

Richard Harrington  
Chief Executive  
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Dear Richard

### **Implementation Plan and National Assurance Framework**

Thank you for the work over the past several months in responding to the recommendations of the LEP Review.

As Stephen said at the LEP Network, the government has indicated that it will make further capacity funding available in 2018-19 to LEPs in order to fund the implementation of the LEP Review and to begin development of your Local Industrial Strategy.

While I recognise the positive progress you are making to deliver the LEP review recommendations and removing your overlap, we are not in a position to release the full amount of additional capacity funding to you until such time as ministers have made a decision on your future geography and composition. I am however able to allocate you £100,000 in additional capacity funding in recognition of the efforts you have expended in seeking a resolution to date and can confirm that this was transferred to your accountable body on Friday 14 December.

We have considered your implementation plan in detail and you should continue to press forward in implementing that plan, prioritising the development of your Local Industrial Strategy.

I also want to thank you for the feedback you have given as we renew the National Assurance Framework. As part of that, I now want to use this opportunity to provide some further clarifications to what we said in *Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships* following queries that have arisen since.

### **Gender representation**

In *Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships* we set out ambitions for LEP Boards to improve their gender balance aiming for equal representation of men and women by 2023 and aim for a minimum of a third women's representation on boards by 2020. I can confirm that these expectations relate to the *entire* LEP board and not just the private sector portion of the board. I would encourage you to continue the excellent progress you have already made in this area.

### **LEP Chair limits**

LEP Chairs should hold the position for a period of 3 years with an optional 3 year extension. In exceptional circumstances, this could be extended for a further 3 years meaning a maximum tenure of 9 years as Chair.

### **Deputy Chairs**

Whilst there is no *requirement* that a Deputy Chair must be a private sector board member, it is our view that a private sector Deputy Chair would be beneficial in ensuring the LEP speaks with a business voice and help with succession planning.

### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive, as a minimum, should report exclusively to the LEP and be under the direction of the LEP Board. The Chief Executive should therefore be employed by:

- The LEP itself as a company.
- Seconded to the LEP. Where a Chief Executive is seconded from a Local Authority, they must have a clear contract which states that they act independently of Local Authority.
- Employed by the Local Authority but with a clear Service Level Agreement or contract which specifies that they report exclusively to the LEP.

### **Scrutiny and audit**

To ensure that the operation of LEPs is subject to external scrutiny and expert oversight, you should establish mechanisms to participate in local authority scrutiny through, for example, attending local authority scrutiny sessions or establishing a special purpose joint local authority scrutiny committee.

### **Advertising Chair vacancies**

It is for each individual LEP to decide on its process for advertising vacancies widely and evidencing that they have consulted the business community within this process. We expect all posts to be advertised externally and not restricted to members of the existing LEP board. The government has created a mechanism to allow for Chair and Deputy Chair vacancies to be listed on the Centre for Public Appointments website. You should contact your Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead in the first instance to receive further information on how to advertise vacancies on this website.

Finally, to reconfirm, this year's performance reviews will be based on the existing assurance framework that was published in 2016 with additional requirements following the Mary Ney review which are outlined in the Annual Performance Review guidance. LEPs will need to be compliant with the new National Assurance Framework by April 2019 in order to receive funding in the 2019/20 financial year.

Many thanks once again for your efforts in implementing these important strands of work. I am confident that it will put LEPs in a strong position as we look forward towards the development of ambitious Local Industrial Strategies and as we look to consult on a new UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Yours sincerely,



Rowena Limb  
Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit