

Summary Notes and Actions

1. Welcome and introductions

Mark Reeve welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Board began by agreeing the points they wanted to cover with Baroness Neville-Rolfe.

2. LEPs and HM Treasury

- 2.1. Baroness Neville-Rolfe and Jackie Ward joined the meeting. Mark Reeve began by welcoming the Minister, briefly summarised the difference that LEPs have made, asked for the Baroness's views on devolution and the role of LEPs going forward, and how she could help LEPs have a closer engagement with HMT.
- 2.2. The Baroness expressed her admiration for LEPs and the way they bring together local government and the business community. She knows that LEPs have a wide range of expertise and networks; Greg Clark has ensured that there is funding available for LEPs; and local leaders understand the challenges such as skills, infrastructure, digital, R&D.
- 2.3. The Baroness observed that LEPs vary, and encouraged the Management Board to "ensure that all LEPs are strong". She noted that every LEP area has to deliver results and demonstrate value for money.
- 2.4. In the Minister's opinion, the business input is key and business representation on LEP boards is paramount.
- 2.5. The Minister was keen to hear more stories about the results obtained through the "soft power" role of LEPs - their working with partners, often behind the scenes.
- 2.6. The Baroness agreed to help with greater engagement between LEPs and HMT.

Baroness Neville Rolfe and Diego Duchi left the meeting.

Patrick White joined the meeting.

3. LEP response to Industrial Strategy green paper

- 3.1. Patrick White gave an overview of the paper outlining a proposed LEP Network response, which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Patrick suggested that the LEP Network response reflects the perspectives of LEP Chairs as local business leaders, with a positive statement about contribution. The response should focus on the areas most important to all LEPs and where LEPs can make a difference. His suggestions include:
 - Sector deals as drivers of productivity.
 - Infrastructure and housing.
 - Skills and technical education – this is proving to be the hardest area to get an overall LEP view.
 - Investment in science, research and innovation.
- 3.2. It was recommended that the LEP Network doesn't push for submitting a response before the budget. It was agreed that the response uses the language of the Industrial Strategy, while being assertive and confident in tone, highlighting our strong track record. Demonstrate what we have done with evidence to add strength to our assertions that we play a key role.
- 3.3. It was suggested that we emphasise the strong relationships with universities – many LEPs have vice-Chancellors on their boards.
- 3.4. It was agreed that we need to pick examples carefully, and use some messages from the conference.
- 3.5. Patrick will update the LEP Network draft response, test with a few LEP Chief Executives and Warren will share a further draft with the Board.

ACTION. Patrick White and Warren Ralls.

4. Transparency

- 4.1. Jacqui Ward said that a non-executive director is going to review the transparency of LEPs, which will be a good opportunity for independent analysis of the recent improvements which LEPs have undertaken.
- 4.2. The Management Board would like to hear about any perceptions from HMG and others on LEP performance so as to help and support LEPs to address any concerns.

5. Business Representative Organisations

- 5.1. Jacqui Ward gave a view that there seems to be an ongoing improvement in the relationships and collaboration with the BROs. However, LEPs must not be complacent, and should take concerns raised seriously and address them.
- 5.2. Jacqui said that Greg Clark is not interested in having a list of LEPs who are seen as a “problem” by the BROs. At a recent meeting with all the BROs, the Minister suggested the BROs should meet with the Chairs of the LEPs they have concerns with, and work together to resolve the issues.
- 5.3. Warren Ralls said that recent meetings with BROs have highlighted some areas. It was stressed as important that LEPs don’t compete with BROs. It was agreed that we need to understand what it is which the BROs think needs further work with LEPs. It was noted that Warren was meeting later in the day with the BROs, and it was suggested to draw up some “rules of engagement” with BROs.
- 5.4. There will be lots of good practice to share. The model which YNYER LEP uses has been noted in Whitehall as exemplary and we should share this as good practice with all LEPs. It was agreed that this would be an agenda item for the next Board meeting. It was also suggested that this be discussed with CEOs at the next meeting.

ACTION: Add to agenda for next Board meeting.

ACTION: Add to agenda for next CEOs meeting.

6. LEP Annual Conference

- 6.1. The Management Board was asked to feed back any comments on the draft LEP script by the end of the week (Friday 3rd March).
- 6.2. It was noted that there is a good story about the Midlands LEPs who are driving the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect, and this should be emphasised in the conference script.
- 6.3. The Board was told that sponsorship of c.£40,000 has been secured for the conference and dinner but total costs are likely to be in the region of c.£50,000. The Board agreed for the team to proceed on the understanding that the LEP Network has sufficient funds available to cover the shortfall.

ACTION: Chairs to look at script and LEP Network Executive to update.

The meeting closed at 1pm.

Future meeting dates

- 11am-1pm Wednesday 5th April 2017 (Hawking room, QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 31st May (Hawking room, QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 19th July (Hawking room, QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 13th September (Hawking room, QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 22nd November 2017 (Hawking, QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 10th January 2018 (venue tbc).
- 11am-1pm Wednesday 28th February 2018 (Hawking, QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE).

Attendees

- Mark Reeve (Chair, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough) *representing GCGP, New Anglia, South East Midlands and South East LEPs* - meeting chair.
- Christine Gaskell (Chair, Cheshire & Warrington) *representing LEPs in the North West*.
- Barry Dodd (Chair, York, North Yorkshire & East Riding) *representing YNYER, Humber, North East and Tees Valley LEPs*.
- Geoff French (Chair, Enterprise M3) *representing LEPs in the Greater Thames Valley*.
- Graham Wynn (Chair, The Marches) *representing LEPs in the West Midlands*.
- Baroness Neville-Rolfe DBE CMG, Commercial Secretary to the Treasury (and Diego Duchi, Assistant Private Secretary).
- Jacqui Ward, Cities & Local Growth Unit (and Lusine Manukyan).
- Patrick White, Metro Dynamics (part of meeting).
- Warren Ralls (Director, LEP Network).
- Mike Dennehy, (Communications Manager, LEP Network).
- Jayne Atkinson (Administration Executive, LEP Network).

Apologies:

- Peter Richardson (Chair, D2N2).
- Roger Marsh (Chair, Leeds City Region).
- Steve Hindley (Chair, Heart of the South West).