



Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

Private and Confidential: No

Date: Wednesday, 20 September 2023

23/24 mid-year Business Plan Delivery Update

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Executive Summary

Given the LEP boards' prior instruction that the company should sustain strong and significant levels of activity in 2023/24 despite the government's imminent withdrawal of funding, this report details how the LEPs main activity programmes are progressing.

Recommendation

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board are asked to note and endorse the report.

Background and Advice

The LEP's revenue budget of circa £1.3m in 2023/24 allows the structure to remain "open for business" and to deliver activity and projects which are well aligned with the emerging Lancashire 2050 framework and discussions on devolution to advance a shared economic vision for the county.

1. Income

- a. The reduced DLUHC grant income of £250,000 has been paid to the LEP and is available for use in the current financial year.
- b. The interest and fees from Growing Places Fund (GPF) loans and the interest on the balance of GPF funds held on deposit by the County Council (less their legitimate costs set out in the Accountable Body Agreement) are also on target.
- c. Local Authority match funding from Lancashire's three upper tier authorities has been invoiced, but there remain some outstanding contributions from previous years.



2. Staffing

Board were keen that the LEP built on 22/23 staffing levels to create additional capacity for delivery in temporary contracts until March 2024. The following changes have been made to address.

- a. LEP co-ordinator cover (3 part-time secondees) – These are now in place respectively providing cover on the closure of Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund grants, co-ordination of National Cyber Force local activity workstreams and LEP integration.
- b. Additional research capacity 1 FTE now fully charged to LEP - We now have a Grade 12 Senior Project Officer working within this roll, providing continued support for the Skills Hub, developing key performance indicators for the suite of economic prosperity activity within Lancashire and support work to establish the Lancashire Data Observatory.
- c. 5 Additional Interns on Business Finance and Internationalisation
- d. Additional Grade 8 Project Officer – recruitment process initiated.

3. Continued Discretionary spend on projects

- a. Strategic Framework Delivery £21,592
- b. Project Support £154,908
- c. Marketing £77,019
- d. Conf and Events £8075
- e. Restructuring £33,659

4. Priority Projects

- a. **National Cyber Force - £425,000 (pays for development of Innovation Hub concept £350k, Industry Engagement £75k)**

A phase 1 commission has been placed with Plexal to continue this work whilst further commissions are being placed via open procurement routes. This work will build on the initial scoping piece for an Innovation Hub envisioned to be developed adjacent to the new NCF Headquarters at Samesbury. The initial study conducted by cyber specialists Plexal, identified a strong rationale for such a facility to act as a touchpoint for local industrial collaboration both with NCF and their supply chain. It also considered the options to co-locate with other anchor tenants and amenity uses for NCF.

This additional commitment of funding, will allow further phases of work to bring the plans for this building to full, "Green Book" business case and with sufficient detail for initial planning consideration (albeit that the EZ remains subject to streamline planning via a Local Development Order).



Plexal and LEP retained contractors on PR are also supporting the Lancashire Cyber Festival in November, taking a leading role on Business Engagement and Supply Chain event at Stanley House.

- b. **Inward Investment and Internationalisation - £150k (pays for Capabilities mapping £50k, External Marketing Proposition £50k, refresh Invest in Lancashire web £25k, Internationalisation Intern £25k)**

The LEP's role in leading and supporting Lancashire-level inward investment and internationalisation initiatives seems uncontested, effective and well-received. This work will allow Lancashire to streamline and agree its outward facing propositions, building this from a in-depth knowledge of where our capabilities lie and how these dock into emerging opportunities and sectors.

LEP funded work has now started to refresh both the Invest in Lancashire and Visit Lancashire websites, including the ambition to create a single front door for investment enquires and a single portal representing Lancashire's ambition around cyber.

We are conscious that these portals only represent one element of the process of securing investment and have also initiated complementary programmes to strengthen and focus our enquiry handling process and to ensure propositions in terms of the property offer, quality of life materials and economic case for investment are all as competitive as they should be.

We are also working with local partners to update the This is Lancashire video, which is now five years old.

- c. **Sector work development - £180k (pays for, Bid awareness and writing £120k, AEM support £60k)**

The LEPs sector groups have been a real driver for activity in the last two years. At their workshop they identified a need for capacity to spot funding opportunities and an ability to access specialist bid-writing skills. This resource will allow this to take place.

- d. **Lancashire Data Observatory - £200k**

Working alongside our local authority partners, LEP resource will help catalyse the concept of a Lancashire Data Observatory, to understand what existing and novel data sources tell us about the current and future trends within the Lancashire economy, to monitor performance of existing thematic activity and to develop business cases for activity as a devolution deal develops.

- e. **Devolution / CCA Project Development £109,416**



The balance of the LEP's revenue budget will be applied to the process of influencing and supporting the development of Lancashire's initial and subsequent rounds of devolution deals, landing the policy development work and private sector work of the Board within this landscape.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
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