

This note captures the summary points and actions from a meeting of LEP Chairs on the LEP Review Steering Group, and a LEP Network Strategy Group meeting held on the same day.

## LEP Review – Steering Group

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Ann Limb welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained the first part of the meeting would cover the LEP Review, the second part would look at LEP Network activity to December 2018.

### 2. Feedback from Cities & Local Growth Unit (CLGU)

The *Strengthened LEPs* report remains the current government policy on LEP Review. There are no new updates to report since the last Steering Group meeting. Addressing the recommendations on overlaps and ‘geography’ is an important first step. Future meetings should begin to cover the practical actions coming out of the other working groups, how LEPs are working through these, and what to bring to the Steering Group’s attention. During the LEP Review process, it is also important to prepare for the next annual performance review.

### 3. Working Groups update on current progress

LEP Chairs and the LEP Network executive reported on progress with the five working groups.

#### a) Geography Working Group

Angus Knowles Cutler, Deputy Chair of the London Economic Advisory Panel, gave feedback from the working group meeting, that took place before the Steering Group.

All LEPs are working to submit their proposals for the 28<sup>th</sup> September deadline.

The group had discussed: the current position on the 20 LEPs with overlaps (relating to 33 District Councils and Unitaries); and where there are conversations exploring potential mergers.

All LEPs have been working hard over the summer on this, with a lot of stakeholder conversations, stakeholder management and considering options.

There will be areas that propose to retain their current geographies, including overlaps, as they are considered functional economic geographies.

The working group will meet again on 15<sup>th</sup> October (at 12:30pm, before the Steering Group) where LEP geography submissions will be discussed.

**Action: Angus Knowles-Cutler / LEP Network**

#### b) Legal Personality

Graham Wynn, Chair of The Marches LEP, chaired this first meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September.

The LEP Network fed back that LEPs are sending through the main areas where they need support. Incorporated LEPs are being approached for information that can be shared.

There is potential for LEP collaboration on commissioning external specialist advice to help on legal and VAT issues.

This working group will meet next from 3pm on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September, in Birmingham. Some incorporated LEPs will be invited to join this meeting.

The Steering Group thought the next working group meeting could look at the Articles of Association and discuss if there is a common approach to the purpose for which a LEP is being incorporated?

The next Steering Group meeting would like to understand the main issues faced by LEPs.

They would also like to look at some metrics, such as which are the LEPs who do not have any overlaps to address, and need to work towards incorporation.

CLGU agreed to share their data on LEPs and incorporated status.

**Action: Graham Wynn / LEP Network / CLGU**

**c) National Assurance Framework**

John Mortimer, Chair of Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, has volunteered to chair this group which will meet for the first time on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September, after the LEP CEOs meeting.

CLGU is working through revised guidance.

**Action: John Mortimer / LEP Network**

**d) Delivery Plans**

Mark Bretton, Chair of Hertfordshire LEP, has volunteered to chair this group. Separate diary commitments may make it not possible for him to chair the working group. The LEP Network will seek an alternate chair.

This working group has yet to meet.

There is a synergy with the National Assurance Framework working group.

It will be important to get a private sector view on what is an effective delivery plan that guides day-to-day decisions, brings together strategy and delivery, and captures the key metrics.

CLGU mentioned they will be commissioning an independent economic outlook.

A date for the meeting is likely to be in October.

**Action: LEP Network**

**e) Local Industrial Strategies**

This working group has yet to meet. A date for the first meeting will be set for October.

There may be a statement on Local Industrial Strategies in the coming weeks, providing some further detail. The LEP Network should co-ordinate a collective response.

**Action: LEP Network**

**4. Progress Report to MHCLG & BEIS**

The group commented on edits to the draft LEP Review progress letter for the two Secretaries of State, circulated in advance of the meeting.

This included feedback received from the discussion held in the Geography working group.

It was agreed that the LEP Network would circulate a revised draft to LEP Chairs, seeking their agreement to be included on the letter.

The group agreed that the letter should be sent to MHCLG and BEIS by mid-day on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September.

**Action: LEP Network**

**5. Engaging DfE**

**a) Key discussion points**

The group discussed the main areas to discuss with the DfE Secretary of State:

- SAPs and aligning these with the existing LEP Employment & Skills Boards;
- Apprenticeship Levy as it evolves and changes;
- The post 16 reform and funding review;
- T-Levels;
- Wider education agenda, including careers advice, and the importance of the secondary school system in the attracting FDI, etc.

- b) LEP Chairs agreed that the LEP Network should prepare a paper on these points, for sharing with LEPs to get their input, to be discussed with the Secretary of State in October.

**Action: LEP Network**

- c) **HE and FE on LEP Boards**

CLGU confirmed that Higher Education Institutions are considered 'private sector'.

LEP Chairs asked the LEP Network to share this information, and CLGU agreed to provide further clarity regarding FEIs.

**Action: CLGU / LEP Network**

The next Steering group meeting will take place at 2:30pm Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October, in London. (Venue to be confirmed.)

CLGU colleagues left the meeting.

## **LEP Network – Operational Priorities to December 2018**

### **6. LEP Network work programme**

- a) **Operational report**

LEP Chairs noted the report on LEP Network executive operational activity that has taken place since May 2018.

- b) **Priorities to end December 2018**

LEP Chairs agreed with the proposed focus for the LEP Network executive outlined in the paper:

- LEP Review (incl. gender diversity); Council of LEP Chairs; UK Shared Prosperity Fund; DfE engagement; Housing; DCMS; Rural.

LEP Chairs asked the LEP Network to identify LEP Chairs who would like to be involved in the above themes/sectors and any others that may arise.

The LEP Network to engage LEP Chairs (and Board Members) in the relevant conversations with Whitehall Departments.

**Action: LEP Network**

### **7. Meeting Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP**

- a) **LEP attendees & alternates**

13 LEP Chairs have indicated they are available to meet the Secretary of State on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

LEP Chairs asked the LEP Network to explore co-ordinating a smaller group, which may result in a less formal discussion, and give more time to hear back from the Secretary of State on the priorities discussed above.

The LEP Network is to liaise with the LEP Chairs who have volunteered, confirm if they would still like to attend, and possibly include a few alternates to ensure a good geographical balance and understanding of the agenda.

- b) **Meeting ESFA officials**

The LEP Chairs agreed that to save LEPs multiple journeys in to London to try and combine the meeting with ESFA officials on the same day as the Secretary of State.

**Action: LEP Network.**

## 8. Bi-annual LEP Chair & CEO workshop

### a) 27<sup>th</sup> November.

LEP Chairs agreed with the proposed date for the next LEP Chairs and CEOs workshop – Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November.

It was suggested that part of the meeting would be for LEP Chairs only, as they do not meet regularly as a group on their own.

**Action: LEP Network**

### b) Dinners.

LEP Chairs agreed that at this stage more effective Ministerial engagement would be pursued by the LEP Network facilitating groups of LEP Chairs meeting with Ministers. This could be in the theme/sector areas as discussed above (skills, housing, rural etc.).

This will free up LEP Network budget to support LEPs through the LEP Review process.

Holding future dinners that are sponsored by a third party, would be reviewed in the New Year.

\*\* END \*\*

## Meeting attendees:

### Local Enterprise Partnerships (alphabetical, by LEP):

1. Dr Ann Limb CBE DL (Chair, South East Midlands LEP) - *meeting Chair*.
2. Andrew Smith (Chair, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP).
3. Jim Stewart (Chair, Dorset LEP).
4. Steve Hindley CBE DL (Chair, Heart of the South West LEP).
5. Mark Bretton (Chair, Hertfordshire LEP).
6. Angus Knowles-Cutler (Deputy Chair, London Economic Action Partnership).
7. Doug Field (Chair, New Anglia LEP).
8. John Mortimer (Chair, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP).

### Government officials:

9. Stephen Jones, Director, Cities & Local Growth Unit (CLGU), MHCLG & BEIS.
10. Jonny Wright, Cities and Local Growth Unit.
11. Callum Whittaker, Cities and Local Growth Unit.
12. Rich Smith, Cities and Local Growth Unit.

### LEP Network Executive:

13. Warren Ralls, Director.
14. Jennifer Gunn, Policy Manager.

### Apologies:

- Christine Gaskell MBE DL (Chair, Cheshire & Warrington LEP)
- Roger Marsh OBE (Chair, Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership, and NP11).
- Dr Graham Wynn OBE (Chair, The Marches LEP).
- Prof. Steven West CBE (Chair, West of England LEP).
- David Kerfoot MBE (Chair, York, North Yorkshire & East Riding LEP).
- Mark Stansfeld (Chair, Worcestershire LEP).
- Jeremy Long (Chair, Oxfordshire City Region LEP).