

# England's LEPs

## A New Deal

lep  
network



## Foreword

The future role of LEPs has been under review since March 2021, with the Government considering what functions they might provide post-pandemic that best supports its policy aims. As business led local partnerships, we are keen to ensure that local businesses continue to have a clear strategic input in driving national priorities and regional economic recovery, as well as providing access to high quality, locally tailored business support services.

This submission sets out the future value that we believe evolved LEPs, through our unique partnership and convening power, will bring to the table, and which strongly supports the Government's priority policy areas in as cost efficient a way as possible. For us that means a big focus on translating national Levelling Up ambitions at the local level, enabling local businesses to transition to Net Zero at pace, building the future talent pool of local skills that business needs, helping local firms exploit international trade opportunities as part of a global facing Britain, investing in the local innovation and R&D that will help bring all this about, and building the infrastructure that will connect areas and visibly level up every region across the country. In order to do this effectively we are seeking a long lasting settlement that secures our core funding and which provides the capital and revenue that our evolved roles will require.



**MARK BRETTON**  
CHAIR  
THE LEP NETWORK

# England's LEPs: A New Deal

England's Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are evolving to deliver on the Government's Levelling Up ambitions and to implement the Plan for Growth and Net Zero ambitions at a local level. Business leaders are already driving that evolution, looking at the role and responsibilities of LEPs – taking the best of the past and making it fit for the future, but are keen to go further and faster. This will require A New Deal.

## LEPs – A Proud Past and a Focused Future

WHAT WE BRING	WHAT WE WILL DELIVER	WHAT WE NEED
Tried and tested collaboration and partnership between businesses, BROs, local government, third sector and education leaders	Focusing on local conditions, we will make Levelling Up a reality all around the country, sharing opportunities and rewards more widely	An evolved role, with strategic responsibilities matched by a long-term funding settlement and access to new funding streams such as UKSPF
Private sector independence and expertise, challenging local decision-making and delivering funding into vital projects	Reflecting local intelligence and priorities, we can ensure the local implementation of the Government's Plan for Growth and Net Zero ambitions	Renewed support for LEPs' vital convening role especially around private sector perspectives with clear ownership at Secretary of State level, one champion in the Cabinet
Clear, tailored and ongoing support for SMEs at a local level driven by business boards, who know what business needs	Based on our local knowledge, we can identify and support local sector strengths, turbocharging their growth	A total of £106 million per annum over the next three years (£76m for LEPs' core costs; £30m for Growth Hub services), as well as funding for the LEP Network. This would fund core running costs and could contain an element of match funding, but importantly would allow LEPs to deliver consistency, collaborative working and to focus wholly on delivering the Plan for Growth. Additional funding, including access to UKPSF, would be required for delivery of defined projects

LEPs can bring the very best of bottom-up solutions to the Government's top-down ambitions. With more than a decade of understanding and working within local areas, LEPs are ideally placed to help ensure the Plan for Growth and Net Zero are delivered right around the country, including through developing our skills base.

We want to work hand in glove with a strong, supportive Government to use the power and might of the private sector to tackle the issues most important to this country. That necessarily means focusing relentlessly on building back better from the pandemic in a post Brexit world. That necessarily means A New Deal for LEPs.



# LEPs and the Plan for Growth

The Government's Plan for Growth set out how its planned investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation would help it pursue growth that levelled up every part of the UK, enabled the shift to Net Zero and supported its Global Britain ambitions. Like every good plan, the Plan for Growth needs to be delivered and that requires bodies which can implement it at a local level. **LEPs are the coalition of the willing that provide the answer to that delivery challenge.**

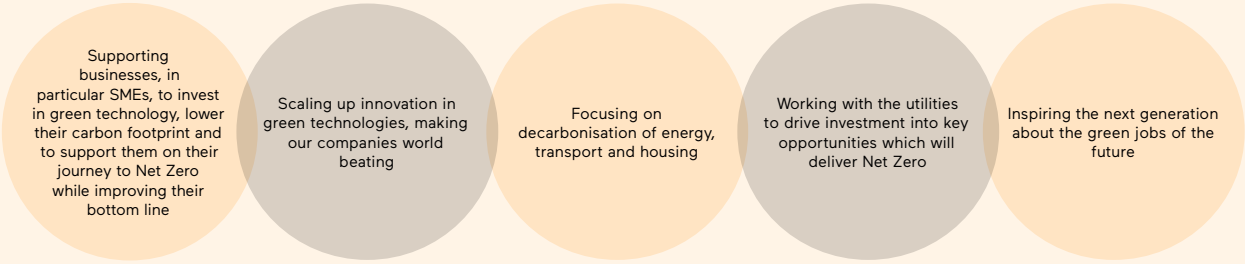
With well over a decade of working collaboratively with Government on its most significant challenges, of tailoring solutions to local circumstances and of bringing private sector input to help overcome issues, LEPs stand ready to tackle this most pressing of priorities: to build back better. Building on the successful LEP Growth Hub model, we could franchise a model of consistency, providing a one stop shop for business in pursuit of excellence.

The six themes of the Plan for Growth are ones which LEPs have been considering, and working on, for some time. As such, LEPs – with a new mandate and funding settlement – are ready to make progress on each and every one of them.

## Levelling up



## Net Zero



## Global Britain

- Supporting local businesses, helping them to become investment and export ready
- Collaborating with the Business Representative Organisations to bring a cohesive business voice
- Working with DIT and local partners to promote local areas on the global stage
- Bringing business and academia together to drive thought leadership creating new markets and opportunities
- Identifying and promoting inward investment opportunities to global investors
- Bringing sector interests together across the country to drive innovation, efficiency and create global opportunities
- Developing relationships with markets near and far as part of the UK's global role

## Skills

- Ensuring local skills reflect the needs of local economies helping deliver the Plan for Jobs
- Using Skills Advisory Panels to drive evidence-based change in the local skills system, working closely with business in their current and future needs
- Working with trailblazers and development fund pilot areas to embed business knowledge and experience
- Developing partnerships and networks, such as the Digital Skills Partnership, to drive improvements in local performance
- Leveraging private sector investment into local skills development
- Using our unique convening powers with FE, HE and apprenticeship providers to ensure businesses have the skills they need, shaping courses so that they are relevant and helping local people realise their ambitions

## Innovation

- Driving innovation and adopting new technology among local businesses remote from existing innovation landscape
- Integrated working between the private sector and universities, FE colleges, Catalysts and Catapults
- Driving R&D, with more than 300 collaborations with HE institutions and FE colleges all around the country
- Local sector expertise which supports firms developing new technology in future industries

## Infrastructure

- Unlocking private investment to transform local economies
- Working with Government to deliver gigabit capable broadband to every home and business, providing the connectivity to guarantee competitiveness and inclusivity
- Ensuring local businesses are feeding into infrastructure plans and development
- Ongoing delivery of priority programmes such as Local Growth and Getting Building Funds, Town Boards, Enterprise Zones and Freeports

### Our Infrastructure Pipeline

LEPs have been at the forefront of identifying the infrastructure required at a local level, bidding for funds and delivering projects for more than a decade. We have successfully executed projects worth tens of billions of pounds up and down the country, helping ensure our infrastructure requirements are met and that we are fit to face the future. **For example, the impact and value for money delivered through LEPs central role within the Local Growth Fund has been widely acknowledged and welcomed.**

We continue to oversee the delivery of funds worth hundreds of millions, in the process leveraging £25bn of private sector investment through the Local Growth Fund, the Getting Building Fund, the Growing Places Fund and more schemes besides, closely monitoring delivery and impact.

## LEPs and The Future of Business Support

Over the last ten years, LEPs have operated as the “go to” organisation for business advice at a local level, with support services provided through the Growth Hub network. More than two million businesses a year have been engaged through this network, but it has perhaps never been as vital to the success – or the survival – of British businesses as it was during the pandemic and as we transitioned out of the EU. That engagement provided a vital source of intelligence to government enabling policies to adapt to business needs. Tried and trusted local partners will be key to giving business the confidence to meet the challenges ahead.

Undoubtedly a core part of the Growth Hub network’s offer needs to be consistent nationally, with businesses able to benefit from the same quality of advice and service no matter where they are. But some services need to be tailored to the local area, reflecting the strengths, weaknesses and specific needs of the local economy.

The future of Growth Hubs is one where local businesses benefit from the best of both worlds – a core, consistent offer available nationwide, with some solutions designed and delivered locally, reflecting local requirements. Fresh investment will allow the services available to local SMEs and other businesses to be the very best on offer anywhere in the world, reflecting the Government’s ambition to level up our country and build back better from the pandemic.

## The Evolution of Growth Hubs

ONGOING	NEW
Joined up, tailored business advice	New consistent offer across country – with bespoke local programmes and local intelligence driving national response
Local solutions to tackle specific problems	Leading recovery by supporting our entrepreneurs
Extensive peer to peer networks	Working with British Business Bank to widen access to finance
One to one advisory services	Collaborating with the BROs, respecting we have different but complementary roles
Improving leadership and management	Expansion of peer to peer networking and a resolute focus on skills
Supported over 2 million businesses a year	Enhanced offer on trade and investment as part of Global Britain

## LEPs and the Skills Agenda

Local skills need to reflect the needs of local economies. We have been working hard at the local level for many years to bring business to the forefront of tackling our nation’s skills challenges. We have the record, the relationships and the resolve to help us respond to the shockwaves of the pandemic and to build back better:

10+ years of success on skills, bringing the voice of business to local design

Operated with agility and at pace in response to Covid

Offer unique partnership with schools – focusing on green jobs of the future

Co-funded 3645 Enterprise Advisors working with 3010 schools in partnership with the Careers & Enterprise Company

Proven record of bringing business alongside HEIs and FEIs

Reliable link between training providers and local businesses

Successful at leveraging private investment

Tailoring skills solutions to local areas, relying on collaboration and partnership



# LEPs – Promoting Competitive Advantage





If our country is going to build back better from the pandemic, to spread opportunity and to level up our economy, we need to make sure we are backing the success stories of tomorrow.

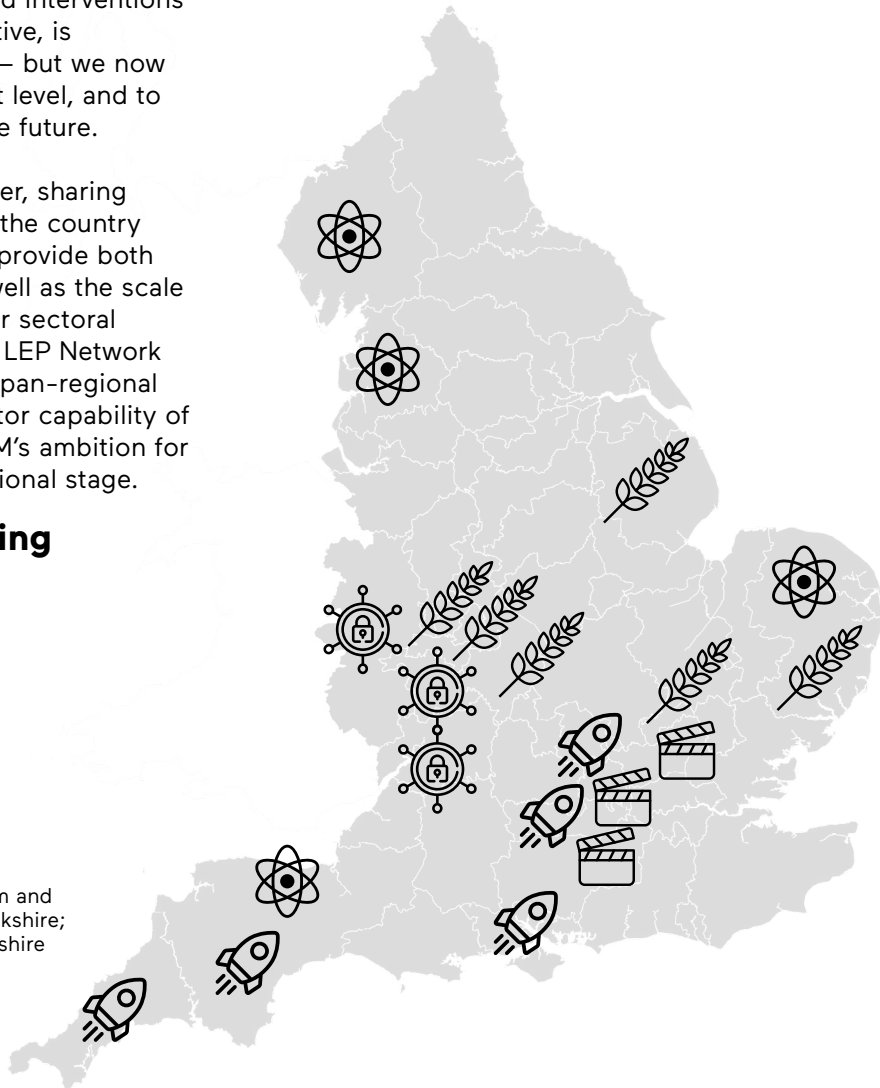
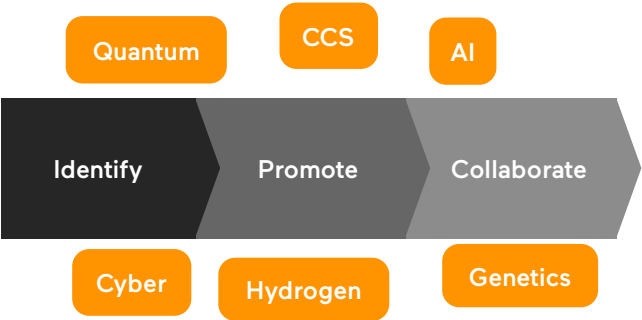
We are already an economic leader in many respects – but the need to maintain existing strengths, or develop new ones, is more pressing than it has ever been. Many of our leading sectors, whether current strengths or industries with future potential, are rooted in local areas and have specific local needs.

That is where LEPs play a vital role – providing support for innovative companies, helping them commercialise new technologies and developing sector clusters. Providing the link between national institutions such as Catapults, Innovate UK and local business. The identification of vital local sectors, followed by the delivery of locally-led interventions which will make these sectors more competitive, is something which LEPs are already pursuing – but we now have a chance to take this activity to the next level, and to make this a central thrust of LEPs’ work in the future.

As part of this, LEPs can and do work together, sharing experience and expertise with other parts of the country with similar sector strengths. Only LEPs can provide both the local knowledge and understanding, as well as the scale and partnership working, which can make our sectoral ambitions a reality. Our transformed national LEP Network provides the glue to bring together a unique pan-regional collaboration with our partners to create sector capability of global significance, like helping realise the PM’s ambition for the UK to be a science power on the international stage.

## Examples of collaborative working

-  **Space:** Cornwall and Isles of Scilly; Heart of the South West; Oxfordshire; Buckinghamshire; Solent
-  **Nuclear:** Heart of the South West; Cumbria; New Anglia; Lancashire
-  **Cyber & Defence:** The Marches; Worcestershire; GFirst
-  **Food chain development:** Greater Birmingham and Solihull; Black Country; Coventry and Warwickshire; Greater Lincolnshire; New Anglia; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
-  **Creative Film Media** Buckinghamshire; Hertfordshire; Enterprise M3



# LEPs Building Back Better

The pandemic has given us an opportunity to think again about how our country, and our economy, function. As we look to build back better, we have a chance to do things differently. But if this is going to be better – and not just different – then we must retain the best of what came before, as well as making changes. We must use what was working as a springboard to accelerate growth.

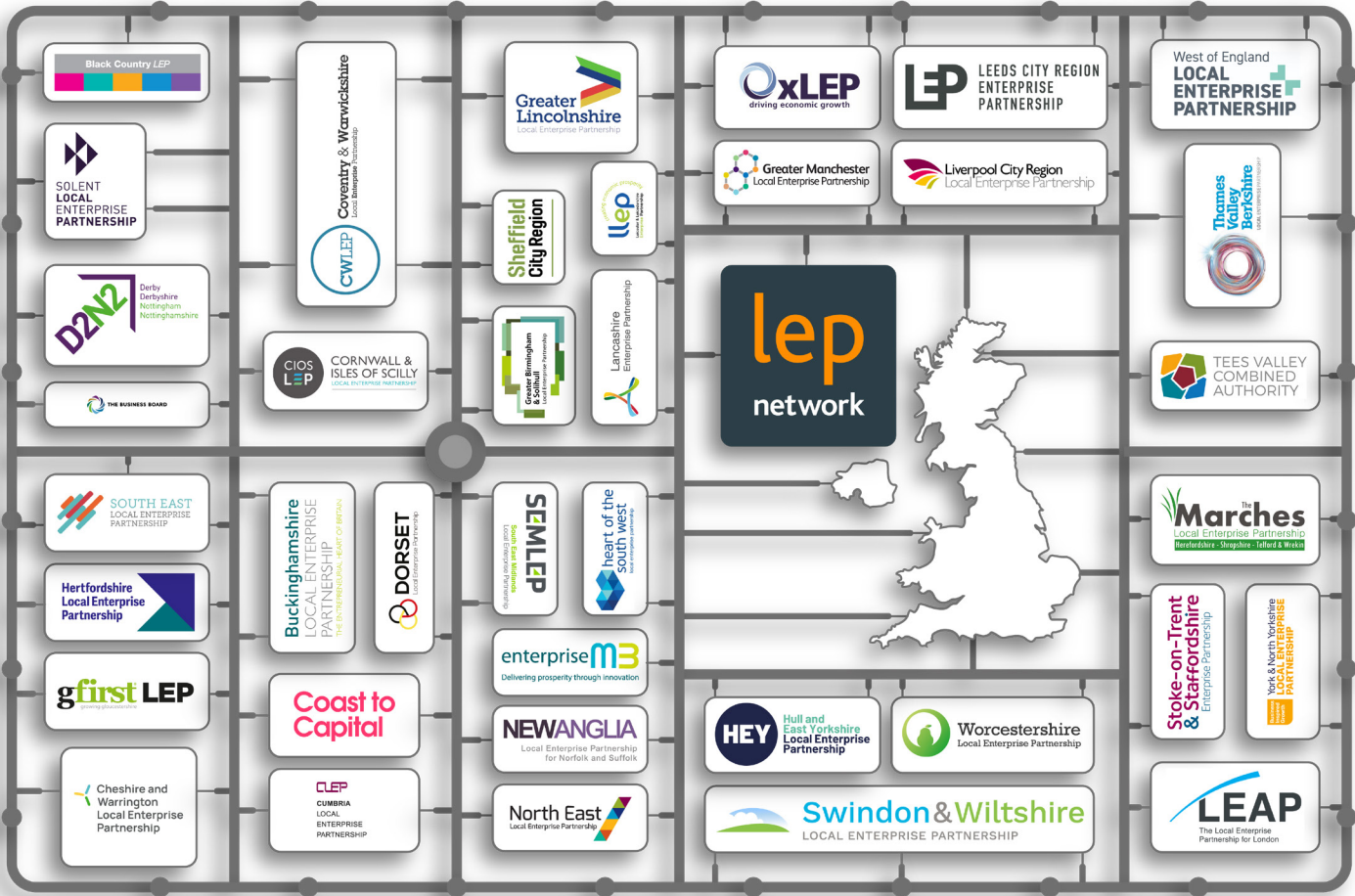
LEPs have more than a decade’s experience of promoting local economies and supporting national growth. Over that period LEPs have worked with millions of businesses, developed and overseen projects worth billions of pounds and had an incalculable economic impact on the UK economy. LEPs have offered unrivalled value for money, leveraging £25bn of private sector investment and making sure the right projects are delivered in the right places.

This is not the moment to waste time, ripping up systems and structures. Instead, this is the time to build on what works. Business needs certainty and consistency, which LEPs already offer.

The experience and expertise of LEPs around the country can help us recover from the pandemic, build back better and realise our post Brexit ambitions. With a refreshed mandate from Government and a renewed sense of purpose, LEPs can focus on putting in place tailored solutions which will work at a local level.

By focusing on the local delivery of the Plan for Growth, by looking to support the Government’s levelling up and Net Zero ambitions, by providing world class business support and by identifying and promoting local sector strengths, LEPs will help stimulate growth in every part of the country – whilst making our country greener, fairer and stronger.

All that is required is a New Deal for LEPs.



# LEPs – A snapshot

More than 2,000 business leaders across our Boards and sub-groups	SME and Equality / Diversity Champions on all Boards	A 3 <sup>rd</sup> of LEP Chairs are female	Representation from HE, FE, Social Enterprise, Voluntary and Community groups	180 Councillors sit as co-decision makers bringing democratic accountability	Over 300 projects being delivered in partnership with HE/FE
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## LEPs – Our impact



Leveraging  
**£25 billion**  
of private sector  
investment



Supporting over  
**2 million**  
businesses last year



Creating over  
**180,000**  
jobs



Helping  
**3 million**  
people develop  
new skills



And supporting  
the build of  
**100,000**  
homes



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