



## **Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited**

**Private and Confidential: No**

**Date:** Wednesday, 21 June 2023

### **Shaping a Lancashire Business Board**

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#### **Executive Summary**

The following is a list of suggested starting assumptions for what a future 'Business Board' for Lancashire might look like, to replace the current Lancashire LEP. The intention outlined with the March budget statement, that the government was minded to stop funding Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) at the end of the current financial year and transfer their functions to local democratic structures, has already prompted some areas to announce their plans for this transition, with business boards being formed in Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region.

This paper starts to set out what the function and form of any future Business Board for Lancashire might look like. This thinking is needed now, both to inform the process of integrating LEP functions within current and future local government structures and to maintain the momentum and reach of the LEPs existing board, specialist functions and sector and project groupings.

This paper will be shared with: LEP Chair, LEP Company Members, and LEP Board, between 23rd May and 21st June.

#### **Recommendation**

LEP Board Members are asked to provide feedback and comments on this report, which will be fed into a further, more detailed iteration. The Board are asked to focus on whether they agree with all the proposals below and whether there is anything they feel is missing.

## **Background and Advice**

### **Thoughts on the development of a successor Business Board Lancashire LEP Integration – Key Assumptions testing**

#### **Function**

- Functions that businesses and a business board are uniquely / especially well placed, and thus should continue, to lead on:



- Intelligence (capability & capacity) to support, and resource to receive Inward Investment enquiries
- Ongoing insights from industry / sectors on what is needed from public intervention
  
- Functions that overlap with existing Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) functions, and thus should be fully integrated into as county-wide services (assuming they are held to account to be done well):-
  - Inward Investment strategy
  - Delivery of Financial products (including Growing Places Fund)
  - Links into key networks
  - Funding identification and bid writing
  - Delivery Strategies / Action Plans
  - Sector specific support
  - Local leadership in Economic Development discussions
  - Destination marketing (including co-ordination for a potential Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP))

## Principles

- The Business Board for Lancashire will be an advisory board, using the 'soft power' of a strong private sector voice to influence economic policy.
  
- The Board will draw on the key private sector competencies to inform, stimulate and scrutinise the delivery of local policies intended to grow the Lancashire economy. It will offer real-time intelligence, commercial awareness and access to a business community which is keen to contribute and give back to the wider development of Lancashire.
  
- Where commercial solutions and concerted, business led activity can deliver solutions the Board will be free to promote and progress this activity. In contrast to the initial functions of the LEP, the Business Board will have a lesser role in terms of bids for and use of public resource. (I.e. it has no direct control of resources, but is the voice of business in Lancashire so can publicly and loudly lobby if not felt to be consulted. AND it should be in the democratic interest (of LCC / a CA) to shape economic policy based on the needs of business (represented by this board) alongside professional expertise.)
  
- The business board is Public Sector's opportunity to have a co-ordinated and resourced feedback mechanism from a core body and enabler of its local economy.
  
- Covers all geographical Lancashire
  
- NB Public Sector MUST take stronger leadership role in Economic Development vision for Lancashire and ensure this is tested with Business Board challenge and feedback – in order to establish / maintain faith from



private sector in UTLA/CA's ability to deliver. (Simplify funding and budgeting to establish greater and more deliberate (not reactive) long term planning across all ED delivery.)

### **Resource**

- Specific Business Board resource should be limited to co-ordination and admin support (likely 1-2 posts at Grade 8 – maximum £100k annually).
- All other resource should form part of overall Economic Development (/prosperity) executive function.
- In order to better respond to the needs identified by the existing LEP board, new resource focus should be formed (within the current ED team) around:
  - Inward Investment
  - Funding intelligence & bid writing
- Board roles all voluntary.
- 2 current remaining LEP posts will be transferred to LCC structures.

### **Governance**

- Called a 'Business Board' or similar (no longer a Local Enterprise Partnership).
- This is an advisory board with terms of reference but not a formal separate legal entity.
- Composition of board:
  - As far as possible, to reflect the diversity of our borough in relation to: gender, race, geography, size and type of organisation (and all other protected characteristics).
  - Focus towards representing 'future' of county rather than the past.
  - Only private sector (not councillors, universities etc; but – other forums to exist to pollinate between these groups).
  - Must have a registered business within Lancashire.
- No accounts are held directly by the board. Any costs to be supported and managed by LCC Economic development.
- Board forms a 'pyramid' structure of one main business board with wider consultation / sub groups where required (to allow reach but also efficiency.)
  - LCC / CCA only provides resource to main Business Board (and potentially some sub-boards)



- A Local Visitor Economy Partnership Board (LVEP) could be formed as one of these subgroups to better align tourism activity with wider economic development priorities
- Structure:
  - Monthly board meetings – half as just the board to focus on key advice / lobbying issues / crossover; half with suite of key council officers (both tiers) to ensure business needs fed back;
    - E.g. ED / Planning / Skills / Public Health etc
    - Work an ongoing 'You said, We did' reporting system from officers to show how feedback is being incorporated into policy.
- Delivery bodies (LCC / CA) agree to be held to account / justify strongly if they go against advice of board (with rationale why i.e. resource limitations).
- Standalone trade bodies exist / can form whether public sector support them or not. Becomes the decision of the Business Board representatives of that topic / sector, where and whether to include those groups in their feedback.

### **Outcomes**

- Quarterly sentiment surveys with a) whole business community, and b) all key stakeholders to track / aim for agreement that:
  - Local policy reflects business needs
  - I can see where my input has translated into policy
  - I understand, where my input has not been translated into policy, why that is
  - I know where to share new ideas & challenges
  - Lancashire leaders understand my industry and are doing what they can to help my business thrive.

### **Next Steps (June 2023)**

- Org chart illustrating exactly where functions that sat in / partly in the LEP, would now sit within LCC.
- Full mapping of past, current and future functions of the LEP to ensure no delivery area is left behind.
- Paper detailing how LCC Economic Development functions will adapt to better incorporate more integrated working with business.
- Full terms of reference drafted.
- Full proposed meeting schedule drafted.
- Timelines produced of move from current structures to proposed structures.
- If welcomed, workshops with all key stakeholders to create positive joint vision for the new Business Board and wider LCC Economic Development team.



### List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A