

Summary Notes and Actions

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. Graham Wynn, as meeting chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, emphasising that this is an open meeting to all LEP Chairs, participation is always welcomed and encouraged.

2. LEP policy update and LEP Review (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Growth and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)

- 2.1. Simon Ridley began by saying that the agendas for local growth and industrial strategy remain unchanged since the Cabinet reshuffle. The two Secretaries of State are the same, Jake Berry MP is still the Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth and, other than an increased focus on housing for MHCLG building on commitments made in the Autumn Budget 2017, all departmental priorities remain the same.
- 2.2. Priorities are supporting local growth, supporting the strategies for the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine, and other place-based work like the Local Industrial Strategies.
- 2.3. There is continued importance for governance and transparency and implementation of the recommendations of the Mary Ney Review. A PAC hearing is being held on 22nd January.
- 2.4. Stephen Jones has been appointed as director to replace Tom Walker.
- 2.5. Gareth Davies said that the Department's priority is to implement the Industrial Strategy and to roll out sector deals. There were announcements before Christmas and automotive is expected imminently. The role of Local Industrial Strategies is to turn the national strategy into reality across the country.
- 2.6. Regarding housing, LEP Chairs asked if there would be a connection between housing and local communities, i.e. building houses where there are jobs and infrastructure. It was noted that the intention is to coordinate links between national and local strategies and this will come under the remit of Homes England (formerly Homes & Communities Agency). LEPs should consider housing in their local plans. The [Housing Infrastructure Fund](#) for the coordination of local leadership and local funding will be critical. Small housing projects (<£10m) will be announced by the Ministry, and they see a strategic role for LEPs in larger schemes.
- 2.7. Confirmation on LEP core funding and Growth Hub funding is expected soon - officials were unable to commit to a specific timeframe. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will provide more certainty around structural funds.
- 2.8. Regarding agricultural funding beyond Brexit, the CAP commitment is in place until 2024. It was suggested Chairs liaise with DEFRA to find out more. (The LEP Network has been establishing relationships with DEFRA.)
- 2.9. It was noted that there are Brexit intelligence teams in BEIS and HCLG and it was agreed that and LEP intelligence and collective thinking be brought together for inclusion at the March 2018 workshop.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress with LEPs.

Simon Ridley and Gareth Davies left the meeting. Giles Wilkes and Will Davis joined the meeting.

3. No.10 - Industrial Strategy and LEP Review

- 3.1. Giles Wilkes began with a brief overview. Place is fundamental and they are keen to hear LEP views on Local Industrial Strategies.
- 3.2. The Cabinet hold LEPs in high regard, noting there is a Review underway.
- 3.3. No.10 was keen to hear Chairs' views on what problem they think the Industrial Strategy is going to address, reflecting on the SEP / LGF process. LEP Chairs shared local stories to illustrate the challenges and opportunities they have at a local level.

- 3.4. It was noted that: the 'challenge sessions' with Ministers was very helpful; having strategic economic dialogue united local stakeholders; LEPs have helped some partners to look outside their boundaries working on a wider economic geography; having a 'pot' of funding to 'aim at' was useful; the competitive aspect of LGF was not an issue.
- 3.5. LEPs said it would be helpful to have No.10 continue to reiterate the importance of the LEP role, and what No.10 wants (guidance) will help to focus the local conversations.
- 3.6. LEP Chairs said that they want to continue working in partnership with No.10, and agreed to stay in touch and formulate an outline of what they want from the first PM LEP Council meeting.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress with LEPs.

Giles Wilkes and Will Davis left the meeting. Claudia Harris joined the meeting.

4. Skills and Skills Advisory Panels

- 4.1. Claudia gave an overview of the impact of the CEC since inception and the challenges ahead to meet government objectives, including where LEPs and CEC can collaborate further. Her pre-meeting briefing note can be downloaded [here](#) and her slides can be downloaded [here](#). Claudia drew attention to slide 4, the collective impact of CEC and LEPs.
- 4.2. There is a £5m fund for the establishment of 20 Careers Hubs following the example of the North East helping schools achieve the Gatsby benchmarks.
- 4.3. Chairs asked if Careers Hubs can be matched to cold spots.
- 4.4. It was agreed that match funding was a good approach to secure 'buy in'.
- 4.5. Claudia asked Chairs to consider three ways in which LEPs can support the work of the CEC:
 - a) By showing leadership commitment and evangelising about the network and the pilot careers hubs which are being launched in 2018 in collaboration with LEPs. If these pilot hubs can be truly transformative it may be possible to make the case that local hubs under LEP leadership, with strong employer links and school and college careers leaders, are the solution to the careers problem that has dogged this country for so long.
 - b) By explaining to businesses where necessary that although the CEC program is national, support is customised locally and therefore the focus in certain areas may be on SME employers rather than larger corporates.
 - c) By reaching out to schools and showing them that LEPs are there to support them. Concretely including head teachers in LEP governance has proven to be a very powerful way to do this – at least on the Employment and Skills boards and ideally on the main board of the LEP.

ACTION: LEP Chairs to respond to Claudia Harris (charris@careersandenterprise.co.uk).

- 4.6. Chairs asked that network impact data be shared with all LEPs. The full independent evaluation can be downloaded [here](#).
- 4.7. Later in January 2018, the CEC are launching a dashboard which will be shared on a quarterly basis with LEPs. CEC will continue to refine ways to share data and would welcome feedback and advice.

Claudia Harris left the meeting.

- 4.8. Reflecting on the previous discussions, it was recommended that LEP Chairs meet with Rt Hon Anne Milton MP, Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, DfE.
- 4.9. It was also suggested that contact be made with Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary at DfE via Giles Wilkes.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress both meetings.

5. Forward look to March 2018 (Operations Report)

- 5.1. Regarding the workshop on 20th March, Chairs were asked to provide feedback on the proposed topics and the following were suggested for inclusion:
- An update on the LEP Review and the LEP collective response to the LEP Review.
 - The productivity challenge. It was agreed that it would be useful to see productivity levels by LEP area to see where it's working well. What does "well" look like? – is there any benchmarking information available? Is it being collected – if not, why not? LEPs would like to see the relationship between cause and effect. Chairs asked if Christine Gaskell could raise this at the next LEP Review meeting.
- 5.2. Regarding the proposal to hold the next management board meeting in Birmingham, it was agreed that given the timing of the LEP Review the next meeting (28th February) should be held in London and we will invite a minister (perhaps Jake Berry MP) to attend.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

6. LEP Network 2018/19 priority focus areas (Operations Report)

- 6.1. Warren drew Chairs' attention to pages 8 and 9 of the Operations Report and asked Chairs to provide feedback on the areas of importance for 2018/19.

ACTION: LEP Chairs to provide any comments to Warren Ralls.

- 6.2. It was suggested that housekeeping matters be moved to the top of the agenda for future meetings. Warren will continue to discuss future agendas with the meeting Chair.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

7. Any other business

- 7.1. Roger Marsh informed Chairs about a meeting of LEP Chairs which have key cities (21 in total). If there are any LEP Chairs who are not sighted on this and wanted to join the discussion, to please let Warren Ralls know.
- 7.2. Warren Ralls has been in discussion with the LGA about areas of shared importance in respect of industrial strategy. The LGA would like to hold a small roundtable in March 2018 with the Leaders of their relevant sub-groups and some LEP Chairs, at the LGA offices in London. Warren Ralls will circulate further information as discussions progress with the LGA.
- 7.3. LEP overlaps. As this is one of the areas to be looked at by the LEP Review, it was agreed that Warren Ralls should ask LEPs for their views to feed in to Christine Gaskell.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

The meeting closed at 1.15pm.

Next meeting dates (2017/18):

- 11am-1pm Wednesday 28th February 2018 (Westminster, London, venue TBA).

Future meeting dates (2018/19):

- 11am-1pm Tuesday 10th April 2018.
- 11am-1pm Tuesday 29th May 2018.
- 11am-1pm Tuesday 10th July 2018.
- 11am-1pm Tuesday 11th September 2018.
- 11am-1pm Tuesday 4th December 2018.
- 11am-1pm Tuesday 22nd January 2019.
- 11am-1pm Tuesday 26th March 2019.

(Meeting attendees are listed overleaf.)

Attendees:**LEP Chairs** (alphabetical order, by first name):

- Dr Ann Limb CBE DL (Chair, South East Midlands).
- Graham Wynn OBE (Chair, The Marches) - meeting chair.
- Peter Read (Chair, Thames Valley Berkshire).
- Peter Richardson (Chair, Derby Derbyshire Nottingham Nottinghamshire).
- Roger Marsh (Chair, Leeds City Region).
- Steve Hindley (Chair, Heart of the South West).

Government

- Simon Ridley, Director General, MHCLG.
- Gareth Davies, Director General, BEIS.
- Will Davis, Senior Policy Adviser, No.10 Policy Unit.
- Giles Wilkes, Special Adviser on the Industrial Strategy, No.10 Policy Unit.
- Ben Pledger, Deputy Director & Head of Local Growth Programmes, CLoG.
- Naomi Green, Head of LEP Policy and Local Growth Communications, CLoG.
- Callum Whittaker, LEP Policy Team Leader, CLoG.

LEP Network Executive:

- Warren Ralls, Director.
- Jennifer Gunn, Policy Manager.
- Jayne Atkinson, Administration Executive.

Guests:

- Claudia Harris, Careers & Enterprise Company.

Management Board apologies:

- Angus Knowles-Cutler (Deputy Chair, London Economic Action Partnership).
- Barry Dodd CBE LL (Chair, York North Yorkshire & East Riding).
- Christine Gaskell (Chair, Cheshire & Warrington).