



THE LEP NETWORK

Newsletter

October 2011 Issue

Message from David Frost CBE, Chair of the LEP Network

A determined focus on delivering outcomes



[Coventry and Warwickshire LEP](#) held their first Annual Conference this month. Mark Prisk MP, the Business Minister, and I were both invited to speak. The Conference highlighted to me the very real potential of the emerging LEP movement. You could sense the growing confidence and influence of both the private and the public sectors. The fact that all the MPs and an MEP saw it as necessary to be there and to answer questions from an audience of 300+ showed to me that the LEPs are being taken very seriously. The quality of the debate was high, with informed discussion on how the planning system was restricting growth; on how we should get the banks lending to

SMEs; on how the tourism offer needed to be improved; and on what steps needed to be taken to reduce the regulatory burden on business.

It is clear that the business-led task groups were not only bringing together all sections of the community but were determined not to become talking shops. There is a huge focus on delivering real outcomes. At the end of the event, the Chairman handed out a 5-point challenge to all who were there. This included a challenge to get 100 companies to take on 100 apprentices in 100 days. [The local newspaper will be running a piece each week](#) on the companies that have been signed up over the previous 7 days. More on this in the LEP Life section below...

There is clearly much goodwill towards LEPs, and the business community is bringing a very real drive and determination to improving the performance of local economies. The senior civil servants that were present could not have failed to be impressed by the progress being made. I have a number of other visits to LEPs across England over the coming weeks and I am sure the same drive and enthusiasm will be on display.

Network Update

Latest on LEP Network activity

Future of EU funding for economic development a focus of 'MEPs meet LEPs' event

This month the LEP Network convened a session in Brussels to introduce MEPs to representatives of LEPs. LEP Board members from [Greater Manchester](#) and [Greater Lincolnshire](#) met with a delegation of UK MEPs on 13 October to discuss the changing policy context for economic development in the UK, the role of LEPs and their engagement with the EU.

A focus of the discussions was EU funding for economic development, in particular the challenge of spending funding allocations to 2013; the future shape of the structural funds programs for 2014-19, especially with regard to centralised

programs and the potential impact on the setting and delivery of local priorities; and the reshaped '[Horizon 2020](#)' programme, previously the Framework Programmes for R&D and innovation.



With no more [Regional Growth Fund](#) monies to be allocated after the current phase, EU funding routes (including [loans from the European Investment Bank](#)) will be critical to the delivery of some LEP infrastructure or business growth priorities in the future. The MEPs highlighted the 30bn EUR of loans made available by the EIB to SMEs in the last year, and that LEPs could play a key role by signposting local companies to this resource.

The MEPs were keen to help LEPs in their areas to engage with structural funds issues, and all present at the meeting volunteered to do so. The LEP Network will be looking to encourage these links more widely, for example by securing European Commission representation in future LEP Network events (see article below) – providing another point of contact on structural funding and framework programme funding.

For more information, please contact Mike Spicer info@lepnetwork.org.uk.

The LEP Network is now on Twitter!



The LEP Network is now live on Twitter – tweeting the latest news from around the Network. So do sign up to follow us - @TheLEPNetwork.

We are posting tweets using the hash-tags #LEP and #LEPs.

Feedback sought on forthcoming LEP Network workshops

The LEP Network will hold four thematic workshops between December 2011 and April 2012, aimed at sharing knowledge, best practice, and building capacity. Based on the feedback from LEP board members at the inaugural event, the Network proposes to hold events on planning, funding, infrastructure and skills. These will be open to LEP Boards and those supporting the work of LEPs, such as their secretariats. More details on timing and venues will follow shortly. As we put together the programmes for the events, we are seeking further feedback to ensure they are squarely focussed on addressing the needs of LEPs. For each topic, we would like to hear from you on:

- Examples of how your LEP is engaging with this economic development issue
- Top things you would like to learn from each workshop

To help us make these events a success, please forward your feedback to Mike Spicer info@lepnetwork.org.uk by 7 November.

LEP Life

News from around the Network

LEPs to offer Business Link content via websites



Information.
Support.
Compliance.

Several LEPs have teamed up with [Business Link](#) and The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on a pathfinder project to enhance the online business support offered to local businesses. The project enables participating LEPs to take content from the national Business Link website and present it on their own website (or an endorsed affiliate website) with their

own look and feel – a free and effective way of adding depth and authority to their online business information, rather than needing to invest in their own business support tools, information and guidance. Businesses can then access Business Link content (guides, diagnostic tools, e-learning tutorials, videos case studies etc) via their local LEP. Participating LEPs include Cheshire & Warrington; Tees Valley Unlimited (website to launch in early 2012); Stoke & Staffordshire; Lincolnshire; and Greater Manchester.

The tool that allows LEPs to syndicate Business Link content goes live with the launch of the new national Business Link website in mid-November. The syndication tool draws on the latest internet technologies to open up their information to enable web developers to access the information and repurpose it on any website with their own branding while also

providing the flexibility to develop new, innovative solutions such as 'Apps'.

The capability to syndicate Business Link content will be available from 22nd November and will be open to any LEP that signs up and registers with Business Link as a syndication partner (Terms & Conditions will apply). For more information about this project, please contact Adrian Housley at Adrian.Housley@businesslink.gsi.gov.uk or Karen Leigh at karen.leigh@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Coventry and Warwickshire LEP announces 'five targets to be met in 100 days' at first annual conference

[Coventry and Warwickshire LEP](#) held its first conference on 14 October. Mark Prisk, Minister of State for Business & Enterprise, was a keynote speaker at the event which attracted 350 business people, including David Frost, Chair of the LEP Network, and a host of politicians and local political leaders. To underline its commitment to make an immediate and positive impact on the area's economy, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP Chair Denys Shortt challenged the LEP to achieve five ambitious targets by early in the New Year:



- To establish a business mentor network to help SMEs and start-ups - 100 business mentors in 100 days
- Create a social network group for businesses – 1,000 contributors in 100 days (building on the success of the LEP LinkedIn group)
- Fill the hard to fill jobs for NEETS and for public sector leavers - 100 jobs filled in 100 days
- Share case studies of small, medium and large business of good and bad access to finance - 20 case studies in 100 days
- Public prospectus of key development and infrastructure projects for Coventry and Warwickshire – 1,000 opportunities in 100 days

For more information on the event or the five challenges above, please contact Roger Douthwaite on roger.douthwaite@cwlep.com

National News

Policy news

LEPs secure funding from Round 2 of the Regional Growth Fund



The successful bids into the second round of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) were announced on 31 October. The RGF is a £1.4bn fund supporting job-creating projects across England, with a focus on helping areas currently dependent on the public sector to make the transition to private sector-led growth.

The second round of bidding closed in July 2011 and attracted 492 bids with a combined total value of £3.3 bn. Although 119 bids were approved, discussions between the government and applicants are ongoing in a further ten cases. The approved applications include direct bids into the fund from Greater Manchester, Solent, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, and Leeds City

Region LEPs.

[Leeds City Region](#) secured £13.2m of funding for a package of nine projects that fell below the £1m threshold for individual RGF bids. This programme, *Unlocking Growth in Advanced Manufacturing*, along with other successful bids endorsed by the LEP brings the total funding secured by Leeds City Region to £32m, which is expected to unlock £257m of private investment and help create and safeguard 4,000 jobs.

[Greater Manchester LEP's](#) bid into the RGF was £89m to secure a further £615m of investment and deliver 12,900 private-sector jobs directly, 11,500 indirectly and safeguard 2,470. The application was based around a programme of projects linking to themes of infrastructure in key investment locations, growth through innovation and technology, and high-growth businesses. Further details of which elements of the bid were successful are expected to emerge later this week.

[Solent LEP](#) also submitted a successful bid, entitled *Bridging the gap: RGF Funding for SMEs in the Solent*. The funding will allow the Solent LEP to manage a fund that new start-up businesses and SMEs looking to grow can bid into on a competitive basis.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LEP secured £13m from the RGF. This is to attract additional funding that will create a £43m programme to directly create or safeguard 3,200 jobs and indirectly create 2,100 jobs. The funding will be split into two

separate strands: the first will be competitive and provide businesses and social enterprises with capital grants and investments to grasp the opportunities of new Superfast Broadband. The second strand will fund infrastructure projects in the Marine, Mineral, Renewable Energy and Aerospace industries which will unlock private sector investment.

Enterprise Zone information packs available to view online



On 3rd October, information packs were issued to each of the local enterprise partnerships with an Enterprise Zone to help them, their constituent local authorities and other partners, successfully deliver and implement their zones. The LEP Network has made the [information pack](#) and guidance on [simplified planning](#) within an EZ available to view online. As part of that pack, local enterprise partnerships were asked to develop implementation plans and send them to DCLG by the 11th November.

The affected LEPs are now developing their plans which will include postcodes; detailed maps; local milestones; key contacts; governance; management and delivery structures; strategies for minimalising displacement; consultation and communication plans and evaluation and monitoring plans.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions for our E-News bulletin, please email us. If at any time you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please email info@lepnetwork.org.uk with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

In the news

We want to hear your news! Why?...so we can let everyone else know in the next issue of LEP Network E-News. Whether its innovative new approaches to local challenges, appointments, or just a quick update – tell us what's going on with your LEP. Email us your news on info@lepnetwork.org.uk .