

Summary Notes and Actions

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. Barry Dodd, welcomed everyone to the meeting, emphasising that this is an open meeting to LEP Chairs and participation is always welcomed and encouraged.

2. LEP policy update

Budget & Industrial Strategy

- 2.1. Ben Pledger and Naomi Green from the Cities & Local Growth Unit gave an update, with the caveat that announcements in the Chancellor's budget on 22nd November and the publication of the Industrial Strategy (scheduled for Monday 27th November) will have further information.
- 2.2. There is an expectation that decisions on Brexit will be announced before the end of the year and this will have an impact on EU Structural Funds.
- 2.3. Naomi said that the Mary Ney review has generally been very well received with many LEPs already implementing the recommendations. Naomi expressed her thanks to LEPs for their positive response to, and support of, this review. She also said that the intention is to co-create the guidance with LEPs, supported by the LEP Network.
- 2.4. The Industrial Strategy White Paper will be a significant document which will reference the LEP review. Clarity on LEP funding may be in the white paper but won't be in the budget.
- 2.5. In the coming weeks there are four round tables with LEPs taking place around the country (South West, South East, Midlands and North).
- 2.6. On Monday 27th November, it is their intention to issue a letter from ministers to all LEPs and LEPs are encouraged to speak to their Area Teams on Monday.
- 2.7. There is an Industrial Strategy launch event taking place on Monday evening which LEP Chairs have been invited to. (Warren Ralls also received an invite and is attending.)
- 2.8. Once LEPs have digested the policy statements in the Budget and Industrial Strategy, Chairs suggested that if LEPs had key points to make, the LEP Network could gather this information.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

LEP Review

- 2.9. The first meeting of the LEP Review Panel is taking place on 11th December with three ministers leading this panel: Jake Berry MP, Margot James MP and Andrew Jones MP. In addition to the four LEP round tables taking place, it was suggested that the Management Board meeting on 10th January 2018 could be a useful opportunity to build on this further.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to liaise with CLoG on linking in with the next Board meeting.

- 2.10. The timescale for the LEP Review is for one meeting in December, with two further meetings in January/February, aiming to conclude the Review by the end of February 2018.
- 2.11. Chairs thought the Review was a good opportunity to continue cementing relationships between private sector and local authorities. To help this, Government need to be clear on the role of LEPs.
- 2.12. Naomi said it would be helpful to have more examples of the LEP difference. The LEP Factor 2-pager is a good starting point. CLoG would welcome more 'stories' which highlight the LEP difference.
- 2.13. Examples of best practice on local relationships, and the LEP 'soft power' will be gathered, noting that relationships are personal and the LEP role has been quietly influencing behind the scenes.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to explore further with LEPs and coordinate.

- 2.14. Ben said that it is expected that the budget will highlight more steps on devolution and this may also feature in the White Paper. There will also be further detail emerging on Growth Hubs and the direction of travel for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 2.15. Regarding the confirmation of core funding, it is Naomi's hope that this will be communicated soon and Ben confirmed that the picture should be clearer in the next few weeks.
- 2.16. LEP Network will continue to communicate and share feedback with Government during this time. The LEP Network is not a lobbying organisation and it is not suggested that this should change, but there may be times when the LEP Network can be helpful by being more vocal on LEPs' behalf to get LEP messages across.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to review and communicate with LEP Chairs.

3. Future Funding LEP proposition (Shared Intelligence)

- 3.1. The draft report prepared by Shared Intelligence was circulated in advance of the meeting. Phil Swann from Shared Intelligence began by giving a brief overview of the report. Chairs were asked to provide their feedback.
- 3.2. It was noted that the report was initially commissioned with the purpose of looking at post EU funding, and the emerging UK Shared Prosperity Fund. When LEPs received the Review letter from Ministers, this then became the main focus of the work.
- 3.3. Chairs said that the October 2017 workshop had identified that there was a strong feeling for incorporation as the most appropriate model. It was noted that this is not ideal for all LEPs, it's not easy to change, and they need to be aware of the cost implications and legal obligations associated with being a company limited by guarantee.
- 3.4. Chairs suggested the report states that LEPs who are not a Limited Company are willing to have a discussion with Government on incorporation. Chairs asked for some clarity and guidance from government as to the preferred model.
- 3.5. Phil queried with LEPs if there was a preference to be seen as strategic bodies or delivery bodies? It was noted and agreed that LEPs are a mixture of both, acknowledging there is a sensitive balance.
- 3.6. Chairs asked for the Executive Summary to be strengthened with words like "leadership", promoting the unique input and impact which LEPs bring to their local communities.
- 3.7. Chairs asked for the report to strengthen the message about the intangible "soft power" which the private sector brings - convening and galvanising. It was noted that there is a lot going on behind the scenes which often can't be reported.
- 3.8. It was agreed that the executive summary will form the basis of LEP Network feedback to ministers (in the form of a letter), and will be helpful as a prompt by Christine Gaskell at the first meeting of the LEP Review panel.

Naomi Green, Ben Pledger and Phil Swann left the meeting.

4. Forward look to end-March 2018 (LEP Network Operations)

Warren Ralls drew the Board's attention to several items in the Operations report for which decisions were required:

- 4.1. Item 1.5, plan to hold the February 2018 Management Board meeting in Birmingham. At the previous meeting, Chairs had suggested holding a dinner the evening before with Andy Street and it was agreed that Warren should make contact with Andy's office to try and set this up. This dinner and board meeting will also be open to other Chairs in the Midlands.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

- 4.2. Item 1.6, future meeting dates. Warren asked Chairs to note the proposed dates for Management Board meetings in 2018/19 and to highlight any dates which are not suitable.
- 4.3. Item 12.10, publication of board minutes on LEP Network website. Chairs were asked to approve the last meeting minutes, highlighting any wording/sections which are sensitive and should be redacted.
- 4.4. Item 14.3, Shared Intelligence report on 'Future Funding'. Chairs replied feedback earlier in the meeting, see item 3 above.
- 4.5. Item 15, ministerial and LEP engagement. Chairs noted that with the imminent publication of the white paper and the potential for the LEP Review to be concluded by end-February that there is the need to engage further with Ministers. The following was agreed:
 - 4.5.1. Round tables with BEIS and DCLG Secretaries of State, mid-February 2018.
 - 4.5.2. LEP workshop and Chairs' dinner in late March 2018. It was agreed that LEP Vice-Chairs be invited to attend the dinner if the Chair is not available. The Network has looked at alternative venues for the dinners but the Chairs agreed that based on the information provided in the Operations paper, the RAC is still the best value and Chairs are happy to continue with this venue for the next dinner.
 - 4.5.3. LEP workshop and Chairs dinner, mid-October 2018.
 - 4.5.4. It was agreed that a parliamentary reception should be put on hold for now, and that the LEP Network can provide LEP Chairs with headline collective messages to use with local MPs.
- 4.6. Item 16.1, 2017/18 LEP Network Operational Budget. The Board noted and agree the revised budget position for 2017/18.
- 4.7. Item 17.3, company directors. It was noted that two directors are stepping down (Mark Reeve on 19th December and Barry Dodd in early 2018) which will leave just one Chair (Christine Gaskell) as a company director of The LEP Network Ltd.
 - 4.7.1. New appointments to the Management Board (and company directors) will be required for 2018/19, but Chairs agreed that this should be done after the completion of the LEP Review in case Chairs wanted to review the role of the Management Board.
 - 4.7.2. Regarding the current model of the Management Board, Warren agreed to bring a proposition to the Board meeting on 28th February 2018, by which time the Review will have completed.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

- 4.7.3. It was noted that Mark Reeve and Christine Gaskell are Warren's "go to" Chairs for ongoing operational matters and Graham Wynn offered to be an interim support Chair for Warren when Mark Reeve steps down. Barry Dodd and Mark Reeve were thanked by the Chairs on behalf of the LEP Network for their contributions to the Management Board.

5. AoB (including outstanding actions from the previous meeting)

- 5.1. No actions were outstanding from the previous meeting.
- 5.2. Chairs asked if it would be beneficial to invite Labour MPs to a future meeting and it was agreed.

ACTION: Warren Ralls to progress.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.

Next meeting dates (2017/18):

- 11am-1pm Wednesday 10th January 2018 (Broadway House (in the Lawrence Room), Tothill Street, SW1H 9NQ).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 28th February 2018 (Birmingham).

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

- Angus Knowles-Cutler (Deputy Chair, London Economic Action Partnership).
- Barry Dodd CBE (Chair, York, North Yorkshire & East Riding)
- Graham Wynn OBE (Chair, The Marches)
- John Mortimer (Chair, Swindon & Wiltshire)
- Mark Reeve (Chair, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough)
- Peter Read (Chair, Thames Valley Berkshire)
- Tim Wates (Chair, Coast to Capital)

Government (Cities & Local Growth Unit):

- Ben Pledger, Ben Pledger, Deputy Director & Head of Local Growth Programmes, CLoG.
- Naomi Green, Head of LEP Policy and Local Growth Communications, CLoG.

LEP Network Executive:

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

Guests:

- Phil Swann, Executive Director, Shared Intelligence.

Management Board apologies:

- Christine Gaskell (Chair, Cheshire & Warrington)
- Peter Richardson (Chair, D2N2)
- Roger Marsh (Chair, Leeds City Region)
- Steve Hindley (Chair, Heart of the South West)