



## Essex LSIP Board Meeting

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 2pm

Via Teams

### Attendees

Denise Rossiter – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Andy Sparks – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Joanne Giles – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Lisa Collins- Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Elaine Oddie – Essex Chambers of Commerce  
Claire Wright – Rose Builders  
Paula Hornett - EPN  
Lucy Spencer-Lawrence – Southend-on-Sea City Council  
Cllr Tony Ball – Essex County Council  
David Warnes - FEDEC  
Hyla Grimwade – Greater Essex Careers Hub  
Julien Sample – Harlow College  
Kate Kozlova-Boran – Thurrock Council  
Justine Addison – Ground Control  
Louise Aitken - SELEP  
Janis Gibson – Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services

### Welcome – DR

- DR welcomed attendees to the first LSIP Board meeting of [Stage 2](#).
- We were delighted that the Essex, Southend and Thurrock LSIP report and annexes were approved by the Secretary of State and published in August 2023.
- Additionally, our Stage 2 application to continue as the Employer Representative Body for the LSIP was also agreed in August. This allows us to continue our skills work and oversee implementation of the LSIP report.
- Weve been extremely busy with the LSIP over the past 3 months and are looking forward to this opportunity to tell you what we've been up to and share our plans for the future.
- I get involved with the project in many different ways, but I'm delighted to have Andy & Jo on board and taking this forward with Essex County Council and the people on this board.

### Apologies

- Tom Broome, Constellation Marketing.
- Alex Brennan, Essex & Suffolk Water
- Ann Scott, FSB
- Karen Spencer, Harlow College – Julien Sample attended in place.



- Marcella MRaberty, London Stansted Airport
- Karris Rowbotham, DP World
- Tanya Mead, Ground Control

#### **Declaration of Interests - AS**

- New members to complete. No further updates.

#### **Minutes of previous meeting (18/05/2023) - AS**

- Approved by the Board.

#### **Actions arising from previous meeting – AS**

- Purfleet creative area regeneration was highlighted as a capital project. This has been added to the report.

#### **LSIP Stage 1 - AS**

- LSIP Stage 1 was a 9-month project from November 2022 – July 2023.
- Project value £170k.
- Report & 3 annexes were published on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023.
- A lot of work went into writing the report. The engagement work with employers, the work from this Board, and the design work to make the report look really good – thank you to Tom for the design work.
- The LSIP report, Annex A which is about the local context, Annex B which is about the process we have been through to come up with the report and Annex C which is our data report are all public documents now.
- The positive thing through this Stage was the Chamber was well placed to do the work and the relationship we built with the stakeholders. It's been a really positive journey. The journey to the report was as important as the report itself. Bringing the stakeholders together was a key part of the process.
- We have received a lot of input from SMEs which is great as it ensures their voice is being heard.

#### **LSIP Stage 2 - AS**

- Stage 2 is a 36-month project from August 2023 to July 2026.
- Funding is only guaranteed for the first 20 months. We hope the DfE agree further funding at the next spending review which will be March 2025.
- Contract value £375k.
- We have around the same amount of money per month for Stage 2 as we had for Stage 1.
- We are really pleased to have Jo Giles on board as our new LSIP Director.
- We have re-appointed the three members of ECC staff we used in Stage 1. Louise Aitken, Gwen Rowan & Kayleigh Kyan.
- The LSIP Stage 2 Strategic Priorities:
  - To make the skills landscape easier to navigate for business, educators, and training providers.



- Monitor and support the realisation of the Essex LSIP and to keep it under review to ensure that it is still relevant and reflects the skill needs of Essex.
- We have the opportunity to do an annual update to the LSIP in June. We also have the option the rewrite the LSIP.
- Maintain skill alignment with larger national infrastructure projects.
- Provide leadership and support to the skills system through Devolution.
- Develop and implement an Essex Employment and Skills Board, which will replace the LSIP Strategic Board.
- The Employment and Skills Board will co-ordinate county wide activities including:
  - Articulate employers' skills needs via sub groups, sector dives, LMI data analysis and co-ordination of major projects.
  - Promote employer engagement in the local skills system to help employers understand and utilise the current training available to them, promote apprenticeships and effective use of Levy, work placements and teacher encounters.
  - Encourage and promote providers response by engaging and supporting providers of all sizes to deliver the LSIP in a meaningful and actionable way. Including collaborative working with Essex Local Skills Improvement Fund (lead by Harlow College).
  - Encouraging and promoting stakeholders (relevant to the skills system) response by continued engagement with all relevant stakeholders and maintain industry focus groups.
  - Provide project management to the LSIP upholding the principals of good governance, effective grant management (including funding claims) and annual reviews.
  - Provide feedback to ESFA/DfE/Local Government/Central Government Ministers to support the continued streamlining and improvements required of the skills system.
- We had to neutralise a lot of feedback in the report. We were not able to criticise any Government policy within the report. This was disappointing.
- The DfE agreed to hold a series of Roundtable events with the ERB around the 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The four main topics of feedback they received through these events were issues with FE funding, T Levels, Apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps.
- The current priorities we are working on in Stage 2:
  - Employment and Skills Board – set up and agree membership – sub sector working groups.
  - Ending of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).
  - Essex Devolution.
  - Action plan review and progress updates.
  - Sector deep dives.
  - Regular LMI updates – update should be published in January in Annex C.
  - Business & Provider engagement events.
- The first sector deep dive has started in the logistics sector. The data has been analysed and we have pulling together other information. We have an employer's survey out in the logistics sector which is struggling with responses.
- DR attended 10 Downing Street to a Local Skills Champion Reception with Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education. AS prepared 3 simple asks for DR to pass to Gillian:



- Increased funding and flexibilities – so more money is available to be spent on what employers really need.
- Reduced Bureaucracy – to help smaller employers understand and engage with the system.
- Increase apprenticeship incentive payments – to £3k - £5 so employers (particularly SME's) have an income to help the train and support apprentices (would help stimulate more apprenticeship starts and help with the labour shortage locally).

## Discussion

- It's encouraging to hear the issues employers are struggling with are the same as providers are struggling with. Was there any commitment from the DfE regarding the feedback?  
AS – The DfE were in listening mode. We will need to continue to push. We have had little communication from the DfE around Stage 2.
- Will the sub groups be sectorial?  
AS – We have mapped out the sectorial ones. We have mapped out 7 sub sector groups, we need to think about the cross-cutting themes.
- There is a lack of tutoring staff to deliver the lower-level apprenticeships. Funding needs to be able to provide those courses. An educational subgroup was proposed to work on the issue of tutor shortages. EPN will support the employer engagement events.
- JG - Conversations regarding the incentive payments for apprenticeships are already taking place with Caroline Betts from Essex County Council to see whether there is money set aside to provide an Essex incentive payment.
- AS – There is also the possibility of an environmental awareness course for 16–18-year-olds. I have a meeting coming up with Gateway Qualifications.

## Initial actions for Stage 2 / progress update – JG

- The Sector Boards is something we are focusing on and aim to have set up and invites set out by the end of the year, with the aspiration that the sector boards will meet on a quarterly basis.
- The 7 sub sector boards:
  - Advanced Manufacturing Engineering & Aviation.
  - Construction.
  - Transport & Logistics.
  - Creative & Cultural.
  - AgriTech & Food Teach.
  - DigiTech.
  - Community & Voluntary Health Care & Med Teach.
  - Professional Services.
- Each sub group will have a specific focus and a distinct set of actions that can be agreed by each sector board.
- We hope to have our first Sub Board meeting in January.
- We will continue to host Roundtable events which will be employer led to continue to listen to the employer's voice.



- Outside of the Boards we will continue to work with any other sector relevant groups across the county that will feed into any of these themes. E.g., NHS Anchor groups.
- We will continue to identify and align sector specific employer participation.
- We are trying to look at what's already in place prior to the LSIP to ensure we do not duplicate any activity.
- One of the observations I have made is that after 25 years of working in the industry, everybody across the county are talking about the same objectives which are what sit within the LSIP.
- We must continue to communicate to Southend UA via the Skills Leadership Board, and Thurrock UA via the Skills Operational Group and to all districts through any relevant routes and boards, ensuring all themes aligned to the LSIP.
- One of the biggest objectives that came out of the priorities is the production of toolkits and skills information. We are having conversations around creating a portal that's supported by AI that can respond to an employer enquiry and give them the right information and how they can participate in the skills sector. We hope to have updates over the next couple of months.
- It is proposed that the LSIP Board becomes the ESB for the county.
- Next Steps:
  - Colleges and Providers
    - AS and I will continue to attend the FEDEC and EPN meetings.
    - Engagement with colleges/providers is underway in support of curriculum planning where appropriate – this will continue to be offered to all providers.
    - Provider survey to be circulated with completion target end of term. Key question to support devolution discussions – aims to identify challenges – funding for AEB – subcontracting positions.
  - Next Steps Action Plan
    - Action plan was RAG graded in September.
    - Discussed and agreed RAG principles with DfE.
    - RAG will be reviewed every quarter.
    - Updated action plan to be circulated through the board.
  - Quick wins in the first 9 week:
    - NHS Essex Roundtable – deep desire to engage against LSIP priorities.
    - Toolkit and central portal already being discussed linked to central accessibility for employers, applicants, parents etc.
    - Meetings with Suzanne Davies to incorporate access for SEND.
    - Early conversations with Balfour Beatty in support of creating a knowledge Academy that can support CPD at every level across greater Essex and can be aligned to curriculum planning linked to schools and colleges.

## Discussion

- For organisations such as the Greater Essex Career Hub, LA's, we are not a sector but are part of your cross cutting themes, where do you see us sitting within the structure to support the cross cutting themes but not as part of an industry.  
JG – We will discuss this with you to see which one of the sub sector boards you would want to participate in and which you would add value too.



## SELEP Update - LA

- I have a dual role between SELEP and Essex County Council.
- The LEP will cease to exist from April 2024. We are transitioning a lot of our work.
- The LEP covers Essex, Kent, East Sussex, Medway, Southend & Thurrock.
- We were set up by the Government around 12 years ago to drive economic growth, with skills being a big part of that. We have a LEP Skills Advisory Panel.
- The Local Enterprise Partnerships have had an official role in supporting LSIPs.
- In the SELEP area, there are 3 LSIPs – Sussex, Kent and Medway were also trailblazers.
- The DfE stipulated that LEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) funding should be used to support with data and intelligence for the LSIPs.
- A SELEP data post has supported the 3 LSIPs with data and intelligence.
- The LEP has produced a State of the Region Report capturing a range of economic, skills, sector and place information.
- Information included local (district) headlines and information of interest will be shared at Essex level.
- In August, Government informed LEP's that core funding will end in March 2024 and the SELEP Board agreed that an effective and swift transition should be sought by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. A draft integration plan was approved by the LEP Board at it's October meeting which will enable this transition.
- Upper Tier Local Authorities will undertake LEP functions in future, where appropriate. This includes aspects such as Governance and Capital Programmes, Partnership and Network, Growth Hub and Business Support, Data and intelligence. For some areas of work, they will continue independently and maintain strong links to Las.
- As part of transition, SELEP is currently sharing best practice, lessons learnt and information. Yesterday a webinar was held to share information on over £160 million of EU Funding programmes.
- SELEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)
  - Employer led SAP reflective of growth sectors and geography.
  - The SAP is informed by the LEP's original skills strategy and evidence base.
  - Chaired by Helen Clements of Mogan Sindall. Vice-Chair Jeremy Kerswell of Plumpton College (and Chair of Skills Working Group). Includes DP World London Gateway, Lower Thames Crossing, Konica Minolta.
  - Now merged with LEP Skills Working Group, which includes FE, HE, Providers and local authorities. Includes Essex, Southend and Thurrock Las, Essex Provider Network, Essex colleges and Federation of Essex Colleges. Includes representation from all 3 LSIPs / Chambers of Commerce.
  - Final meeting in December 2023. As part of LEP transition arrangement, SELEP has recommended that members transfer to local skills / LSIP Boards where appropriate.
- SELEP has a major skills group, a sub-group to the main MPG group. Projects include The Lower Thames Crossing, Hoo Peninsula developments, Ebbsfleet Graden City, Thames



Freeport and Freeport East, UK Health Security Agency. The combined value of these projects is £28.5bn and has significant labour market shortages.

- Research was undertaken to look at the collective skill needs of major projects across the South East.
- Conversations are underway with the DfE who are interested in the work and the projects in term of potential funding for some of the solutions.
- The construction and Industry Training Board (CITB) will lead the group from April 2024 with a handover underway. All 3 LSIP Leads will be part of this group to ensure join up and alignment.
- We will continue with data support from the LEP until April 2024. Further information to be shared.
- Essex devolution deal also to inform next steps. Close working with local authorities and LSIP leads to ensure a smooth transition of work.
- Continue to share our newsletter which is a great source of information.
- Work underway includes adapting and updating an apprenticeship toolkit for employers produces for Essex by SELEP with the DfE to be utilised for LSIP delivery.
- We are hosting a T Level conference with DfE in Chelmsford on 25<sup>th</sup> January at the County Hotel in Chelmsford, primarily aimed at SMEs.

### Discussion

- Will the KPI reports now sit with Essex County Council?  
LA – As an Essex based project it will fall with Essex County Council.

### Review and agree Terms of Reference & Conflict of Interest Policy - AS

- Terms of Reference and Conflict of Interest Policy has been updated.
- All Board members happy to be approve. Please email AS if any problems.

### Local Skills Improvement Fund - JS

- The LSIF is a pot of money from the DfE for training providers to implement the actions and results coming out from the LSIP.
- We submitted an application on behalf of a consortium of partners across Greater Essex on September 16<sup>th</sup>. The application consisted of 4 projects, as of today we do not have a funding agreement. There is meant to be an announcement tomorrow from the DfE. If it's a positive announcement, we will be looking to get started as quickly as possible.
- Revenue and the first year of capital is due to be spent before March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 so there will be a lot of activity in a short space of time. The capital programme is over 2 years.

### Next steps & AOB

- Nothing to report.