

Hull & East Yorkshire LEP Board Report

Paper B - Chief Operating Officer and LEP Team Board Report 23rd November 2023

1. Summary

The LEP Team has continued to deliver on a wide range of various responsibilities to support the region's Economic Growth and Workforce Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan. New opportunities have been secured by the team, despite of the forthcoming closure of the LEP.

2. Recommendations

The Board to note the report.

3. Report

A) Strategic Issues

3.1 Growth Hub – Create Growth Programme - As the Board have been previously informed, the LEP was invited to bid for an additional programme of support for those businesses who are part of the creative sector (as determined by specific sector SIC codes). A DCMS grant of £9,500 was used to enable additional capacity provided by Kada Research after an appropriate procurement exercise.

3.2 Working with our small steering group, including both local authorities and the University of Hull, we are pleased to inform the Board of our success. This will provide an additional £520k of sector-specific business support to the Hull and East Yorkshire region. The programme focuses on those businesses which have capacity to grow, providing access to finance in addition to business support, advice, and mentoring.

3.3 This excellent result is particularly pleasing, as some other shortlisted MCA areas with much larger resources and teams participated in the competitive phase.

3.4 Jon Brunton, Growth Hub Manager will attend the national launch of the programme on 13th November 2023 at a Creative Industries conference in Manchester. Specialist services will be commissioned for delivery from April 2024. Well done to all involved.

4. Programme Delivery

4.1 The Board will receive today a separate report on the recent activity of the Investment Panel, bringing attention to the most recent recommendations of the panel.

4.2 Membership of this Panel can be found here: [Investment Panel » HEY LEP - Hull and East Yorkshire](#). All agreed grants and loans are published on the HEY LEP website, thus meeting the requirements of the Local Assurance Framework.

5. Export Update

5.1 HEY LEP continues to administer the Export Growth Grant (EGG) UKSPF project, which has already allocated 8 trade show exhibitor grants to Hull-based companies, with a further 3 new applications to be considered for approval at the November Investment Panel meeting. The total target for such grants is 12.

5.2 As a result of Hull CC re-allocating UKSPF Year 2 funds, HEY LEP has requested an additional £22K from Hull CC to support a further 4 companies attending a trade show between November 2023 and the end of March 2024.

5.3 The DBT Trade Partnerships Manager will work with HEY Growth Hub, Hull CC and East Riding Council and the Chamber of Commerce to coordinate a series of export-focused events and workshops in the coming new year.

5.4 The DBT Trade Partnerships Manager is also in conversation with Hull CC and East Riding colleagues around how a devolution trade offer might work for the Combined Authority in terms of developing an export plan, learning from the approaches taken by other NPH Mayoral Combined Authorities which are further down the devolution road.

6. **Governance** - The letters concerning the initial extension to the current appointments 31st March 2024 as per the board's request. This process can be revisited if needed.

7. HICP Legacy

7.1 Following on from the development and launch of the Humber Industrial Cluster Plan a number of Humber based organisations involved in decarbonisation (including the LEP) were invited an Enabling Net Zero launch event hosted by UK Research and Innovation in London. The event was held to launch a document produced following the learning from the 6 Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge (IDC) plans. The report, 'Enabling Net Zero: A plan for UK Industrial Cluster Decarbonisation' was produced

by research organisation Guidehouse and tackles the challenge of developing at least 4 low carbon clusters by 2030, and the world's first net zero industrial cluster by 2040. In discussing the report, it was highlighted that all 6 plans were ambitious with strong links back to enabling economic growth and providing additional energy security. They vindicated the industrial cluster focus as an effective way for the UK to meet its Net Zero commitments and highlighted the need to collaborate effectively within and across regions. Key findings include:

- **4 strategic pillars identified, namely:**
 - Attracting investment
 - Decarbonising supply chains
 - Innovating technology and knowledge exchange
 - Local community engagement
- **Key report recommendations:**
 - Provide clear market signals to facilitate commercial investment
 - Rationalise and expedite permitting for common infrastructure projects
 - Formalise an industrial cluster advocate with strong Government connections
 - Develop actionable measures and timings in relation to jobs and skills
 - Define and prescribe methodologies for estimating decarbonising impacts

8. The LEP Network Update – This month's activity highlights relevant to the LEP Board follows:

Government

- **DSIT** has launched a £60 million [Regional Innovation Fund](#) (RIF) that will boost support for 110 English universities in areas with lower levels of research and development investment. It will be delivered by **Research England**.
- The Government announced a [£118m "boost to skills funding"](#) that includes a new grant scheme and confirmation of a further 12 Centres for Doctoral Training in AI, funded through UKRI.

- The [Innovate UK AgriFood Accelerator](#) programme has been opened up to **AgriFood innovators** from underrepresented groups and those who have struggled to access funding in the past. This will help individuals to fast-track their ideas. Six training sessions will be delivered to support the development of business ideas. Application deadline is the 24th November 2023.
- The **Department for Education (DfE)** has [published information](#) about portable flexi-job apprenticeships in occupations that have shorter-term or less predictable working patterns. Portable flexi-job apprenticeships support apprentices in employment sectors where shorter-term or less predictable contracts are common. The pilot is running across thirty-seven standards in the following sectors:
 - Care services
 - construction and the built environment
 - creative and design
 - digital
 - health and science
 - sales, marketing, and procurement
 - transport and logistics

Engagement/Communications

- A further **integration meeting** took place this week with those LEPs who are on a clear and defined journey, (*including the HEY LEP*). It is clear from the discussions in both meetings that some issues remain common to all LEPs; primarily ***the role and remit of business boards*** and how are those going to remain **independent and influential**. As colleagues pointed out, if the role of the private sector is to be diminished through integration, then many senior business leaders may well walk away.
- As flagged in last week's update, the Network met with the **County Councils Network (CCN)** and it is clear *there are* common concerns. In short, the CCN clearly value the work *of LEPs*, as was reflected in their most recent report, but are worried the integration process could dislodge some of the good work which has gone before. They remain concerned at the lack of clarity around funding, both for the coming year and beyond. They are also concerned that the deadline set by government of March 2024 for transition, may prove problematic given the complexities involved in settling local arrangements. Again, they are keen to ensure *the retention* of the best of what has gone before and ensure the private sector remain vital.

- Attached at **Appendix One** is a copy of the response we have received from **Jacob Young MP, Minister for Levelling Up**, who replaces Dehenna Davison MP at DLUHC. As you will see, the Minister has confirmed the importance of ***embedding a strong independent business voice*** and to do so in a **consistent way** across the country. We will continue to press for the publication of guidance which we are calling on to directly address this point.
- The Network is keen to keep the channels of communication open with Shadow Ministers and so following the recent integration group discussions, we thought it would be timely to **provide an update to Jonathan Reynolds MP**, Shadow Secretary of State Business and Trade, *flagging* the issues around business board role and remit, future funding and the need for clarity around the process for settling local disputes.
- The LEP Network also plans to write to DfE to ask for clarity/flexibility around the **funding for skills programmes** which we currently operate (given the impending March 24 deadline). Concerns have been raised over whether LEPs have to take part in tendering processes moving forward, or whether funding will go to local authorities if LEPs have not integrated. To that end, the Network had a conversation with the **Careers and Enterprise Company** this week, and they have reassured us that they are happy to continue working directly with LEPs where they are continuing to exist as well as when they integrate. The Network will look to put this on record with DfE.
- The Network has also submitted a response to the **Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee** (EFRA) Call for Evidence on Education and Careers in Land-based sectors.”

9. **LEP External Communications** - Coverage in the media has included the following items:

[Learn about the next phase of the Goole Town Deal programme at forthcoming exhibition | Promoting the Humber's distinctive strengths to unlock the region's potential \(futurehumber.com\)](#)

Hull What's On - [Hull & East Yorkshire LEP launch new programme focused on student feedback & guidance \(hullwhatson.com\)](#)

Hull Is This - [Driving forward your interest in export? Discover more at the Export 4 Manufacturing Businesses event \(hullisthis.news\)](#)

B) LEP Operational Matters

10. Staff team update - Further team changes have occurred since the last LEP board meeting:

- The LEP's Service Support Assistant who had been on an 18-month secondment has returned to the team from 1st November. This additional resource is much welcomed to assist with the various administration tasks including those related to the close down of the LEP. Funds for this role were allocated in this year's budget.
- The Careers Hub Project Lead will start in post on 13 November. This role is funded from investment from the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board to pilot intensive careers support for school age students to encourage them to consider careers in the health and care sector whilst also working with adults who may be looking for a new career. This role is funded until August 2025.
- The success of the Creative Growth Programme Bid will require the future employment of a Project Manager who will provide the necessary coordination of activity, as well as reporting into DCMS and this board and all relevant administration. The post would be fully-funded by the DCMS funding award. This post is currently with HCC regarding evaluation and grading prior to being advertised. It is hoped that this post can be recruited to by March 2024 at latest.