

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 JULY 2014

MEMBER BRIEFING BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP MEMBER UPDATE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Member Briefing:

- To provide a factual update for Members about the work of Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to include information about the LEP structure, strategic plans and potential opportunities and information about developments since the last Corporate Business Scrutiny report in March 2012.

RECOMMENDATION FOR CORPORATE BUSINESS SCRUTINY That:

(A)	Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee give consideration to the update on the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in advance of the LEP funding settlement with government.

1.0 Background

1.1 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were set up by the Government to provide the vision, knowledge and strategic leadership needed to drive sustainable growth and job creation across natural economic areas. Hertfordshire LEP was formerly accredited by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) in March 2012.

2.0 LEP Structure

2.1 The LEP is led by a Board of twelve people. There are four from the Corporate Business sector, three from Local Authorities, two representing Small to Medium Enterprises (SME's), one from the Not for Profit sector and one from the Higher Education (HE) sector plus a Chairman who is also from the Corporate Business sector.

- 2.2 The structure includes four Programme Boards accountable to the LEP Board and responsible for the four key LEP themes of Enterprise and Innovation, Strategic Infrastructure, Skills and Employment and Investment and Advocacy. Each Programme Board is chaired by a member of the LEP Board.
- 2.3 The LEP also has two key lines of accountability via the Herts Leaders Group and the Hertfordshire Business Forum. These groups will play a scrutiny role in relation to the LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).
- 2.4 The LEP is supported by a team of six or seven Officers including the LEP Director and administrative functions. Each Programme Board has designated Officer support and there is also a lead Officer for European Union Funding.

3.0 Strategies

- 3.1 The LEP has submitted two key strategies to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).

3.2 Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

Herts LEP has submitted a long term plan to government which sets out a blue print for economic growth in Hertfordshire. The plan calls on government to enter into a local growth deal with the LEP which includes proposals for investment in key transport schemes and a business growth package to support private sector jobs growth in 2015. Any funding agreed by the government would be made available through the Single Local Growth Fund which is largely a capital funding stream. The LEP are expecting a response from government in July 2014.

- 3.3 The SEP has defined three economic Growth Areas in Hertfordshire linked to the principal road and rail corridors, the M1/M25, the A1(M) and the M11/A10 corridors. The latter incorporates the East Herts District.

3.4 European Strategic Investment Fund (ESIF)

The LEP has received a £61.5 million allocation from the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014 to 2020. The LEP's ESIF strategy, which was submitted to government in January, has now been approved. The LEP's ESIF

priorities are innovation, SME competitiveness and low carbon economic development and skills. It is expected that the LEP will be in a position to commission and approve projects in early to mid 2015 after receiving final agreement from Westminster and Brussels.

4.0 Opportunities

4.1 Future investment will therefore be subject to the Strategic Economic Plan settlement with government as well as the result of projects identified through the European Investment process. Whilst there are no guarantees of funding for projects in East Herts, the SEP does make reference to potential opportunities in the M11/A10 corridor and in the District. These include –

4.2 A package of schemes providing station access improvements and upgrades to the network to improve resilience for Bishop's Stortford, Broxbourne, Hertford East and Rye House.

4.3 Later schemes, some of which are major projects for Hertfordshire, including Little Hadham Bypass, A602 improvements, A10 network resilience.

4.4 A long term venture to explore options in relation to Bishop's Stortford because the town is in the process of accommodating significant growth.

4.5 Development of a Growth Hub to deliver business networking and advice and provide signposting and access to business support across Hertfordshire.

4.6 A commitment to maximise the economic benefits linked to the planned growth of Stansted Airport.

4.7 Additionally LEP Officers are in discussion with Planning Policy Officers from East Herts with regard to possible LEP funding for technical studies that will support the District Plan.

5.0 Previous LEP investment in East Herts

5.1 The LEP has already provided funding to enable some East Herts projects to proceed. These include -

5.2 Provision of £35,000 support to the My Incubator business incubation and advice programme operating from the Ware

Campus of Hertford Regional College. This programme is managed by Wenta. The sum matched a contribution made by East Herts Council.

5.3 Match funding of £4,000 for economic research to support East Herts Council's application for further Rural Development Programme funding.

5.4 Funding of £2,000 to support website development for the Bishop's Stortford Chamber of Commerce "Business Stortford" project.

6.0 East Herts Participation in the LEP

6.1 East Herts Council participates in the LEP as follows:

6.2 LEP Board Member – Councillor Tony Jackson

6.3 Investment and Advocacy Programme Board Chairman-
Councillor Tony Jackson

6.4 Enterprise and Innovation Programme Board Member – Paul Pullin (Economic Development Manager)

6.5 European Strategic Investment Fund (ESIF) Shadow Governance Group – Chairman Councillor Tony Jackson, Group Member Paul Pullin.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

<http://www.hertfordshirelep.com/>

Link to Herts LEP website

<http://www.hertfordshirelep.com/Publications/>

Link to Herts LEP Newsletter

<http://www.hertfordshirelep.com/growthplan.aspx>

Link to Herts LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

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