



THE LEP NETWORK

Newsletter

November 2011 Issue

Message from David Frost CBE, Chair of the LEP Network

2012: A Year of Action



I can report on a very busy period which has involved speaking at a number of conferences and visits to LEPs.

Of particular interest was the [Thames Valley Berkshire LEP](#) Executive Meeting earlier this month, which not only demonstrated the clear leadership coming from the business community, but also the real and positive contribution from local authorities. This included detailed work on the barriers to growth faced by business and, more importantly, what they could collectively do to remove them. Skills, yet again, was a

key area for discussion. The LEP will involve itself in all levels of education and is seeking to link jobs that are in the pipeline through to local college provision. In other words - ensuring the skills are available when they are needed.

Recent announcements clearly position LEPs at the heart of the economic development agenda. Enterprise Zones will be at the core of activities for a number of LEPs. We expect an announcement on the Capacity Fund and we have seen the launch of the Growing Places Fund. When you add to this the 100% capital allowance granted to certain Enterprise Zones, including the zone in the Black Country, plus the allocation of a further £1bn from the Regional Growth Fund, there are now substantial incentives on the table to drive sustainable job and wealth creation.

Finally, to round off the year, the LEP Network has organised a funding workshop on 14 December, with sessions on UK and European funding, as well as managing multi-source funding packages. We hope this will enable LEPs to share good practice on securing funding – and to hear from LEP experts about some of the opportunities available.

The next edition of this newsletter will be on 6 January, so may I also take the opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. 2011 has been a year of planning; the next 12 months promises to be a year of action.

Network Update

Latest on LEP Network activity

LEP Network Funding Workshop – book your place now!

The first in a series of four capacity-building workshops organised by the LEP Network will take place in December and will



focus on funding issues. The workshop will be held at the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 14 December between 10am and 2pm. It aims to furnish LEPs with the information they need to make use of the funding options available to them, to deliver against the strategic priorities for their local economy and to support their day-to-day working.

It will include sessions led by experts and officials on UK, European and private-sector funding options for LEPs. It will also include two facilitated case study and breakout sessions on developing and managing multi-source funding packages; and establishing and managing revolving funds.

The event is open to each LEP, with at least one place available per LEP. Some senior Government and trade association officials are also invited. Please feel free to contact the team at

info@lepnetwork.org.uk with any additional queries.

Update on Round 2 of the LEP Capacity Fund

A big thank you to all who responded to our call for feedback on the LEP Capacity Fund and the design of the second round. The collected comments were passed onto the panel overseeing the fund along with feedback submitted via BIS Local Teams. Changes to the operation of the fund are due to be announced shortly, and the LEP Network will pass on any information from BIS as soon as it becomes available.

Help shape the launch of our online community



The LEP Network is tantalisingly close to launching its website and online 'LEP Community' – but we need your help to make it a success. *LEP Community* will be a social media function / discussion forum embedded in the Network website. It will organise discussions and user comments around 12 broad policy areas: Regeneration; Inward Investment; Enterprise; Funding; Planning; Transport; Digital Infrastructure; Skills and Training; Rural Economy; Tourism; Green Economy; and Regulation. The website will also carry the latest LEP-related policy news in these areas. Together this will evolve into a valuable and accessible library of economic development knowledge that will support LEPs and the wider community of interest. We would welcome the following inputs ahead of the expected launch date of 19 December:

- Suggestions for first discussions in each of the policy areas listed above
- Details of local LEP-related events to feature on the site
- LEP-commissioned research to share on via our 'LEP resources' feature

Please forward your inputs to Mike Spicer at info@lepnetwork.org.uk by 16 December.

LEP Life

News from around the Network

LEPs hit back at critical report by Centre for Cities

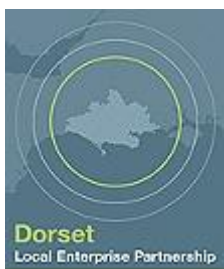
At the end of October, the think-tank [Centre for Cities](#) published a critical report on LEP policy called [Cause célèbre or cause for concern? Local Enterprise Partnerships one year on...](#) The report scored LEPs against a common set of organisational characteristics and concluded that some had become too complex and bureaucratic while others had done too little to finalise formal governance arrangements. It also criticised LEP-led Enterprise Zones as a 'distraction'.

The report drew robust public responses from across the LEP Network, with LEPs emphasising the greater importance of their achievements over differences of structure and organisational form, and the potential of Enterprise Zones to generate new jobs and economic growth. In response to the report, Managing Director of [Tees Valley Unlimited LEP](#) Stephen Catchpole said: "This report is fundamentally flawed and wrong... our success in achieving an innovative Enterprise Zone spread over several locations and involving numerous benefits will pay dividends for Tees Valley in the months ahead. Our early success in winning several Regional Growth Fund bids...is already resulting in work to build new factories in Tees Valley. Reports contrasting [Tees Valley Unlimited] with other LEPs are misleading as each LEP has its own distinct way of communicating with local stakeholders."

Chairman of [Leicester and Leicestershire LEP](#) Andrew Bacon also spoke out: "Our LEP has hit the ground running. We are a genuine, business-led partnership, with clear goals and a clear route map. We have already made great progress in engaging colleges and enterprise, working on local procurement programmes and turning our Board meetings into a genuine dialogue with business on the key issues facing each sector. And our flagship scheme, the enterprise zone at MIRA in Hinckley, is taking shape."

For more information please contact [Mike Spicer](#) at the LEP Network.

Dorset LEP Board line-up announced



November saw the confirmation of appointments to the Dorset LEP Board. The Board comprises eight private-sector members and seven public-sector members. It plans to meet monthly whilst it is being established. The private-sector Chair is due to be selected by the Board at the first meeting in early December. The first Board meeting will cover Board Terms of Reference, constitution, governance, LEP Start Up Funding, launch event, training, and quick wins amongst other topics.

Business Board members include Gordon Page, Hamworthy plc, advanced engineering; Christina Baker, Dorset Community Foundation, social enterprise; Bruce Grant-Braham, Bournemouth University, tourism; Terence O'Rourke, creative industries; David Ramsden, Political and Parliamentary Advisor, small business expertise; Peter Scott, Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry, business support; Philip Warr, PH Warr, property and construction; James Weld, Lulworth Estate, rural and estate management; and Anthony Woodhouse, Hall & Woodhouse, food and drink.

The public-sector Board members are: David Willey (Bournemouth University) Higher Education; Lawrence Vincent (B&P College) Further Education; Peter Charon, Leader of Bournemouth Borough Council; Angus Campbell, Leader of Dorset County Council; Elaine Atkinson, Leader of Borough of Poole Council; and the Leader of a Dorset District Council (to be confirmed).

For more information please contact [Lorna Gibbons](#).

Coventry and Warwickshire LEP Chairman wins 'Local Hero of Enterprise' national business award



On a star-studded evening in London - including James Caan, Julie Meyer and Will King - the Growing Business Awards celebrated the best of British business. Created by Real Business and the CBI in 1999, the Growing Business Awards are an established form of recognition for UK independent and entrepreneurial businesses. This year's event kicked off [Global Entrepreneurship Week](#) - where enterprise activity is being championed across the world.

A new award for "Local Hero of Enterprise" was won by Denys Shortt, founder of DCS Europe and Chairman of the [Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership](#). Declan Curry - presenter for BBC Business News - announced the award: "Former England Hockey player, highly successful entrepreneur and proud son of Stratford-upon-Avon, Denys Shortt commits himself to a huge array of local community projects - from supporting the town's football club to mentoring business owners to launching an ambitious new project to place helipads on rooftops alongside accident and emergency wings."

The award was presented by Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government who said: "He is my local hero because of his work with the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership."

On receiving his award Denys Shortt said, "I have realised life is not just about making money - it's about helping others along the way. Being Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership has been one of the most challenging but satisfying things that I have ever done. LEPs are good news. I would highly recommend that business owners get involved. For the first time ever the Government is asking business leaders to help shape the future of our country".

West of England LEP conference hails growing engagement with local business community

Almost 200 people attended the second annual conference of the [West of England LEP](#), which was held in the glorious



historical setting of Bath's Assembly Rooms. The organisation received a warm tribute from a Government Minister and Chairman Colin Skellett reviewed achievements already made and set out an ambitious programme for the coming year.

Greg Clark MP, the Minister for Cities, Decentralisation and Planning said: "Bristol, Bath and the West of England have the potential to be a powerhouse of growth and I'm delighted that the local enterprise partnership has got off to such a strong start." He drew particular attention to the high profile that Bristol and Bath had in the creative, financial, tourism and higher education sectors and told delegates that he believed the area could be a real motor for future growth.

In looking back at the past year, Colin Skellett highlighted that fact that there were around 400 businesses which were involved in working with the LEP, helping to form no fewer than 11 sector groups, a real sign of the willingness of the private sector to play its part.

He explained, "We have had seen successes during the year, which have included the creation of the Enterprise Zone and the Enterprise Areas, which will be progressed in the next 12 months. They will play a big part in delivering our target of 95,000 new jobs by 2030. Among our other priorities we will be working on improving our systems for attracting inward investment and make the case to Government for still more improvements to our transport infrastructure. But we are also doing a number of other positive things, such as supporting work to increase the number of apprenticeships, launching a scheme to provide grants for training in leadership and management and setting up a website to help businesses find vital sources of support."

For more information, please contact [Ian Bell](#).

National News

Policy news

Growth and Innovation Fund now open to LEPs



Do you meet employers who share common challenges in employment or skills? Do you have ideas for innovative solutions and need investment to develop them? If so, it might be worth finding out more about the government's [Growth and Innovation Fund \(GIF\)](#). The second phase of the fund was launched on 23rd November. There is £29 million available to bid for this year and BIS has allocated £34 million for 2012-13. It will support businesses to develop skills solutions tailored to their own needs, transforming growth in their sector, region or supply chain. There is a strong will to support solutions that work for a particular economic area and the fund has now been opened up to LEPs.

It is now open for business all year round so that proposals can be submitted whenever they arise. Applicants who submit a successful (and very short!) expression of interest will receive financial support and have the option to work alongside the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to develop full proposals. Proposals must demonstrate that they will have measurable impact and are genuinely employer-driven.

LEPs work closely with hundreds of employers and know what's really needed in their locality, so are very well-placed to shape exciting propositions. UKCES would welcome applications from a single LEP (where it is a legally-constituted body), a group of LEPs or collaboration with other eligible organisations.

The prospectus, including criteria and details of the application process can be viewed [here](#). In the coming months more information will be available at the LEP Network Skills workshop in the new year and one-to-one advice clinics in December.

For an informal discussion please contact [Gillian Brewin](#) at UKCES on 07824 626710.

Details of Growing Places Fund Announced

The much-anticipated details of the Government's [Growing Places Fund \(GPF\)](#) were announced on 7 November. Sponsored by the Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government, the GPF will allocate around £500m to Local Enterprise Partnerships across England this financial year to establish revolving infrastructure funds that address local infrastructure constraints. The funding is to be made available to all Local Enterprise Partnerships on a formula basis, with LEPs required to submit pre-qualification questionnaires (PQQs) to government by 20th December to draw down monies. These must include:



- Details of the management scheme (there must be a 'lead local authority' drawn from the LEP area to receive and account for the money);
- An explanation of how the initial allocation will be converted into a revolving infrastructure fund (e.g. will investments be recouped from developer contributions?);
- How the fund will be used in conjunction with other funding sources (such as EU structural funds);
- How the fund will deliver LEP priorities for housing and economic growth.

The GPF will allow for up to 2% of allocations to be used to help LEPs resource the management of the funding.

LEP-led Rural Growth Networks announced in Autumn Statement

The Government is launching a [Rural Growth Network \(RGN\)](#) initiative supported by around £15 million of new government funding. A competition will be launched before the end of 2011 for up to six LEPs to run pilot Networks.



Each Rural Growth Network will consist of a number of relatively small 'Enterprise Hubs'. Key features of each Network will include:

- Essential infrastructure and premises needed by businesses to start up and grow
- A simplified planning regime
- Targeted action to enhance business skills and mentoring opportunities

In addition to the £15m of new funding, pilot RGNs will have preferential access to schemes funded by the [Rural Development Programme for England \(RDPE\)](#).

As part of the £15m, the Government is targeting up to £2.3m to support rural enterprises led by women, particularly in RGNs.

Some of the barriers to growth that are particularly acute in rural areas include a lack of suitable premises and insufficient critical mass to justify the provision of physical infrastructure (especially superfast broadband and mobile) and other business services. RGNs are expected to address these through enhanced networking between and across Enterprise Hubs.

New national Business Link website goes live



Information.
Support.
Compliance.

November saw the launch of the new national [Business Link website](#). More and more businesses save time and effort by looking online for business information and advice. The opportunity to carry Business Link content is open to any LEP that signs up and registers with Business Link as a syndication partner (Terms & Conditions will apply). For more information please contact please contact Adrian Housley at Adrian.Housley@businesslink.gsi.gov.uk or Karen Leigh at karen.leigh@bis.gsi.gov.uk

LEP Toolbox updated

We want to remind you of the BIS [LEP Toolbox](#) - a useful resource in terms of getting up-to-date cross-government policy and sectoral news and contact information. The LEP Toolbox provides information on economic development activity



across government departments and sets out possible avenues for LEP/government cooperation. Once LEPs have identified their priorities, they can use the toolbox to ensure that their work dovetails effectively with activity led at the national level.

It also provides contacts for the different the areas of economic development activity. As well as these experts on particular areas of policy, BIS and DCLG have Relationship Managers devoted to working with individual LEPs on any issues that they might have. Their contact details can be found via the ['Getting in touch' page](#).

The BIS LEP Toolbox also provides useful updates on several of the pathfinder projects which LEPs are involved in. The updates are posted as PDFs on the subject pages.

BIS welcome feedback on how the toolbox can be improved and your ideas for cooperation between LEPs and government.

Feedback and any questions about the pathfinder projects can be sent to Andy Dawber andy.dawber@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

Mid-sized Businesses Pathfinder



Eight LEPs have agreed to run a pathfinder programme to develop business networks between mid-sized businesses in their local area. This will enable mid-sized businesses to share best practice and to develop leadership and management capability. The LEPs involved in this project are Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Black Country, Cheshire and Warrington, Hertfordshire, Leeds City Region, New Anglia, North Eastern and Tees Valley. Each LEP will run their pathfinder programme in a slightly different way, however the core elements of the pathfinder are:

- Arranging a series of peer-to-peer business seminars on issues such as exporting to new markets and succession planning over the next twelve months
- Promoting mid-sized businesses
- Building networks of mid-sized businesses

Any LEP that would like to be involved with this pathfinder project should contact their BIS local team in the first instance.

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.