

AGENDA PACK

Meeting	OSE Board
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Date and Time	Wednesday 3 rd June 2020, 2-4pm
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Venue	On Line
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Notes:
 This will be our first Board meeting using Microsoft Teams. Can I ask that you mute your microphones unless speaking to reduce background noise and interference.

Item	Title and Description	Lead	Timing
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Procedural and update Items

1	Welcome and Introduction	Chair	14:00 to 14:20
2	Declarations of Interest	Chair	
3	Minutes of last Meeting	Chair	
4	Action Tracker	Chair	
5	Directors Report including Programme Update	Ian Lewis	

Agenda items for discussion/decision

6	SELEP Funding Allocations Review of projects considered for Growing Places Fund and Sector Support Fund (report included, for decision)	Ian Lewis	14:20 to 14:30
7	Consultation Responses Thames Estuary Action Plan, Freeports and Bradwell B Nuclear power Station (report included, for decision)	Ian Lewis	14:30 to 14:40
8	Next Steps for South Essex Economy Review of Productivity Strategy Action Plan (Report Included, for discussion)	Chair	14:40 to 15:10
9	Growth Hub Introduction to and future business plan for Growth hub (presentation & discussion)	Jon Birkett BEST Growth Hub	15:10 to 15:25
10	South Essex Inward Investment Discussion around what this should look like in South Essex (report included, for discussion)	Chair	15:25 to 15:40
11	SELEP Update Update from SELEP (verbal update)	Adam Bryan SELEP	15:40 to 15:50
	Date of Next Meeting 23 rd September 2020, 2-4pm Venue TBC		

Item 4 – Action Tracker

Date	Action (Minute reference)	Lead	Due By	RAG	Notes	Update (incl date of update)
04/03/2020	More detailed information required on Amber rated projects in programme report (6.4)	IL	03/06/2020		Further detail to be presented at the next Board meeting	13/5 Update will be delayed until full implications from C-19 lock down are known and a more accurate report can be given. Anticipate this will be Sept Board
04/03/2020	Review Board feedback on current issues and priorities against productivity strategy (7.2)	IL	23/09/2020			13/5 - Comments will be reviewed alongside wider review of the strategy in response to C-19
04/03/2020	Board views to be fed back into the productivity strategy implementation plan development (7.3)	IL	23/09/2020			13/5 - Comments will be reviewed alongside wider review of the strategy in response to C-19
04/03/2020	OSE Website Development (7.4)	IL	TBC		Board reaffirmed requirement to development of website	13/5 Outline of site requirements completed. Developer to be sought
04/03/2020	ASELA - Conversation with ASELA Board around deeper engagement to be arranged (8.3)	ASELA	30/06/2020			13/5 Ongoing engagement is taking place across a range of ASELA programme areas
04/03/2020	Draft response to Freeport Consultation to be circulated to Board for comment (9.2.2)	IL	13/07/2020			13/5 Consultation deadline extended to July

Item	5
Subject	Director's Update
Date	3 rd June 2020
Author	Ian Lewis, Executive Director

Report Summary and Recommendation

The report outlines the activities of OSE since the last Board meeting and provide an update of the current financial position of the Partnership.

The Board are asked to note the report.

Introduction

1. This report is in three parts:
 - General Updates
 - Productivity Strategy Progress
 - Finance Update

General Update

2. Since the last Board meeting we have seen the imposition of significant lockdown restrictions to tackle the spread of Covid 19. This has seen unprecedented levels of support for businesses to enable them to work through the lock down period which is still yet to come to an end. This has created significant challenges for all of us, and uncertainty will be with us for the coming months as we emerge from the lockdown.
3. For South Essex, this has had a significant effect on the projects and programmes underway. Construction of major projects has slowed or stalled, but now tentatively restarting. Apprenticeship programmes have been disrupted with uncertainty over starts in September. This has also led to challenges for project funders such as SELEP with implications for operational costs and some uncertainty creeping in around funding allocations. We will also need to review our policies, notably the Productivity Strategy and emerging Local Industrial Strategy, to make sure they are relevant and support an effective recovery.
4. **Covid 19** – The country went into lockdown within a couple weeks of the last Board meeting. This led to the introduction of an unprecedented level of central Government support to support businesses through this period. The South Essex local authorities and the BEST Growth Hub have been a critical part of helping businesses through this, as well as implementing the grant schemes in a very short period. At the time of writing, around 60% of businesses eligible for grants have applied and many those have been paid. Effort is now focussing on getting to the remainder of the business community. OSE have been continually capturing local intelligence and issues and feeding this into SELEP and other parts of Government to push for changes within the wide-ranging support packages that have been put in place. Since then OSE with colleagues across South Essex have been leading the initial thinking around the development of a recovery plan.
5. **ASELA**– OSE are working with ASELA to develop the Inward Investment proposition for South Essex and supporting the development of corridor masterplans. These will

be used in the development of a South Essex investment proposal to Government in the summer.

6. **Thames Estuary Growth Board** - Working with North Kent and London colleagues we have developed the Thames Estuary Action Plan which will be launched in July 2020. Recruitment is now underway to secure private sector membership of the Board. Work has also commenced on brand building and communications approach for the Estuary.
7. **Local Industrial Strategy** – the work on the LIS has paused for now. A review of the LIS will be undertaken to consider the economic implications of the Covid 19 pandemic.
8. **SELEP Company Board** – the first meeting of the new SELEP Company Board took place on the 17th April.

Productivity Strategy Update

9. Work on some of the wider actions within the productivity strategy have been put on hold due to the immediate business needs arising from the lockdown. The strategy will be reviewed over the coming months to take into account the recovery phase. The table below gives an outline of progress since the last report (4th March).

Programme	Activity	Progress since last Report
Vibrant Places	Define and publish a productivity-focused South Essex inward investment vision, targeting high-value business investment.	OSE and South Essex economic development colleagues have developed an options paper for consideration for options for an inward Investment function. CBRE, who are leading the development of the case for investment in South Essex are also supporting this work
	Develop and publish an investor prospectus, developed in-line with other ASELA work streams	
	Prototype/pilot and evaluate a South Essex Inward Investment Ambassador project; leveraging established international networks to catalyse investment.	
	Publish a 'South Essex Creates' vision and work programme; linked with the Thames Estuary Production Corridor to develop cultural and creative industries across South Essex.	Thames Estuary Production Corridor and Creative Estuary Programmes are getting underway, as is BasildON project. These programmes will contribute to the realisation of this activity. Thames Estuary Festival to take place in 2021.
Enterprise Growth Programme	Develop business support model that leverages the business service sector (accountants, solicitors, marketers) to generate new business growth.	Initial conversations have been had with the BEST Growth hub in relation to their future business plan
	Develop the scope/plan for a new small scale business investment vehicle for South Essex (targeting SME market with best growth potential).	Business case with aim of securing Growing Places Fund funding has been prepared submitted to SELEP.
	Develop and agree a new South Essex 'Innovation Concordat' with academic partners to agree a new approach for supporting innovation in the private sector.	Work on hold due to need to focus on Covid 19 Response

Programme	Activity	Progress since last Report
Future Work	Convene a new 'Skills Leadership Group' for South Essex; bringing together public and private stakeholders to develop a single, clear and comprehensive skills interface aligned to existing programmes of work	Work mostly on hold due to need to focus on Covid 19 Response. However, campaign to highlight opportunities to retrain will be launched in late June.
	Establish a new project to expand higher education research base across South Essex; linked to the proposed 'innovation concordat'	
	Targeted activity to improve South Essex utilisation of apprenticeships and apprenticeship levy potential	
Data Transformation	Develop and publish a South Essex online 'Data Observatory' as a single source for economic and social data	Work on hold due to need to focus on Covid 19 Response
	Explore how we use data generated in South Essex as a resource for developing new applications and service models	

10. A full review of the actions above in response to Covid 19 is to be considered under Item 10 of this meeting agenda.

Programme Monitoring

11. At the Board meeting held on the 4th March, the Board asked for a comprehensive update of issues and mitigation for projects within the Local Growth Fund (LGF) programme that have been rated Amber. Since then, all of the projects have had to deal with the wide-ranging implications from the Covid 19 lockdown. This has meant that progress has been completely halted in nearly all cases or at least significantly disrupted. It would therefore be sensible to delay this report until we are in a much clearer position once we know the implications for the projects arising from the lockdown. This will be reported to the Board as soon as possible.
12. SELEP have received notification from Government that they will only receive 2/3 of the LGF funding allocation for 2020-21. The reason for this is that Government wish to ensure certainty that LEPs will be able to spend their allocation by year end. SELEP are reviewing the programme to confirm the position, a task made much more difficult due to disruption to progress in recent months. Once Government are satisfied that programmed spend will be achieved, the final 1/3 will be released.
13. For South Essex, this would mean that the Accountability board at their meeting on the 3rd July may not be able to confirm funding for the Basildon Innovation Warehouse.
14. The A127 Fairglen improvement project is also yet to have its business case approved by the Department for Transport. The business case is scheduled for sign off over the summer with a start on site anticipate by March 2021.

SELEP Company Membership

15. Members of the Federated Boards are invited to become a Member/Guarantor of the SELEP Company. Members are equivalent to shareholders in a more standard limited company, but they do not have ownership interests. Any excess assets that remain on dissolution of a company limited by guarantee would not be distributed to

members but to another entity having similar objects. OSE Board Members have been e-mailed the form to complete to become Members of SELEP Company.

16. A company limited by guarantee is owned by individuals and/or corporate bodies known as 'guarantors'. Guarantors do not have any shares in the company and, generally, they do not take any of the profits. The owners of a company limited by guarantee will agree to pay a sum of money, known as a 'guarantee', if the company has any debts or becomes insolvent. In the case of SELEP Ltd, the guarantee is £1 per guarantor.
17. Guarantors will be invited to the SELEP Annual General Meeting where they will be able to put questions to the Directors of SELEP Ltd.
18. A guarantor can be any person or a corporate body. Their details will be registered with Companies House and displayed on public record. All Federated Board members are invited to become a guarantor, but it is not a requirement. If your place on the Federated Board is to directly represent an organisation, then that organisation should be the guarantor rather than the individual.

Financial Update

19. The current financial position of the Partnership is shown in the table below.

Income and expenditure	2019/20 actual / budget £	2020/21 budget £	2021/22 budget £	2022/23 budget £
Programme Manager salary, including on costs (later years include allowances for indexation)	90,391	94,000	97,000	100,000
Car Allowance	1,239	1,239	1,239	1,239
Expenses (spent to date)	3,389	0	0	0
Expenses (unspent balance)	0	3,500	3,500	3,500
Supplies and services (spent to date)	2,000	0	0	0
Supplies and services (unspent balance)	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Premises and establishment	7,200	7,400	7,500	7,700
Sub-total expenditure before projects	104,219	108,139	111,239	114,439
Projects:				
• South Essex Investment Fund - scoping work	1,300			
Total expenditure	105,519	108,139	111,239	114,439
Total subscription income	(97,500)	(97,500)	(97,500)	(97,500)
Net expenditure / (income) for the year	8,019	10,639	13,739	16,939
Opening partnership balance 1 April	(53,798)	(42,879)	(32,240)	(18,501)
Net expenditure / (income) for the year	8,019	10,639	13,739	16,939
Planned future projects:				
• South Essex Investment Fund - Business Case Contribution (estimate)	2,900			
Closing partnership balance 31 March	(42,879)	(32,240)	(18,501)	(1,562)

Item 6

Subject SELEP Funding Allocations

Date 3rd June 2020

Author Ian Lewis, Executive Director

Report Summary

The Board are asked to:

- Review the projects developed in South Essex seeking support from the Growing Places Fund in the context of Covid 19 and provide their views
- Review the Sector Support Fund applications and come to a view on the relative priorities of the three projects that have come forward

Growing Places Fund

1. SELEP opened a call for projects in October 2019 for projects seeking loan funding from the Growing Places Fund. Three projects came forward from South Essex which are described in the table below. The projects are listed in priority order as agreed at the OSE Board meeting in November 2019, and reconfirmed in March 2020.

Project	Promoter	Description
Leigh on Sea Cockle Wharf	Southend Council	Project will improve access to the Cockle Wharf from the High street, resurface the wall area and strengthen sea walls/retaining walls. Project is essential to enable the continued landing and processing of fish, and to also enable businesses which are actively seeking to grow to have the facilities to expand. This growth will not be realised without this project. £7m project, seeking £3.5m from GPF
No Use Empty South Essex	South Essex Project	Project will return long term empty commercial properties back into use for residential, other commercial and other mixed use purposes. It will focus on town centres, secondary retail and other commercial areas that have been impacted by changes in the economy. £2.65m project seeking £1m from GPF.
South Essex Productivity Investment Fund	South Essex Project	A new finance facility targeted at South Essex SMEs to help fund investment in new technology/equipment to increase productivity. Project will provide loans between £50-£250k, requiring 50% match. £6.254m project, seeking £3m from GPF

2. The SELEP Independent Technical Evaluator reviewed the submissions and come to a different view on priorities based on the assessment criteria. Their priority order was:
 - No Use Empty South Essex
 - Leigh Cockle Wharf
 - South Essex productivity investment Fund

3. SELEP have written all promoters of projects considered for Growing Places Fund to clarify the status of each project following the Covid 19 situation. Promoters were asked to confirm that the projects remained viable and deliverable, and if there were any changes to scope, costs, programme, and benefits arising from Covid 19 restrictions. OSE are now asked to review the projects based on information provided by the project promoters in response to Covid 19. The feedback from the promoters is in the table below, with full responses in Appendix A:

Project	Update	OSE Consideration
Leigh Cockle Wharf	The project remains deliverable and viable. There are no changes to scope, costs, match funding availability, programme or benefits. Repayment schedule is also unaffected.	The project is unaffected.
No Use Empty South Essex	The project remains deliverable and viable. There are no changes to scope, costs, match funding availability, programme or benefits. Repayment schedule is also unaffected.	The project is unaffected.
South Essex productivity investment Fund	This project is being withdrawn. This product has been superseded by the loan finance and grants packages that Government have introduced in response to Covid 19. In addition, the administration cost gap has not been filled. In the current circumstances, it is not the right time to launch a new loan product.	Feedback from businesses indicates a concern about the level of debt being taken on as a result of the response to Covid 19. An investment fund focussed on productivity gains is in itself a good idea, but timing is against it now.

Sector Support Fund

4. The Sector Support Fund (SSF) supports one-off discrete pieces of work which are of a pan-LEP nature with a sector focus that brings demonstrable benefit and has support across the LEP.
5. There is currently £206,500 of the fund which is yet to be allocated. Submissions have been received for the three projects below, which in total seek funding greater than what is available. Full Applications can be found in Appendix B.

Project	Amount Sought	Description	Suggested OSE Position
Delivering Skills for the Future through teaching (extension proposal)	£78,000	This seeks to extend the already successful project which addresses the shortage of teaching staff in the 16+ sector by attracting people from industry and providing bursaries for training to enable them to train as teachers. Applications for the original scheme were 300% greater than anticipated.	OSE board have already endorsed the project (Written procedure March 2020). This project has been extremely successful with 20 bursaries granted in South Essex so far. <u>In relation to the current situation and the anticipated need for retraining for many people, OSE should be supportive of this project because it adds much needed capacity to the training sector</u>
SE Export Development (SEED)	£129,860	This project seeks to support SME's to develop their exporting potential through facilitating a presence at international trade shows. This would target particular sectors and be an	In a pre-Covid world, this would appear to be a good project. However, it is not likely that international trade shows will be taking place for the foreseeable future, and

Project	Amount Sought	Description	Suggested OSE Position
		ability for our SME's to present their products and services to a wider audience. It would work alongside existing initiatives and activities such as those undertaken by the Department for International Trade and Chamber of Commerce.	attendances may be lower than anticipated. <u>Timing may be against this project currently but may be one to re-visit in the future. Recommend that this project is not supported at this time.</u>
Buy Local South East	£69,510	The focus of this project is to support businesses in the food and drink sector through a LEP wide campaign focussed on producers, retailers and leading into the hospitality sector. A website of local producers will be created, surveys undertaken to develop a business support offer and connect suppliers to buyers	This project is led by Produced in Kent, an organisation with the primary focus of promoting Kent produce, and has been developed to support rural business undertaking home deliveries. It builds on established schemes in Kent and East Sussex. The Essex Partner (the Essex Rivers Group, formed to distribute EU funding to small rural businesses) are active in Rochford. This would enable them to extend their reach. <u>The OSE Board should consider supporting this project because it would give our rural areas another outlet for promotion and support. . However, we need to be satisfied with the delivery arrangements for South Essex.</u>

Item	7
Subject	Consultation Responses
Date	3 rd June 2020
Author	Ian Lewis, Executive Director

Report Summary

The report highlights two active consultations which will have significant economic and growth implications for South Essex:

- Thames Estuary Action Plan
- Freeports
- Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station

The Board are asked to make comment on the Thames Estuary Growth Plan electronically when it becomes available for consultation

The Board are asked to, for Freeports and Bradwell B Nuclear power Station:

- Confirm an overall position in relation to these projects
- discuss points to be made in response to the consultations; and,
- Agree to finalise the response electronically following the Board Meeting

Introduction

1. There are two active consultations underway which will have potentially significant implications for South Essex. They are:
 - Thames Estuary Action Plan (draft)
 - Freeport Consultation
 - Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station

Thames Estuary Action Plan

2. This is the action plan prepared by the Thames Estuary Growth Board. The Board has been in place since December 2019, and is chaired by the Thames Estuary Envoy. The Board and Envoy have been established to give a clear voice for the Estuary, as well as to put the estuary on the map as a place for investment. One of the founding principles is that it will not duplicate or replicate local activity but add value and provide a framework within which the estuary can address issues that are best tackled at this scale.
3. The Action Plan outlines the headline areas of action for the Growth Board and the Envoy. The Action Plan will be circulated to Board Members upon its approval by the Growth Board.

Freeports

4. The Government has announced a consultation on the establishment of freeports within the UK. The consultation can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/freeports-consultation>

5. At this stage, the Government are consulting on the policy surrounding freeports and how they will operate. It will be later in the year that they will open a process for locations wishing to secure Freeport status will be invited to submit their proposals. Indications are currently that the Government are seeking to identify 10 locations.
6. A freeport is designed to specifically encourage businesses that import, process and then re-export goods. They have different customs rules and they are being promoted as innovation hubs to boost global trade, attract inward investment and increase productivity. In doing so, the government wants freeports to generate employment opportunities to the benefit of some of our most deprived communities around the UK.
7. The government has drawn on evidence from successful freeports around the world to develop a UK freeport model. The proposed model includes tariff flexibility, customs facilitations and tax measures. We are also considering planning reforms, additional targeted funding for infrastructure improvements and measures to incentivise innovation.
8. For South Essex, there are a number of aspects we may wish to respond to:
 - Views on the Freeport concept and potential implications, limitations and opportunities
 - The link between Freeports and the role in supporting regeneration of deprived communities
 - How we can use Freeport status to help drive innovation and enhance the skills of our workforce
 - Explore the potential for multiple sites – both in and outside ports – to form part of a single Freeport proposal

Bradwell B Nuclear power Station

9. The Bradwell B project is holding its first stage of consultation on proposals for a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex. The consultation website can be found here: <https://bradwellb.co.uk/>
10. Once operational, the new station would generate enough electricity to power about four million homes, making an important contribution to the UK's future energy needs. Bradwell B would build on the long-established history of nuclear power in the area. The project will create up to 9,100 jobs during a 9-12 year construction phase, peaking at a requirement for 3,000 at key points in the programme. Up to 1,200 apprenticeships would be created. The project is at the first stage of public consultation.
11. This project could provide significant opportunities for a large range of businesses across South Essex. In our draft response (See Appendix A), we highlight the following:
 - The role of supply chain development and ensuring local businesses are best placed to support the project. We would cite examples from other major projects (eg the Supply Chain School for Lower Thames Crossing)
 - What are the lessons that can be brought from other nuclear projects such as Hinkley Point
 - We would be very keen to see a clear and proactive approach to developing skilled labour locally for the project, with a clear commissioning role supported by a focus on providing opportunities to local residents first.

Item	8
Subject	Next Steps for the South Essex Economy
Date	3 rd June 2020
Author	Ian Lewis, Executive Director

Report Summary

The Board are asked to review the Productivity Strategy and its actions in the current economic context. Specifically, to ask:

- Are the productivity strategy programmes and activities still relevant?
- Are the suggested next steps the right ones?

Introduction

1. The South Essex Productivity Strategy was completed during 2019, and the action plan developed earlier this year. In response to the unprecedented economic impact of Covid 19, it would be right that we test this strategy and how it fits with the substantially different economic context within which we now find ourselves.
2. This paper is to be used to frame a discussion item. The output from this will shape the update of the Productivity Strategy Work Plan.

Context

3. Over the recent weeks, OSE along with the various business boards across South Essex have been regularly feeding back the issues that have faced businesses as a result of lockdown restrictions. Many of these issues have been shared with partners and Government and have helped to refine the immediate response measures.
4. These discussions have moved on to how we recover. Key points made in these conversations are summarised below:
 - Concern from businesses around the amount of debt that they are taking on through the government support schemes and through usual lending routes. Debt taken on by companies will be a drag on future investment with growth plans will be delayed or no longer taken forward.
 - Demand from apprentices is increasing, yet the number of places offered by employers are starting to reduce (including those due to start in September) because of uncertainties. How does social distancing and home working work in the context of an apprenticeship, and how can we support the ongoing supply of places?
 - High quality digital infrastructure is now critically important in helping businesses to adapt. Implementation of new technology within supply chains is becoming increasingly important.
 - Concern that when businesses do re-open they will be trading at a loss due to lower demand or social distancing requirements reducing output. We will need a flexibility in how support packages are withdrawn. Recovery and recession will be uneven across sectors, with a real concern that the true effects may not present themselves until businesses start operating more normally
 - Need to recognise the creativity and innovation shown over the last few weeks by our small businesses. Some businesses have been able to completely transform

the way they operate – a business continuity response may become the new business as usual. Smaller companies seem to be waiting for instruction on what to do next. Appears to be a demand for developing leadership skills and help them to identify how they can adapt

- Housebuilding sector expected to take 12 months to recover to pre-covid output levels
- In the voluntary sector expectation that a third of organisations will close, a third will carry on and a third will need to completely change their service.
- The role of local authorities in the response was often praised. In the recovery phase, regulatory functions will need to work constructively to assist with pragmatic implementation of measures to restart businesses. Bringing certainty to capital programmes and investments will help business and supplier confidence

Discussion

5. The following table lists the programme areas and activities from the Productivity Strategy. Alongside this, there is a commentary outlining considerations we should reflect in the updating the strategy and suggested next steps taking on board the key points from the bullet points in paragraph 3.
6. The Board are asked to review the considerations and the next steps, to test that we are addressing the key emerging points for recovery. There are two key questions:
 - Is the productivity strategy programme areas and activities still the right ones?
 - Are the next steps the right way forward?
7. There is also a need to undertake more detailed economic analysis for South Essex to understand the implications and shape responses. This work will need to be undertaken in the near future. The Board are asked to give their views on this.

Programme	Productivity Strategy Activity	Considerations for Revision	Next Steps
Vibrant Places	Define and publish a productivity-focused South Essex inward investment vision, targeting high-value business investment	<p>In the initial phases of recovery, businesses will be focussing on how they can reset and restart their businesses to work in a world with continuing measures such as social distancing. These measures will have varying degrees of impact, but for many businesses it will mean a reduction in output due to either reduced demand or simply having to operate with fewer people.</p> <p>Generally negative media throughout the Covid 19 period</p>	<p>Work should continue with the development of an inward investment proposition for South Essex, even though this may not be the immediate focus of businesses right now. We do not currently have one for South Essex so it would be useful to take the time now so that we are ready to take this forward as we recover.</p> <p>Thames Estuary will also be moving forward with its work to develop a brand identity for the Estuary and start to improve the profile and perception of the area. Our work will fit neatly within that and we can pull on this wider work to support our own activity.</p> <p>Consider how we bring certainty to investment in the area (public and private) to give confidence</p>
	Develop and publish an investor prospectus, developed in-line with other ASELA work streams	An Investment prospectus is being developed for South Essex by ASELA for submission to Government in the summer	A strong and resonant private sector contribution to this will add credibility. OSE to work with ASELA partners to help to bring this through
	Prototype/pilot and evaluate a South Essex Inward Investment Ambassador project; leveraging established international networks to catalyse investment	International networks via trade shows may not be possible for some time, but other opportunities for getting the message out should be considered.	Proceed with this, using the inward investment vision and Thames Estuary work as a basis for messaging. Could consider using case studies based on our business's response to Covid 19 as part of the messaging to show how we can innovate and flex our approach.
	Publish a 'South Essex Creates' vision and work programme; linked with the Thames Estuary Production Corridor to develop cultural and creative industries across South Essex.	The creative sector has been hard hit by the lockdown restrictions, but equally has shown that as a sector many small businesses have been able to adapt and move to digital platforms. However, there will be a challenge in turning this into new revenue streams. Sector also has a high number of freelance and micro businesses which have not been able to work/trade and have fallen outside Government support packages. Digital sector has been resilient due to increased reliance on on-line services	This programme forms part of the wider Thames Estuary production Corridor concept and the Creative Estuary programmes which is underway. The Thames Estuary Festival will now be taking place in 2021 and will put a spotlight on South Essex. South Essex will need to get behind this because it will help our profile and have a role in supporting our hospitality sector

Programme	Productivity Strategy Activity	Considerations for Revision	Next Steps
Enterprise Growth Programme	Develop business support model that leverages the business service sector (accountants, solicitors, marketers) to generate new business growth.	Some businesses are finding it a challenge to adapt to a new way of working or to develop a new business model. Concerns about how the Government support packages will be withdrawn. Lower levels of demand/output due to social distancing will have viability implications	Support the Growth Hub to develop adaptation support, but also to secure access to the right data to help programme design. Develop the Growth hub offer/business plan to meet local needs, building on the core requirements from its current funding sources
	Develop the scope/plan for a new small scale business investment vehicle for South Essex (targeting SME market with best growth potential).	Concerns across South Essex from business across South Essex in relation to the amount of debt that is being taken on, through the Government support packages and usual financing routes. This debt is likely to negatively impact on future growth ambitions	Development of a further loan support programme at this stage will be challenging and uptake likely to be low. Development of other approaches and options will need to be considered.
	Develop and agree a new South Essex 'Innovation Concordat' with academic partners to agree a new approach for supporting innovation in the private sector.	Work has been progressing on this, highlighted by the resilient infrastructure bid recently developed.	Continue to pursue the resilient infrastructure bid and explore how to realise this if unsuccessful. Seek out and develop further opportunities, developing the approach further. Work with Thames Estuary to develop some of its emerging action areas, such as decarbonisation, which could present opportunities for South Essex.
Future Work	Targeted activity to improve South Essex utilisation of apprenticeships and apprenticeship levy potential	Demand by future apprentices has been increasing, but offers of places by employers are being withdrawn due to future uncertainties and the practicalities of taking them on. Some issues also presenting themselves in relation to current apprentices being able to complete their programmes. Engagement with learning has been maintained. Work to develop approach to use of apprenticeship levy within local government and its supply chains has started, but patchy implementation so far.	We need to address the immediate issue with demand and places through current uncertainties. Following on, we need to implement programmes to drive up apprenticeship levels across South Essex.
	Convene a new 'Skills Leadership Group' for South Essex; bringing together public and private stakeholders to develop a single, clear and comprehensive skills interface aligned to existing programmes of work	Over the short term, it is very likely that many people will be reconsidering their employment options. It is vital that we are able to help them navigate the options that are available to them. Initial meetings of what could become this Group have taken place	This remains relevant but needs to be undertaken with greater urgency. Campaigns are due to start to promote re-training opportunities, but we may need to consider its scale and reach. Need to put this Group in place

Programme	Productivity Strategy Activity	Considerations for Revision	Next Steps
	Establish a new project to expand higher education research base across South Essex; linked to the proposed 'innovation concordat'	Work has started to explore potential models for higher education, which may be different to what we would know as a University today. Consortia across and beyond South Essex have advanced bids to establish a research base.	No change – this work needs to continue, but may need to bring a more focussed approach to leadership
Data Transformation	Develop and publish a South Essex online 'Data Observatory' as a single source for economic and social data	This has become increasingly important, as well as the speed of presenting the data.	Work with partners and the Growth Hub to create the observatory. Use data to support the development of service offer
	Explore how we use data generated in South Essex as a resource for developing new applications and service models	The response to Covid 19 has seen many companies move their businesses on line and develop new models of service delivery.	<p>In the first instance, there may be benefit in capturing case studies from the new approaches taken by businesses because this may help other businesses to think through their future approaches.</p> <p>Work should continue to develop the use of data to support growth and innovation</p>

Item	9
Subject	BEST Growth Hub
Date	3 rd June 2020
Author	Jon Birkett, BEST Growth Hub Manager

Report Summary

The report outlines the current activity of the BEST Growth hub, and its plans for future development

The Board are asked to note the report.

Introduction

1. The Business Essex Southend & Thurrock (BEST) Growth Hub forms part of the South East Business Hub, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's overarching business support programme, which also supports local hubs in East Sussex, Kent and Medway. We help new and existing businesses find the most suitable type of business support available in their area.
2. BEST is becoming far more than a simple business navigation service evidenced by the speed, breadth and agility of response during both EU transition and Covid 19 crisis.
3. BEST is swiftly repositioning itself both as a regional repository of current and relevant enterprise data intelligence and as a nucleus for high-level business support, grant funding way-finding and direct in-depth business capacity building advice.

The evolution of best growth hub - new for 2020/21

4. Business navigation & enterprise account management - Our specialist team of Business Support Navigators, through a bespoke diagnostic tool, help Essex businesses identify relevant programmes, initiatives or funding schemes currently on offer across the region. From summer 2020 our navigation team will now act as business 'account managers' helping nurture businesses, build capacity, scale up and adapt their service.
5. Grant finding - BEST are already keyed directly into a portfolio of over forty different funding and support streams meaning BEST are primed to offer support regardless of sector, size or need. From June 2020 The BEST Growth Hub will now have access to a new development tool that can help source available grants and investment opportunities from across the UK like never before. This, when coupled with our relationship with regional, direct funding bodies such as SELEP and the 14 local authorities BEST can greatly enhance its reputation as the key conduit for direct business funding navigation.
6. Front line economic curation & observatory (horizon unit) - The BEST growth hub provides a gateway for Essex businesses to the everchanging economic environment. We work hard with funding partners, businesses, communities and government to drive productivity and economic growth with key strands of activity including skills provision and business growth support. Using a unique mix of data sets and data analysis tools the BEST Growth Hub will also now be able to evaluate and model the current and

future economic landscape by investment, geographically and by sector and disseminate this intelligence to back to key partner, businesses, investors and prospectors.

7. Data and business intelligence sharing - BEST found its niche during the COVID 19 crisis by centrally gathering and controlling the flow of Covid economic and business related information to partners across the region. With limited resources we had to ensure we could impact and support to as many businesses as we possibly could, swiftly and effectively. We gather, sense-check and collate all intel and then disseminate to all front line enterprise responders across the region on a daily, monthly and quarterly basis to ensure all the most up-to-date and relevant information is to hand, at all times. This function will be enhanced and building on the foundations of strong relationships with key partners and econ dev teams we aim to further help mitigate flash points and challenges across the entire county while also ensuring opportunities for prosperity and growth are highlighted.
8. Business assessment & adaptation programme - As part of the BEST Growth Hub's objective to provide ongoing support to Essex businesses, and particularly in response to the adverse impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, BEST has developed and will introduce a new Business Assessment & Adaptation Programme. The Programme is essentially designed to assist businesses in the difficult decisions of what and how they need to adapt to meet new challenges brought about by the COVID 19 crisis. Business support, for those that meet the eligibility criteria, will consist of up to 12 hours of free advice following our unique process that includes a specially designed Pivoting Assessment Tool (PAT test), will receive a detailed Pivoting Assessment Report (PAR) along with tailored specialist one to one advice and peer to peer support.
9. In Development and due to Launch In June/July 2020
 - New Enterprise Programme to support start up and micro businesses
 - Online New World New Skill Programme and accreditation to support businesses looking to enhance their video, sound, graphic design, web design and online marketing skills and functions.
 - A range of new Resilience and Adaption Online Workshops and Roundtables - conjunction with the Anglia Ruskin University - looking at business resilience and adaption – cashflow, cyber security and digital marketing
 - A new Regional Award open to all sectors and businesses of any size. The awards will recognising excellence in innovation across four economic strands of – environment, Digital and TECH, Creative/Experience economy, Social enterprise and societal development.
 - Brand new BEST Prospectus due out late June 2020

Enterprise Conference and Business Expo 2021

EAST BY SOUTH EAST BUSINESS INNOVATION CONFERENCE & BEST IN BUSINESS SHOW

ESSEX | BUSINESS | WORLD

Where Essex does business with the World.

Hello World ... This is Essex.

OVERVIEW

ExSE is the event of the year for ambitious Essex-based businesses. A chance to showcase your products and services to other Essex and UK businesses, to the visitors to our exclusive luxury venue and to digital delegates from all over the world. It is free to attend, both in person and remotely.

BRAND DESCRIPTION

ExSE is a 2-day festival celebrating the best businesses based in Essex. A hybrid real-world and virtual conference and expo, with the themes of innovation, creativity, technology and the environment.

With TED-style keynote speeches, interactive workshops and live networking - both on and off-line - the event will be streamed live to the world and supported by a dedicated ExSE app and virtual exhibition booths on the ExSE website and social channels.

DIFFERENT

- Hybrid real-world and virtual event
- Online conference, Expo and business showcase
- International live networking

BETTER

- 2 for 1 in an exclusive luxury venue (The Davos effect) the Hylands House
- BEST and ExSE in one location
- Funding, support **and** business development

REMARKABLE

- Remote talks and presentations from some of the world's visionary and inspirational business leaders.
- 1,000s of digital delegates exploring the best that the Essex business community has to offer.
- Free to attend for all delegates, on and off-line.

Item	10
Subject	South Essex Inward investment
Date	3 rd June 2020
Author	Ian Lewis, Executive Director

Report Summary

This is a paper which will seek the views from the Board in shaping Inward Investment activity in South Essex.

Introduction

1. Work is underway to consider how South Essex promotes itself for investment. This will be for promoting opportunities for businesses currently in South Essex for them to stay and grow, but also to attract new businesses into the area.
2. Invest Essex, the inward Investment organisation covering Essex, Southend and Thurrock has been wound up which means that this route for investment enquiries is no longer available. This presents an opportunity to consider what an inward investment function should do for South Essex.
3. This paper is a discussion prompt to seek the views of the OSE Board. The following are a number of points for the board to consider.

Discussion Points

4. South Essex has a number of strengths which create a compelling proposition:
 - Proximity to London, and south east and eastern regions
 - Excellent connectivity via road, rail, sea and air
 - Opportunities for development
 - Very competitive land/property values
 - Strong quality of life offer
 - Entrepreneurial spirit
5. Challenges for an Investment Function
 - The agents active in the area are already undertaking a range of promotion activity. What is the added value that an inward investment function could bring?
 - We should not seek to replicate or duplicate existing structures, particularly the market, but look to how we can amplify this
 - South Essex does not have a clear proposition to market
 - If a big step change in offer or a desire to attract particular occupiers is being pursued, South Essex will need to consider how we might provide additional incentive above inherent attributes to land the investment.
 - Any function must provide a clear single voice and point of contact, representing all of South Essex
 - We need to develop an opportunity pipeline from within our existing companies – this will take time
 - How do we cover the costs of an Inward investment function?

- How do we make sure senior individuals with the contacts and networks to land inward investment opportunities are fully engaged?
6. Potential Short Term Actions and Opportunities
 - Short to medium term response to the Covid 19 recovery and potential new reality with lower levels of commuting into London – develop an offer that responds to this
 - Work with our larger businesses who may be seeking to shorten supply chains and have suppliers located more closely to improve resilience – develop an offer that responds to this
 - Work with existing businesses to keep them in South Essex, and help to secure re-investment when businesses do restructure
 - Develop a range of initial opportunities (both new build and existing sites) – be market led on this in the first instance
 - Need to work with our local businesses to ensure we retain and grow them
 - Get behind existing development opportunities and develop a pipeline
 - Work with the private sector to establish and develop a South Essex offer which responds to the needs of our businesses
 - Explore how we might secure a couple of large new businesses to South Essex as a catalyst, and the supply chain opportunities they may bring
 - Be best placed to develop opportunities in the run up to Brexit, and after.
 7. An Inward Investment function needs to, as a minimum:
 - be credible
 - have a clear proposition and offer
 - establish strong relationships – Department for International Trade, intermediaries (local, regional and national)
 - be responsive to all enquiries
 8. In addition to the above, and depending on the level of resource available, the function could also offer the following:
 - ‘Soft landing’ function to offer short term flexible space, networking opportunities and support through bedding in
 - Project management – support the development of investment opportunities such as helping with introductions to local authorities and accessing local professional advice
 - Introductions and links to local business support
 - Lead networking and other events amongst intermediaries to help them promote the region
 9. The Board are asked to share their views around what they consider to be the key functions and roles needed in South Essex to promote investment from our existing businesses as well as attracting new.