

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	20 th June 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director Economy, Enterprise & Property
PORTFOLIO:	Employment, Learning & Skills and Community
SUBJECT:	Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Transition Report
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update about transition from a Local Enterprise Partnership and Growth Platform to a more integrated organisation as part of the LCR CA against a backdrop of a Central Government review.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

i) **The Board note the update and receive a further update in 6 months.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **What is a LEP?**

A Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a locally-owned partnership between local authorities and businesses.

A LEP plays a central role in deciding local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and create local jobs.

There are 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships currently operating within England and are members of the LEP Network.

A LEP is overseen by a Board which is led by a business Chair and its board members are local leaders of industry (including SMEs), educational institutions, and from the public sector

The Position in the Liverpool City Region

The current LEP arrangements in Liverpool City Region provides the basis of partnership working and brings the insight of the private sector to local economic strategy and delivery.

The democratic mandate is provided by locally elected leaders and Mayors.

Its impact in informing and shaping policy interventions to benefit the economy is extensive with influencing the City Region's innovation and high growth priorities in the likes of health and digital manufacturing priorities and effective interventions in recent years can be directly attributed to the excellent work of the sector boards.

Their role of the review and transition is to “strengthen and simplify our regional ecosystem, creating a sustainable economy that reflects the needs of all our business community across Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.”

The LEP provides the Business voice and the Growth Platform delivers programmes on behalf of the LCR partners. For example Growth Hub and Inward Investment services.

Government Review

The government wrote to LEPs on 22nd March stating “The publication of the Levelling Up White Paper marks a turning point for local growth policy. It set out a series of ambitious missions to level up by, for example, increasing pay, employment, skills and productivity, ensuring every area has a globally competitive city, and offering every part of England a devolution deal that wants one within the new devolution framework. It was on this basis that a consultation to review the role of the LEP's commenced. Timeline set out below.

3.2 Locally the review consists of the following activities:

- Review of LEP/Business Boards, their membership, structure, engagement with the CA and servicing to ensure even greater inclusivity, better integration with CA and a sharper focus on the City Region's economic priorities and delivering the most positive impact on those areas
- Review of LEP related roles and services and where they continue, whether these can be efficiently integrated into the Combined Authority or should remain within the Growth Company.
- Reduction in LEP Core funding from £500k to £375 k for 2022/3 and no guarantee of future funding beyond this year.
- Whether to maintain the identity of the LEP within revised arrangements (LEPs will continue as separate entities in areas without Combined Authorities or similar devolved local arrangements)
- The future role, resourcing, sustainability, and governance of the Growth Company to further strengthen and simplify the City Region's Business Support Ecosystem – and its role related to Boards and Sectors.
- Maintaining the backing of the c 65 key businesses and institutions across the City Region who currently as “Growth Partners” provide over £500k of voluntary funding towards running of the Growth Company for the benefit of the City Region.

Timeline

3 June	Options Appraisal Completed
17 June	Draft Transition Plan prepared
1-28 June	Draft Transition consulted with LEP Sub Boards etc.
21-28 June	Draft Transition Plan consulted with LA Growth Directors
7 July	Draft Transition Plan approved by LEP Board
8 July	Draft Transition Plan approved by LA CEXs
22 July	Final Transition Plan approved by Combined Authority Board
29 July	Transition Plan submitted to Government

Next Steps of the Review

The review provides an opportunity to appraise business input into economic strategy development and delivery over the coming years. The review is open to public and private and provides the opportunity to ensure local views are heard.

As highlighted above the Chief Executives will have the penultimate say with Leaders having the final say on 22nd July 2022.

The LEP Board and sub-boards and other private sector stakeholders will be thoroughly consulted for individual and collective input during this process over the coming weeks

Board Members will be consulted in this process.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No further implications arising from this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No further implications arising from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Not applicable

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Changes to how LEPs are managed and how they operate should result in positive will link to how businesses can be supported in the future.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Not applicable

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Not applicable

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Not Applicable

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Not Applicable

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues relating to the contents of this report.

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Local Enterprise Partnerships: Integration guidance	On-Line	Paul Corner, Floor 5 Municipal Building, Kingsway Widnes.