

Member Briefing on Local Enterprise Partnership Proposal

Purpose

On 29 June 2010 the Government Departments of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) issued a letter to all Leaders and Chief Executives of local authorities inviting them to work with Government to create local enterprise partnerships and help strengthen local economies. The [letter](#) asked for outline proposals to form Local Enterprise Partnerships by no later than 6 September 2010. A White Paper is due to be published in early autumn.

The purpose of this note is to brief Members on progress to date given that the letter from Government was published on 29 June with a deadline for responses of 6 September, falling outside of scheduled Cabinet and PDG meetings.

Background

Local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) will play a key role in promoting local economic development. They are expected to be chaired by a prominent local business leader and be 50:50 public/private. The partnerships have been proposed in response to the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). As well as taking on some of the current roles of the RDAs, Local Enterprise Partnerships could also take on some or all of the functions of Growth Delivery Vehicles and Sub Regional Economic Partnerships.

Local Enterprise Partnerships are expected to be key drivers of economic recovery and growth, rebalancing the economy towards the private sector and driving the delivery of infrastructure to support growth. It is important that the partnerships reflect current and future needs for investing in growth.

Preparing the proposal

The indication is that there will be very little public money to support Local Enterprise Partnerships. It is therefore vital that the creation of a local partnership is undertaken in the context of the wider funding and resource reviews and integrated with the wider partnership review work already commissioned by Cambridgeshire Together, to ensure maximum use is made of limited and diminishing public sector resources.

As a result, at the end of June, the Cambridgeshire Public Service Board appointed Mark Lloyd, Antoinette Jackson and John Hill as Project Sponsors with John Onslow, Acting Executive Director for Environment Services as Project Manager to develop a proposal for a local enterprise partnership.

Established on a 'Task and Finish' basis the Project Sponsors convened a Board to help steer the development of the proposal. Members include the Leaders of the local authorities in Cambridgeshire and representatives of business, social enterprise and the universities. John Bridge, OBE, CEO of the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce (covering Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) was asked to chair the Project Board. The Board brings together key agencies responsible for economic development in the area, including:

- Cambridgeshire County Council
- South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridge City and Fenland District Councils
- Greater Cambridge Partnership
- Cambridgeshire Horizons
- Chamber(s) of Commerce
- Business Representative Organisations
- Social Enterprise representative
- EEDA

In addition, the Government Office for the East of England and neighbouring local authorities have contributed to the discussion about the issues in order to inform the draft Proposal.

The project is using existing capacity within the agencies currently delivering economic development in the area as well as evidence already gathered, such as:

- Discussions within Cambridgeshire Together about partnership arrangements
- Local Economic Assessment
- Skills and worklessness plans
- Local and regional economic strategies
- Integrated Development Programme
- Community Strategies

This work takes place as part of the wider Cambridgeshire Together Partnership Review covering the themes of Economic Prosperity, Growth and Environmental Sustainability. There is also a strong link with work being undertaken by a task and finish group of the Directors of Strategic Planning, commissioned by the Cambridgeshire Public Service Board, to consider how we develop a future Spatial Strategy for Cambridgeshire, and work commissioned by EEDA on an Economic Vision for the future of the Cambridge Sub-region.

A multi-agency project team has been working on the outline proposal for a Local Enterprise Partnership under the supervision of John Onslow, Project Manager.

Consultation with business

Businesses in the area have been invited to respond to a consultation on Local Enterprise Partnerships circulated through 10 umbrella networks. These networks have a reach of thousands of businesses in the area. Comments were received from a diverse range of organisations including social enterprise, business and the voluntary and community sector.

In addition, a business event was held at the Hauser Forum in Cambridge on 6 August to discuss Local Enterprise Partnerships. 150 leading businesses from the area were invited to the meeting, which was attended by 60 companies. The event enabled local businesses to express their views and opinions and have an open discussion about Local Enterprise Partnerships. The list of businesses invited to this event was compiled by the economic development officers from each of the district councils and the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridge Network.

All of the views and opinions expressed through this early stage of consultation have been considered when preparing the proposal.

Outline proposal

The Project Board has considered options and is developing the proposal with the aim of ensuring that the functions of a Local Enterprise Partnership are those that maximise the potential of the area to lead national economic recovery and represent the functional economic geography.

During the development of the proposal, it was established that the travel to work areas of the cities of Cambridge and Peterborough, together with neighbouring market towns and communities, are a significant and distinctive economic geography that makes an important contribution to the UK economy.

The Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough proposal covers the local authority areas of Cambridgeshire, Peterborough City, Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. Beyond these administrative boundaries, the real economic geography extends into parts of North Hertfordshire, Uttlesford, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath; South Kesteven, South Holland, Rutland and King's Lynn & West Norfolk all of whom have been involved in developing this proposal.

Together, our 1.3 million population (estimated to grow rapidly to over 1.5m by 2031), around 700,000 jobs, and 60,000 major businesses generate approximately £30bn a year for the UK economy.

The Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership's mission will be to **“lead our area's growth to 100,000 major businesses and create 160,000 new jobs by 2025 in an internationally significant low carbon, knowledge-based economy.”**

As Chairman of the Project Board, John Bridge OBE, has already written to Government ministers urging them to support the creation of a Local Enterprise Partnership for Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough area, based on the interlocking economic areas of the cities of Cambridge, Peterborough and the neighbouring market towns and communities. See his letter [here](#).

The final proposal will be submitted to Ministers by the deadline of 6 September, and will be circulated to Members.

Next Steps

LEP proposals will be considered soon after submission and feedback on the proposals, plus guidance on the formal establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships, will be issued shortly afterwards.

In the meantime the project will turn its attention to planning the activities required for the establishment of a formal Local Enterprise Partnership including governance, scope and a communications strategy.

Questions

If you have any questions please contact Charlotte Taylor in the project team, in the first instance, at charlotte.taylor@cambridgeshire.gov.uk