

## SUMMARY NOTES AND ACTIONS

### 1. Welcome and Introductions.

- 1.1. Christine Gaskell welcomed everyone to the meeting, including those Chairs who don't normally join the LEP Network management board, emphasising that full participation from all LEP Chairs is welcomed and encouraged.

### 2. LEP review and transparency

- 2.1. Prior to LEP officials joining the meeting, Christine told the Chairs that she has been invited by Ministers to sit on the LEP Review Panel.
- 2.2. Following conversations with officials in the Cities & Local Growth unit, 'transparency' is the single biggest issue for ministers. HMG expects LEPs to self-regulate, to fully comply with the national Assurance Framework and they expect it to be embedded into LEP culture. It was noted that while annual conversations are an opportunity for concerns to be raised, LEPs are expected to be proactive in addressing this issue.
- 2.3. Chairs were keen to know what will come out of the review. It was noted that we need to be prepared to make an 'offer' to government along with any 'asks'.

Naomi Green and Robin Froggatt-Smith from CLoG joined the meeting.

### 3. Latest position from HMG officials

- 3.1. Naomi said that following the letter from Jake Berry MP and Margot James MP, the messages coming from ministers are very positive and that there is nothing negative to be read behind the review. HMG is seeking assurance that the right institutions are in place as we leave the EU and for the implementation of local industrial strategies.
- 3.2. The LEP Review panel is expected to meet twice (1.5 hour duration each) and have received a good level of interest and engagement.
- 3.3. It is not the intention for Jake Berry and Margot James to bring about large-scale reform and they want to retain the bottom-up model.
- 3.4. When asked how involved LEP Chairs would like to be, it was stressed that all LEP Chairs would like to be involved. Chairs asked for a timetable for capturing LEP views and an evidence base of LEP achievements and what LEPs can do to help government.
- 3.5. It was noted that dates for the panel meetings have not been agreed yet.
- 3.6. Chairs asked that Terms of Reference for the panel be drawn up. It was acknowledged and agreed that all LEPs are different and interpretation and implementation varies depending on format/structure and geography/location.
- 3.7. Acknowledging that there would be some challenges, it was agreed that the workshop on 18<sup>th</sup> October will be a good opportunity to gather information from Chairs and to feed back the views of government.
- 3.8. It was agreed that a questionnaire be circulated to all Chairs to begin gathering views and impact data, well in advance of 18<sup>th</sup> October. Naomi reiterated that CLoG is keen to capture all views which can be presented to ministers: examples of achievements and where LEPs perform well and highlighting those activities which need to be preserved.
- 3.9. It was agreed that there needs to be some clarity and understanding of what "more consistency" and "legal footing" mean. (References in the Ministerial letter to LEP Chairs.)
- 3.10. There also needs to be clear understanding of the purpose of the review. Ministers need to know where any recommendations from the review could bring negative impact to local economic growth. Naomi confirmed that the consistency in this context refers to assurance and transparency.

Phil Swann and Lisa McCance from Shared Intelligence joined the meeting.

#### 4. Future Funding proposition

- 4.1. Robin Froggatt-Smith gave an update. Thinking on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is in very early stages. It will be a cross Whitehall process, and involve a number of Ministers. CLoG is looking for LEP input to the policy development of this piece of work.
- 4.2. Phil Swann gave an introduction to [Shared Intelligence](#) explaining that they have worked with 10 LEPs, local authorities and also have close links with the LGA so they are very familiar with the landscape in which LEPs operate.
- 4.3. Phil took Chairs through a brief presentation of their understanding of the work brief. He asked Chairs for guidance as to where Shared Intelligence's focus should be, and what the ministers' letter means in terms of SI's role and focus.
- 4.4. SI believes that future funding needs to factor in the following key elements: (1) LEP structures and roles; (2) local relationship between LEPs and other stakeholders; and (3) future funding models.
- 4.5. Chairs stressed that any proposition must be a long-term solution and not a short-term remedy. LEPs need to understand how they fit into the structure to help. Naomi said that local industrial strategies are key to this and LEPs need to think about what a local IS can do which a SEP can't. She said that the role of local industrial strategies will become clearer when the industrial strategy is published in the autumn.
- 4.6. Consistency of language is important – no hierarchy. Business voice is key.
- 4.7. There are some immediate concerns, for example cliff edges such as funding for growth hubs.
- 4.8. Timing of funding and longevity of funding is very important, particularly for LEPs trying to recruit and retain staff.

Phil Swann left the meeting.

#### 5. LEP Network Operations – report and decisions

- 5.1. **Section 1.5, future board meetings.** It was noted that the next meeting will be held in London. The Board agreed that one meeting per year be held outside London and perhaps combined with another event such as a dinner the evening before.
- 5.2. **Section 5.4 Autumn Budget 22<sup>nd</sup> November.** The draft letter has been agreed and will be shared with all LEP Chairs to seek their approval to use their signatures. The letter will be sent to the Chancellor before the deadline of 22<sup>nd</sup> September.
- 5.3. **Section 9-15, work priorities.** The Chairs agreed that the outlined work priorities were the main areas for the LEP Network executive to focus on, and it was confirmed that nothing is missing from the list.
- 5.4. **Section 10.7, transparency.** Minutes of LEP Network management board agendas and minutes will now be published on the LEP Network website.
- 5.5. **Section 13.1, 18<sup>th</sup> October workshop.** Warren reminded Chairs that LEP Chairs had asked for a workshop type session with officials to discuss 'skills and jobs'. It's clear that some time needs to be given to industrial strategy, LEP review, future funding and transparency. The session on 'skills and jobs' will therefore be shortened to accommodate these topics.
  - 5.5.1. Chairs asked if 'Brexit' could be woven in to the afternoon's discussion, probably best placed under 'skills and jobs' rather than as a separate topic.
  - 5.5.2. Naomi reported that Melanie Dawes is very energised after the last management board meeting and believes that local industrial strategies and place are crucial to any response to Brexit.

- 5.5.3. It was stressed that any discussion on skills needs to be focused and clear about the outcomes. It was also noted that skills and skills shortages are critical to all LEPs but issues vary from LEP to LEP.
- 5.5.4. Chairs were broadly in agreement with the outline for the workshop. Warren confirmed that invited guests to the workshop will be director level officials with ministers invited to the post-workshop dinner.
- 5.6. **Section 14.4, parliamentary receptions.** Agreed.
- 5.7. **Section 15.6, new website.** The Board agreed that the executive start the process for identifying a new supplier, and that the form and function of the LEP Network's refreshed site to be guided by the outcome of the review.
- 5.8. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

## 6. Any other business

- 6.1. No points were raised.

The meeting closed at 1:00pm.

### Future meeting dates

- 11am-1pm Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 (QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 (QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 (Birmingham).

### Attendees (alphabetical order first name):

#### LEP Chairs:

- Angus Knowles-Cutler (Deputy Chair, London Economic Action Partnership).
- Christine Gaskell MBE DL (Chair, Cheshire & Warrington) *representing LEPs in the North West.*
- David Frost CBE DL (Chair, Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP)
- George Beveridge (Chair, Cumbria LEP).
- Mike Blackburn (Chair, Greater Manchester LEP).
- Roger Marsh OBE (Chair, Leeds City Region) *also representing Sheffield City Region LEP.*
- Steve Hindley CBE DL (Chair, Heart of the South West) *representing LEPs in the South West.*

#### Government:

- Naomi Green, Head of LEP Policy and Local Growth Communications, Cities & Local Growth Unit.
- Robin Froggatt-Smith, Head of UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Cities & Local Growth Unit.

#### LEP Network Executive:

- Warren Ralls, Director.
- Jayne Atkinson, Administration Executive.

#### Guests:

- Phil Swann, Executive Director, Shared Intelligence.
- Lisa McCance, Director, Shared Intelligence.

### Management Board apologies:

- Barry Dodd CBE (Chair, York, North Yorkshire with East Riding)
- Graham Wynn OBE (Chair, The Marches)
- Mark Reeve (Chair, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough)
- Peter Read (Chair, Thames Valley Berkshire)
- Peter Richardson (Chair, D2N2)