

**Chief Executives' Group – North Yorkshire and York
19 June 2014**

Local Enterprise Partnership update:

Lessons learnt from the Local Growth Fund process and acting now to create a stronger partnership and better deal for a rural LEP

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is reflect on the process in developing our Local Growth Fund Submission, and learning lessons to ensure any subsequent bids are of the best quality.

2. The Local Growth Fund

- 2.1 The LEP Strategic Economic Plan and Local Growth Fund Submission has been well received by a broad range of partners, both locally and nationally, and has been complimented for its clarity and focus.
- 2.2 To a large extent, Government timescales, lack of guidance and changing expectations drove the process.
- 2.3 Whilst we do not yet know our Local Growth Fund settlement, we are able to reflect on the process of creating the plan and how collectively we could improve going forward.

A workshop is scheduled with Local Authority officers during July 2014 to provide comprehensive officer feedback.

Positives	Lessons to learn
Strong partnership with LA's. Working with LA teams to identify growth towns and support their growth ambitions ensured coherence with local plans and has resulted in a plan which spatially makes sense.	Early engagement is critical. Clarity over what is needed and when provides greater opportunity for good quality input. (it is accepted government timescales impacted on this)
1-1 sessions and challenge Boards worked well with local partners. It enabled the LEP to fully understand projects and their impact, whilst also providing robust challenge around deliverability.	Communication is never enough. Whilst we regularly met with LA officers, there was still a sense of not knowing, and deadlines prevented more updates and involvement. A more comprehensive communications structure is crucial to ensure progress is cascaded throughout partners. This is wider than the LGF bidding process including existing business support and skills activity.
Working with existing structures (Devolved Local Transport Body, Housing Board) provided support, capacity and expertise, whilst providing additional challenge. It also allowed the LEP to benefit from established, approved governance arrangements.	Best practise sharing is crucial. In a competitive environment we need to present the strongest possible investment cases. The vast majority of projects had been around for some time, yet there remained gaps in 'shovel readiness'
The secondment of Julian Rudd from Ryedale made a significant difference. Both in terms of his experience and knowledge and providing fresh challenge	Capacity – There is strong capability in partner organisations but strengths vary across the LEP area and there are some clear gaps. A better understanding of

to the LEP improving both the quality and presentation of our submission.	skillsets in the region and more collaborative working would increase quality and capacity. This is both for opportunities within the LEP but also across partners, to develop
Selby's positive engagement and direct involvement of the Developer in negotiations improved information flow and allowed for a stronger more flexible funding approach.	There is a need for better alignment of transport and regeneration in local areas. A closer relationship with developers and involving them in discussions with the LEP is useful.
Local Authority political engagement and support was good, with prioritisation being achieved in a business focused manner.	Aside from the projects in the LGF submission, there is a lot of development work needed to make future years priorities investment ready. Given the 18-24 month lead time for developing this, action is required now by local authorities, working with developers and agencies, to ensure strong future bids. Local authorities need regular combined working between their planning, housing and economic development staff to build the business case for future projects. The input of highway engineers is frequently vital.
	Skills – Whilst significant progress has been made since Annabel Jelley joined the team, skills remains an area which is complex and confusing. This is partly driven by the number of stakeholders operating in this field. There is significant scope for greater alignment and simplification of activity in this area.

Chief Executive feedback on the Strategy & Local Growth Fund Development process would be welcomed.

3. Proposals moving forward

- 3.1 The LEP is now being asked to consult on a wide range of issues, but locally and nationally. This requires significant resource from the Secretariat, however is an important part of the LEP role, in particular supporting development of Local Plans.
- 3.2 The LEP is currently recruiting secondments from Local Authorities to support the delivery of its investments and development of future priorities. This will significantly strengthen the LEP capability and capacity in key areas of the LEP agenda.

A verbal update will be given at the meeting

- 3.3 Looking forward to future funding opportunities, we need to consider how we operate as an economic geography to maximise our chances of investment. City Regions, including neighbouring Leeds, are developing Combined Authorities or Economic Prosperity Boards demonstrating strong local governance to government. It is possible that local authorities that fall within both this LEP and LCR LEP may join the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, depending on the outcome on current consultations regarding such bodies.

- 3.4 With Government funding being allocated on a competitive basis, we need to ensure the local governance and joined up thinking within the Y, NY & ER LEP can compete with these formal arrangements.
- 3.5 Whilst this LEP has created an Infrastructure Board to prioritise and lead on infrastructure investments, there is a lack of joined-up spatial planning and delivery across the LEP geography and also an ability to take on devolved powers from Central Government. Effective spatial planning requires, transport, housing and regeneration to operate together, developing long term planning and investments to maximise growth.
- 3.6 Currently operating across Local Authorities there are independent structures for housing (Housing Board), transport (Devolved Local Transport Body) and planning (Spatial Planning Board), although the Spatial Planning Board meets infrequently.
- 3.7 As a geography we need to consider how best to improve strategic spatial planning, delivery of growth and the ability to take on devolved powers from Central Government, developing a model which will maximise long term growth and attracting maximum investment into the LEP area. In doing this we must respect the tensions and concerns that will exist at an individual local authority level (particularly given the combination of two-tier arrangements and unitary authorities, coupled with overlapping LEP geographies). ***The views of Chief Executives on how best to improve inter-authority working and strategic arrangements across this LEP area would be welcomed.***
- 3.8 Potential different model for managing the governance across York, North Yorkshire and East Riding could range from:
- Combined Authority – transport and economic development
 - Economic Prosperity Board – economic development
 - Formalised Strategy Board – coordinating strategies for housing, transport, economic development & skills
 - A strengthened and revised Spatial Planning Board – Coordinating strategies for housing, transport & economic development
 - No change – continue with existing arrangements.

Within each of these models consideration would need to be given to how best the following functions or roles could be achieved:-

- Ability to take on devolved powers from Central government
- Strategic planning powers and the co-ordination of housing, transport and economic development strategies
- Strong and accountable governance
- More efficient and effective joint working

Recommendation: A small Task & Finish group of LA Chief Executives to develop proposals for better strategic spatial planning and joint working across the LEP geography