

LA / LEP INTEGRATION PLAN TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDANCE

Government has [confirmed](#) that Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) core functions – namely, business representation, local economic planning, and the delivery of Government programmes where directed – from April 2024 should be delivered by local authorities.

This template is intended to aid the process of integration and inform the direction of any future government funding. This document should be read in parallel with the [guidance](#) published on the integration of LEP functions into local and combined authorities on 4 August 2023. Government expects decisions on the transfer and delivery of current LEP functions to be made locally.

Government expects functions to be delivered over current or potential devolution deal geographies so far as possible. Outside of areas with an agreed devolution deal, it is expected that functions will be exercised by the upper tier local authority, working with other upper tier local authorities as appropriate. Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate within an area, only one return is necessary. The authority which submits the return on behalf of the whole area should ensure all upper tier local authorities have agreed to the return and copy it to the LEP Chair.

It is recognised that the formal process of transferring any assets, loans, investments, or liabilities between existing LEP(s) and local democratic institutions will require agreement between both parties. All parties must follow the relevant laws and regulations that apply, including having due regard for the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Any commercially sensitive information may be submitted in parallel to the main integration plan. The use of annexes is also recommended for non-sensitive issues where more detail is required.

Completed plans should be sent to the central LEP Integration inbox (LEP.Integration@levellingup.gov.uk), copying all relevant parties (all upper tier local authorities and LEP Chair) and the relevant Area Lead in the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

The deadline for submission of this plan to Government is **23:59hrs on Thursday 30 November 2023** or earlier if possible, to help inform future funding decisions.

SECTION 1: CORE INFORMATION

Core details and current arrangements	
<p>1.1 Name of LEP which is to be integrated.</p>	<p>South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).</p>
<p>1.2 Name(s) of upper tier authority or authorities into which LEP functions are being integrated.</p>	<p><i>East Sussex County Council (ESCC)</i></p> <p>SELEP contains six upper tier local authorities (UTLAs): East Sussex County Council, Essex County Council, Kent County Council, Medway Council, Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.</p> <p>LEP functions are being integrated into the three larger UTLAs as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Sussex County Council. - Kent County Council (to include Medway Council). - Essex County Council (to include Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council).
<p>1.3 Current relationship with the LEP</p>	<p>Each of the six UTLAs listed above are members of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, acting as local accountable body for the projects and programmes in their respective areas (Essex CC is the overall Accountable Body for the LEP). East Sussex collates information for East Sussex based LGF, GBF and GPF projects on behalf of SELEP.</p> <p>A joint partnership agreement is in place between SELEP Ltd and the six UTLAs, with each UTLA having a seat on the SELEP Accountability Board, responsible for approving all major funding decisions and ensuring those investment decisions are made in a democratic, transparent and public forum with full due process.</p> <p>Each UTLA Leader, including the Leader of ESCC, is also a Company Director of SELEP Ltd, with a seat at the SELEP Strategic Board.</p> <p>ESCC provides a secretariat function to Team East Sussex (TES), one of SELEP's four federated boards (see section 3 below).</p> <p>ESCC also manages the contract for the Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub on behalf of SELEP.</p> <p>Senior officers from East Sussex County Council meet regularly with SELEP to discuss and agree activities and priorities and ensure a two-way flow of information between SELEP and the federated area of East Sussex. They also ensure that the area is fully represented in SELEP's network and partnership groups.</p>
Integration leads	
<p>1.4 Contact details for integration leads</p>	<p>East Sussex County Council: Richard Dawson, Head of Economic Development, Skills, Culture and Infrastructure 07917 210721 Richard.Dawson@eastsussex.gov.uk</p>

SELEP:
Helen Russell, Chief Executive Officer
07795 257810 | Helen.Russell@Southeastlep.com

SECTION 2: GEOGRAPHY

Geography

2. Please set out the proposed geography for the delivery of LEP functions from April 2024. Answers should confirm whether the proposed geography is coterminous with the current LEP geography. If not, answers should confirm that the proposed geography constitutes a functional economic area (FEA), with reference to the size of population, local travel to work areas (TTWAs) and any other relevant drivers of the local economy.

Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate across the proposed geography, you should confirm the governance arrangements and that service provision will be ensured across the whole geography – no authority should be left out and all parties should agree the arrangements.

From April 2024, LEP functions will be delivered by the three larger UTLA areas of SELEP – East Sussex, Essex and Kent – each constituting a functional economic area.

Essex is to include Southend on Sea and Thurrock, and so Essex CC will ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to continue service provision across all three authorities. Similarly, Kent is to include Medway, so Kent CC will ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to continue service provision across both authorities.

East Sussex will continue to include the geographical area covered by East Sussex County Council (ESCC), with continued alignment to the current Team East Sussex (TES) federated board arrangement. Governance will sit with ESCC. Note that the total population of East Sussex is 545,900*.

Overall, this proposed geography is coterminous with the current geography of the South East LEP, as all of the constituent authorities are included.

*ONS Census 2021

SECTION 3: BUSINESS VOICE

Current and future activity

3. Please set out how you intend to embed a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice into local decision-making across the area. Answers should cover the following points:

- (a) Proposed model & governance structure** (e.g., a stand-alone business board, sub-board, or other structure)
- (b) Membership** (including the mix, balance and diversity of independent business members and any other partners drawn from outside of the business community)

SELEP currently operates a 'federated' model of governance, with four sub-boards across its geography allowing for even more localised decision making. The federated sub-board for the county of East Sussex is *Team East Sussex* (TES).

Team East Sussex mirrors the LEP in that it is a *business-led*, private/public body, with representation from business members and business representative bodies (including the FSB and Chambers of Commerce), the voluntary and community sector, further education, higher education and the local authority leaders of all of the county, borough and district councils. TES Board membership is currently 59% private to 41% public sector.

As well as being a federated SELEP sub-board, TES is also the strategic advisory economic growth board for the county, with a primary aim to drive forward economic growth and prosperity in the county of East Sussex. In pursuit of this aim, TES currently has the following key functions: Strategic direction and oversight; Pipeline development and capital programme oversight; Project consideration (prioritisation); Lobbying and promotion; Engagement; and SELEP activities. TES is supported by East Sussex County Council officers in a secretariat capacity.

Moving forward, TES has the ongoing support of the County Council and partners *to continue to operate beyond the life of SELEP as the independent, business-led, strategic oversight/advisory economic growth board for the county, providing the voice of business in steering our economic growth agenda*. TES will continue to review its membership to ensure as broad a representation as possible across business sectors and the local geography, and when the government issues a new framework in early 2024 (to replace the National Local Growth Assurance Framework), the TES Terms of Reference will be updated accordingly.

TES has also established a series of thematic subgroups to help drive forward activity in some of its key sectors, including Business, Culture and Tourism, Housing and Commercial Development, Environment, and Skills. Similar to TES, these active working groups are partnerships of private and public sector, plus social enterprise, education providers and more, ensuring all of the key stakeholders for each sector are represented, with a strong business voice. The Business subgroup in particular enables even broader business engagement, exploring key economic issues affecting the private sector in the county, as well as acting as a steering group to our local Growth Hub. Subgroup activity is regularly reported to TES for information and endorsement, and TES will continue to give consideration to creating new subgroups for areas of particular interest or need.

Government guidance is clear that UTLAs are encouraged to create, or continue to engage with, an Economic Growth Board (or similar) made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies, in order to provide the view of local businesses as part of regional decision making, and to work with local leaders to create a broad economic strategy for the area.

The guidance states that business representative boards should follow a series of principles for ensuring business representation in local decision-making. These include: Involving business representative organisations (such as a local Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, or the designated Employer Representative Body developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)); Including a diverse range of businesses related to local economic strengths and priorities (including businesses of all sizes and which are geographically diverse, e.g. urban, rural, coastal businesses as appropriate to the local area); Ensuring a diversity of voices; and Having a clear conflict of interest policy. *In East Sussex, Team East Sussex already fully meets that brief, with representation on all the above from business representative organisations and businesses on its board, and with established terms of reference and policies in place.*

TES has previously overseen the development of the county's Growth Strategy for 2014-20, the post-pandemic Economy Recovery Plan in 2020, and is currently overseeing the development of a new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy for 2024+.

SECTION 4: PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

Current and future activity			
<p>4.1 Please list the projects, programmes and services currently delivered by the local LEP. In each case you should indicate whether, subject to receiving equivalent funding, the upper tier local authority/authorities would continue to undertake each activity.</p> <p>Where a different set of functions/services is being delivered for a neighbouring area, you should repeat the exercise for that area.</p> <p>You do not need to include LEP activity delivered in a private capacity.</p>			
Title	Short Description (1-2 sentences)	Will the activity continue once the LEP is integrated? (subject to future funding)	
		Yes	No
Economic Strategy	A new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy for 2024 onwards is currently being developed and will underpin the delivery of former LEP functions in East Sussex.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Growth Board	TES will continue to operate but will review its structure and activity prior to March 2024 to ensure alignment with post-LEP functions and the new economic strategy. ESCC will continue to provide TES' secretariat function.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capital Grant funded programmes: Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF)	Oversight of LGF and GBF grant programmes in East Sussex, including ongoing financial claims and post-completion evaluation and monitoring as appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capital Loan funded programmes: Growing Places Fund (GPF)	Oversight of GPF loan programme in East Sussex, including ongoing monitoring and evaluation and establishing arrangements for future deployment of returned GPF loan funding.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountable body role, as defined by DLUHC	Establish ESCC in to-be-defined AB role, ensuring all appropriate functions transferred from SELEP. Ongoing capital programme management, reporting and decision making as the new Accountable Body will be required for future years both internally and to DLUHC.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Existing data and reports	SELEP reports, data and analysis to be shared with ESCC, or an agreed 'archive' to be set up with legacy arrangements in place for ESCC and partners to access the data.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

State of the Region Report	ESCC already produces its own State of the County report which will replace this.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills Data	ESCC will make use of other publicly available skills datasets and LSIP generated skills data.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SELEP Partnership and Network groups	Team East Sussex (TES) to be retained as an informal partnership acting as the strategic oversight / advisory economic growth board for the county of East Sussex, providing the voice of business. ESCC to consider whether East Sussex CC and/or other East Sussex representatives' involvement will be wanted/needed in any of the SELEP working groups.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town Boards	Representation on Hastings and Newhaven Town Deal Boards to be achieved through nominated TES business members.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greater South East Net Zero Hub	Current SELEP member on board will initially be replaced by a UTLA representative from across SELEP region. The future intention is to have one representative from each of the three economic areas, including ESCC. To be determined by GSENG hub board and any change to their terms of reference.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
South East Business Hub (SEBH) Growth Hub	The SELEP South East Business Hub (SEBH) Growth Hub to be drawn to a close.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
East Sussex Growth Hub	The Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub which is an in-house run service will continue operating fully independent of SELEP from April 2024, contracted with and reporting directly to the Government Department for Business and Trade (DBT).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Growth Hub websites	SELEP Growth Hub websites to be discontinued in March 2024, to be replaced in East Sussex by a BES Growth Hub page on the ESCC website.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Match and other funding commitments	Options for alternative or additional sources of funding for a possible enhanced Growth Hub offer to be explored.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Support	This will continue through the Business East Sussex (BES) Steering Group, BES Providers Group, and the activities of the BES Growth Hub and wider ESCC Economic Development Team.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 5: DELIVERY AND APPROVALS

Governance of the integration process
5.1 (a) What mechanisms will be in place to manage the integration process at the local level?
<p>ESCC teams have been fully involved in the transition process since early summer 2023, including colleagues in our Legal, Finance, Governance Services, Economic Development, Audit, Communications, Research & Information, and Major Projects & Growth departments. All of these teams have contributed to the development of the SELEP Integration Plan and our own East Sussex Integration Plan.</p> <p>As we continue to move through the integration process, colleagues stand ready to respond to any updated Government guidance (expected January 2024) and will revise the above draft plans accordingly. We are also prepared to establish new governance and monitoring/reporting procedures to align with the anticipated new Government framework (to replace the National Local</p>

Growth Assurance Framework) and will update the Team East Sussex (TES) Terms of Reference as necessary.

Throughout the process, senior managers including the ESCC S151 Officer, the TES Chair and the Leader of the County Council have been fully briefed on progress and are involved in the approvals process (see 5.2 below).

5.1 (b) If the existing LEP is intending to formally cease operation and dissolve following its integration, who will be responsible for managing the transition and any legacy issues?

SELEP is intending to formally cease operation following its integration from April 2024.

Throughout the current transition period, SELEP has worked closely with its six UTLAs, including ESCC, on developing the SELEP Integration Plan, and all of these organisations are continuing to work closely together on the plan's implementation. At a local level, ESCC has developed its own East Sussex Integration Plan, arranging the activities of the SELEP plan into county-specific actions, to ensure timely progress and a smooth transition of LEP functions locally.

The current accountable body for SELEP is Essex CC, who has formal responsibility for managing the transition and any legacy issues, in close cooperation with the other five UTLAs. From April 2024, ESCC will take on local accountable body status, and will manage any local legacy issues. Overall responsibility for managing this at ESCC sits with the Head of Service for Economic Development, Skills, Culture and Infrastructure.

Approvals

5.2 Has this integration plan been agreed by the relevant boards/persons in both the local LEP(s) and local authority/authorities?

Yes



No



Please copy all relevant parties (including the Chair of the local LEP(s)) when you submit this plan.

- SELEP Strategic Board approval of draft SELEP Integration Plan, 13 October 2023. Board members from East Sussex CC Leader and 3 x TES business members supported this decision.
- ESCC Corporate Management Team (CMT) note and endorse SELEP Integration Plan and draft East Sussex Integration Plan, 22 November 2023.
- Team East Sussex approval of SELEP Integration Plan and draft East Sussex Integration Plan, 4 December 2023. TES board members approve including ESCC Leader.
- SELEP Strategic Board approval of SELEP Integration Plan, 8 December 2023. Board members from East Sussex CC Leader and 3 x TES business members intend to support this decision.
- ESCC Cabinet Briefing to consider SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 10 January 2024.
- Team East Sussex approval of SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 29 January 2024.
- ESCC Cabinet approval of SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 5 March 2024.
- To be determined if required - ESCC Full Council approval of SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 19 March 2024.

NB – Dates are indicative.

At East Sussex CC, this Government 'LA/LEP integration plan template' has been agreed by: the Leader; the Corporate Director for Communities, Economy and Transport; the Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer); and the Chair of Team East Sussex.

