowing through the Hub would drive what goes into the RABs.
- **Key Stakeholders** – Local Partnerships asked the Board members to consider the priority of key stakeholder involvement in the RABs.
- The GSENGH Board members had the following questions and comments on the priority of key stakeholder involvement in the Regional Advisory Boards:
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council asked why the DNO/DSO stakeholders had been removed from the map as key stakeholders. Ed Barlow advised that this was because their role was regulated, and they had less flexibility. Sheryl French observed that their business plans would be informed by the local area energy plans produced by local authorities, so their involvement was important. Ed Barlow questioned whether such conversations would take place in the GSENGH Board setting. Maxine Narburgh GSENGH asked whether it would be more relevant for DNOs to be invited in to contribute on DNO-specific matters or to be a voting member that decided Hub business. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council considered the former to be more appropriate.
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP asked whether the regional East of England group was included. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that these would be under the category of climate change partnerships. Sarah Gilbert, Oxfordshire County Council asked whether climate change partnerships needed formal status as such. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that their definition was broad and that they could be diverse, for example politically or community led. Sarah Gilbert, Oxfordshire County Council asked, given the nature of climate change partnerships, whether a representative would be able to adequately represent them. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that concerning representation, there would be flexibility depending on the circumstances. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council proposed that climate change partnerships to be involved should be formally recognised and defined.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council asked for the reason for inviting universities to be explained. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that there are two roles for universities: thought leadership and as a public sector estate owner. Sheryl French observed that universities are also businesses and that there was a need to be clear about the rationale for their role and involvement, otherwise organisations such as water companies could be said to have a representative role.

- Simon Wyke, GLA proposed that climate change partnerships should be grouped with net zero forums. Simon Wyke also highlighted that some climate change partnerships, for example, London Climate Change Partnerships, were focused on resilience rather than mitigation so it was also necessary to think about what role they had.
- Nick Bell, CPCA observed that there was a difference between policy makers and energy users and how you differentiate is important. With regard to the universities, this did not cover skills, which were important to include, and that Further Education and Higher Education colleges should also be included to bridge this gap. Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP agreed with Nick Bell that the universities could provide the academic input whereas the colleges would focus on skills.
- Helen Pollock, Hertfordshire LEP observed that not only are local authorities key but who and where in the local authority is important. For example, in Hertfordshire if the Climate Change Partnership is involved, the local authority could play another role such as planning which is particularly significant area to cover.
- **Stakeholder Mapping** – Local Partnerships explained that there were tensions in the design of the proposed governance process: to enable both a manageable size and diversity of experience, to enable continuity and new perspectives, and to provide a model for engagement that would be tempered by the availability of individuals to participate.
- Nick Bell, CPCA referred to the purpose of the RABs, and observed that an alternative structure to the one proposed would be to have a Board and underneath it a forum for wider views, or to have more local advisory groups to feed up into the RABs, and that this would be more enabling of engagement. Nick Bell suggested that inclusivity would be difficult to obtain with the RABs. Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships advised that thematic groups would be a part of the structure, but that the governance structure needed to be manageable and for the capacity of the GSENZH team to be sufficient to resource it. Jo Simmons, South East LEP agreed with Nick Bell and suggested that the structure could be a more fluid network to enable more people to be involved than would be engaged via formal groups. Jo Simmons asked whether Task and Finish Groups would still be involved. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships confirmed that this was so.
- **Thematic Structure** – Local Partnerships explained that the governance structure that they had proposed so far would address representation based on the geography of the region, however, there is an alternative model to consider, which is to use thematic groups that cover the whole region, or a hybrid version of this, which is to have thematic groups that feed into the RABs, and asked the GSENZH Board to suggest what thematic groups might be relevant.
- Sarah Gilbert, Oxfordshire County Council observed that to have the value and depth of stakeholder engagement there was the requirement for convening and servicing of groups. Sarah Gilbert asked whether there was sufficient capacity within GSENZH for this and whether DESNZ would be able to increase the resource to support it. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Director advised that GSENZH already sits on seven DESNZ working groups. Resourcing is tight and funding static until the next Spending Review. Resources put to the governance process will take away from front-line delivery and so must be balanced.
- **RAB Guiding Composition** – Local Partnerships presented to the GSENZH Board the stakeholder groups that might be included in the RABs, which would have a staggered three-year rotation to enable both continuity and new ideas and include a guest slot. Communication would be supported by the involvement of Hub staff.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that business boards were not shown as part of the composition of RABs. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that this would be covered by whoever is taking on that role within local authorities and that the governance process would aim to involve a diversity of view. Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that a key concern is the loss of a business voice and that local authorities would not represent the voice of business. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council agreed that a business voice should be included in the RABs.

- Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships asked for GSENZH Board views about the size of the RABs for representation, suggesting that the smallest it can be while being representative would be best.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP advised that a larger group was best from their point of view because their LEP has a large geography and numbers and a larger group would be viable if run well.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council agreed that a larger group was preferable and that the difference between administering a group of 14 and 18 people was not significant.
- Simon Wyke, GLA suggested that a smaller grouping was better whilst establishing the board. Simon Wyke cautioned against building a large board and associated opportunities but not having the resource to fulfil them. Simon Wyke asked whether existing structures would feed in. Simon Wyke observed that there are existing structures that provide representation, and so proposed that GSENZH RABs should focus on strategic input or that individual RABs should do what works for each sub-region.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that while they agreed that RABs should be strategic, a fair number of players was needed for representation, given that the geography of areas could be so varied and include rural, urban and coastal. Jo Simmons suggested that it was important to recognise that stakeholders coming to the process will have their own networks and share information already. A key role of the governance process was information sharing and a larger group would enable that better.
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented that the resources of local authorities do not include funding to support involvement and a larger group while more representative would represent a larger burden on local authorities. Ben Burfoot questioned whether maintaining the RABs and extra groups was sustainable.
- Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships agreed that capacity is a significant issue and that there would be an increased requirement on representatives, and that the level of consistency could be a challenge to maintain with an expanded ask, increased frequency of meetings and deeper dive into topics.
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP observed that maintaining representation would be dependent upon the perceived benefits and the funding available.
- Vicky Kingston, Local Partnerships commented that it is more important that people in a group have sufficient opportunity to contribute, which might not be facilitated by large numbers. It was also important the those that were involved were ready and able to contribute rather than simply receiving information. It would be important to have Terms of Reference to clarify expectations about the type of participation required.
- Simon Wyke, GLA commented that there were differences between the sub-regions in terms of what stakeholder structures are in place. London already has these structures, so needs something streamlined but elsewhere there is more opportunity for additional structures to add value.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that the scale of the governance process should relate to the geographically reality.
- **Appointment Process** – Local Partnerships proposed that GSENZH Board members and GSENZH staff should be able to identify potential candidates from their networks. There would be an expression of interest process and an oversight group comprised of GSENZH Board members would be used to appoint members to the RABs.
- Nick Bell, CPCA commented that the most important thing was to make the process transparent and that it should stand up to scrutiny and challenge. Jo Simmons, South East LEP agreed. Ed Barlow confirmed that there would be Terms of Reference to support the decisions made.
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP noted that the current Board was formed as a LEP-led group, so that the business voice was present. With the shift to local authority representation, a democratic process is involved and therefore how nominations are made to Boards should



be via a different process. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships advised that RABs are advisory so that unlike the main GSENZH Board a formal delegation is not needed, therefore nominations arrangements were dependent on the individual organisation.

- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented that there is an ask from GSENZH for resource and engagement for the governance process, so it was important for communication about the RABs to be got right.
- Simon Wyke, GLA asked how the RABs mirror existing structures or structures that the GSENZH Board might be part of. How have others become representatives of existing structures and how do those processes map across. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships explained that for the recruitment of representatives, names can be put forward by individuals themselves, the Hub, or GSENZH Board members. The Oversight Group will then consider it and there is a rationale put forward for the representative to be involved. Simon Wyke observed that it depended on whether the RAB was strategic or advisory. The minimisation of bureaucracy should be a consideration. Unless the RAB was adding considerable value it would be adding to bureaucracy.
- Sarah Gilbert, Oxfordshire County Council noted that in the northern sub-region there are greater upper tier authorities than there are places. Sarah Gilbert asked that when ensuring representation from each geographic area, would this involve some level of tier, or will it be skills or networks based? If the latter, then the less resourced areas will be disadvantaged. Geographic representation is very important. Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships explained that geography may not necessarily enable a representative to come forward or may not bring diversity of views.
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council, observed that local authorities need to bring different representations of skills in housing, finance, transport etc., which need to be involved.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP asked whether it was a given that current GSENZH Board members will sit on RABs? Ed Barlow, Local Partnerships explained that the opportunity would be there, but that current GSENZH Board members could do both or either.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that clearly outlining the purpose and duty of the RABs and RAB representatives up front to the organisations to be involved was the most critical factor to enable suitable candidates to come forward. Jo Simmons asked whether it would be appropriate to base the RAG geography on functional economic areas which could provide an appropriate split and representation of population and business.
- Simon Wyke emphasised that for the appointment process it would be important to clearly set out the role the opportunity and the rationale to potential organisations to be involved.
- **Local Advisory Groups and Task And Finish Groups** – Local Partnerships advised that these would sit underneath the RABs and that existing grouping might be able to feed in. The Local Advisory Groups would report to the RABs and the Task and Finish Groups would report to the Boards.
- Jo Simmons observed that the purpose of the RABs as set out by Local Partnerships should include that RAB members should be required to represent their sector. This means that the Local Advisory Groups are a duplication. The Task and Finish Groups on the other hand had a track record of being a useful mechanism.
- Maxine Narburgh, Regional Head GSENZH advised that the intention is that the Local Advisory Groups will be formed from existing groups. The GSENZH Energy Project Managers are participating in many different groups so there is an opportunity for them to feed in.
- **Frequency** – Local Partnerships explained that there would be 3-4 RAB meetings per year for a half-day session. Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP asked whether this would mean that the board would have a reverse build-up of issues? Maxine Narburgh, Regional Head GSENZH explained that there would be two main GSENZH Board meetings per RAB (x4) feeding in, to enable the business brought forward by them to be fed in. Ben Burfoot asked whether the number of main GSENZH Board meetings could be reduced. Maxine Narburgh advised that the main GSENZH Board needed to meet regularly for decision-making.



- Nick Bell, CPCA, suggested that RABs should not have hybrid meetings as these were not satisfactory, so should either be in-person or virtual, and virtual was the better option. Jo Simmons, South East LEP agreed that virtual was better as less resource would be needed. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH suggested that it would be useful to have at least one in-person meeting like the GSENZH Board strategic workshop to which local authorities had been invited and for which the in-person opportunity had been appreciated. Jo Simmons, South East LEP commented that this would be OK for a one-off meeting but not as a regular feature as this would compromise attendance.
- Local Partnerships thanked the GSENZH Board for their feedback on the governance process.

#### 4. Finance

- An update report on the GSENZH financial position to 31 December 2023 was provided to the GSENZH Board in advance of the meeting with the GSENZH Board pack 23.01.24, pages 20-22. Gerry Glover, CPCA, Finance Manager to GSENZH highlighted the following points in the report:
- **2023/24 Spend** – The first table in the report gives the actual spend of income to date. Grants newly received this year include the year 1 Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2). Grants prior to this year and their underspend have been treated as receipts in advance and will be transferred at year end for expend this year, so this shows as a lot of expenditure but not income.
- **Regional Skills Pilots** – The Regional Skills Pilot grant fund spending requirement deadline 31.03.24 may be problematic.
- **Community Energy Fund (CEF)** - Community Energy Fund applications have exceeded the budget. Grant Funding Agreements have not yet been done and can take time to prepare so money cannot be expended until then.
- **Local Energy Advice Demonstrators (LEAD)** – The £2 million funding for the LEAD programme needs to be carried forward. Approval must be obtained from DESNZ to do this.
- **Budgets** - Budgets are not included pending changes to the accounting structure. We will include the budgets for each financial year and programme or grant in future.
- **Risks and Issues** - Some risks and issues have been included in the report.
- **HUG2** - We are finalising the programme and its outcomes, so any sums to be returned to DESNZ must be returned by 18 February 2024. We have a 20% balance of £2.4 million to be returned. HUG2 has had late signature of its delivery partner contracts and other issues so is unlikely to spend this financial year's grant and cannot carry it forward. Therefore, GSENZH will need to prepare a change request in February 2024 to seek agreement from DESNZ. When DESNZ gave GSENZH an upfront payment for HUG2 it was an overpayment of £2 million. GSENZH has kept the payment, but the sum is reserved for property batch payments.
- **Cumulative Total Net Expenditure** – This table shows cumulative spend across financial years for each of the projects and programmes.
- **GSENZH Board Reporting** - This report is a work in progress and GSENZH Board comments and requests are being used to develop it.
- GSENZH Board members had the following questions and comments about the finance update:
- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council thanked Gerry Glover for a clear and easy-to-read report.
- Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP commented that they would like to see budgets, income and expenditure and asked Maxine Narburgh, Regional Head if they had any further comments to make on the financial report.

- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Director explained that the net zero budgets run through to September 2024 and £800k to be drawn down by strategic projects is awaited. For the LEAD projects, due to delays by DESNZ there is a need to spend the year's money in four months. For the Community Energy Fund programme, GSENZH has received £1.8 million worth of bids for a £1 million budget for this year. These applications will come to the GSENZH Board meeting for recommendations 05.03.24. There may be some underspend due to recruitment timing and from the Net Zero Hub budget that could be allocated via a call for projects or suitable research project. We will bring this to the GSENZH Board 05.03.24.

**ACTION 3.** Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Director to bring forward options for reallocation of recruitment and Net Zero Hub underspend to the next GSENZH Board 05.03.24.

## 6. Regional Hub Manager Report

- An update from the GSENZH Regional Hub Manager, Maxine Narburgh, was provided in advance of the meeting to Board members with the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24 pages 32-40.
- In view of limited agenda time, due to the time dedicated to the governance item, rather than providing a verbal update, Maxine Narburgh asked the GSENZH Board members to raise any questions that they had on the written report.
- **Spending Review** - Maxine Narburgh highlighted the anticipated Spending Review. GSENZH will be gathering evidence to feed into DESNZ for this purpose. There will be a post-2025 review of the Local Net Zero Hubs and each Hub can start to plan and gather evidence for that.
- **Regional Hub Manager Report** - Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council asked whether it was possible for GSENZH Board members to share the written Regional Hub Manager Report with colleagues and networks and whether there was anything confidential within it.

**ACTION 4.** Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Head to check the Regional Hub Manager Report in the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24 and advise the Board whether it can be shared.

- Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council suggested that a general report to send out would be useful, a summary version of the Regional Hub Manager Report and HUG2 points.
- **Heat Network Zoning** – Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP asked about the proposal to recruit Hub staff to support heat network zoning and whether that was in progress. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Hub Manager advised that this was not yet decided by DESNZ, there had only been an initial discussion so far and no MOU was in place.

## 7. Forward Plan and Horizon Scanning

- A Forward Plan had been provided to the GSENZH Board in advance of the meeting with the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Head highlighted the following key items:
- **Governance arrangements** – The South East LEP would be closing at the end of March 2024, along with other LEPs so it was important that governance papers were signed off. Maxine Narburgh proposed that the Board meet in February 2024 to complete work on the governance process and come back to the 5 March 2024 Board meeting with a firmed-up arrangement to present and asked that as many people as possible could attend. GSENZH Board members requested that the meeting avoid the half-term period which covered two weeks in February 2024.
- Jo Simmons, South East LEP asked for clarification about what the extra GSENZH Board meeting in February 2024 would cover. Maxine Narburgh advised that the GSENZH Board Terms of Reference are completed but not all LEP transitions and closures are clear yet. There are key principles on governance that need to be confirmed and people gaps that need to be addressed. Jo Simmons advised that the GSENZH Board meeting 05.03.24 would be her last meeting and that three new representatives from the former SELEP area would be involved from April 2024 onwards.

**BOARD DECISION:** The GSENZH Board will have an extra meeting in February 2024 to complete work on the revised GSENZH governance process, prior to the GSENZH Board’s next scheduled meeting 05.03.24.

**ACTION 5.** Erica Sutton, Hub Support Coordinator to arrange for the GSENZH Board to meet in February 2024, avoiding the weeks of school half term, to finalise the revised GSENZH governance process.

- **GSENZH Board Strategic Workshop** - The notes of the discussion at the GSENZH Board Strategic Workshop November 2023 had been included in the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24 and consideration of the outputs would be brought forward to the GSENZH Board meeting 23.04.24.
- **Budgets and underspend** – Options identified about how to deploy underspend will be brought to the GSENZH Board to its meeting 05.03.24.
- **Local Net Zero Accelerator Programme** - Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP asked for an update on the programme. Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Head advised that the programme was in mobilisation and that further detail could be found in the Regional Hub Manager Report within the GSENZH Board Pack 23.01.24. Ben Burfoot emphasised the importance of extracting learning from the programme to benefit the region. Alex Rathmell, GSENZH Local Net Zero Programme Lead (South) confirmed that GSENZH has taken that importance on board in the way the programme will be approached.
- **Local area energy planning** - Ben Burfoot, Berkshire LEP asked whether local area energy planning could be included in the GSENZH Board Forward Plan. Sheryl French, Cambridgeshire County Council suggested that this be brought forward to the GSENZH Board meeting 23.04.24.
- Maxine Narburgh, GSENZH Regional Head reminded GSENZH Board members of the intention, time permitting, to bring an update on the Regional Skills Pilots to the GSENZH Board meeting 05.03.24.

**8. Any Other Business**

- No other business was raised.

**9. Dates of Future Meetings**

**BOARD DECISION:** The next regular meeting of the GSENZH Board is scheduled for 5 March 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:
  - 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.

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| <b>Minutes approved as a true and accurate record by Sheryl French (Cambridgeshire County Council) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.</b> |             |
| <b>SIGNATURE</b>   | <b>DATE</b> |