

AGENDA ITEM 9**REPORT TO THE TEES VALLEY
COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET****28th OCTOBER 2022****REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND SKILLS****LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP INTEGRATION PLAN****SUMMARY**

Following a review of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Government's Levelling Up White Paper stated that "LEPs should be better integrated and aligned with empowered local institutions to unlock growth" and "should merge with MCAs where they exist". LEPs were required to submit a Plan to Government, setting out their integration approach.

Tees Valley proposes to use this opportunity to review existing ways of working to enable a stronger and more influential business-led partnership. Details are provided below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Combined Authority Cabinet:

- i. Approve the attached LEP Integration Plan
- ii. Approve the proposed constitutional amendments set out in Appendix 1.
- iii. Delegate to the Local Enterprise Partnership Chair, working in partnership with the Group Director of Business and Skills, responsibility to deliver the Integration Plan. This will include working with existing Business and Local Authority Leaders to rebrand and develop Terms of Reference for the LEP successor body.

DETAIL

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are non-statutory bodies responsible for local economic development in England. Since 2010 they have brought together local authorities and business leaders to drive forward local economic growth.

The Levelling Up White Paper (2022) stated that the Government is now "encouraging the integration of LEPs and their business boards with Mayoral Combined Authorities where they exist". Subsequent to the White Paper, a request was made by government that Local Enterprise Partnerships prepare an Implementation Plan by July 29th, 2022, setting out how they intend to achieve this.

In the Tees Valley, this integration largely occurred with the establishment of the Mayoral Combined Authority in 2016, with the Tees Valley LEP acting principally as the Combined Authority's formal forum for engaging with the local business community and the Combined

Authority assuming the majority of the responsibilities previously held by the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Tees Valley, however, intends to take this opportunity to build on our well established and integrated LEP structures to create a stronger and more influential business-led partnership that is:

- Independent – providing specialist, business-led insights to critically influence, shape and review economic development activity in Tees Valley.
- Inclusive and Diverse - providing a representative voice for all businesses in Tees Valley.
- Innovative – developing innovative, business-led solutions to address challenges and opportunities, and deliver transformative change for the Tees Valley economy.
- Intelligence Led – providing local business insights; drawing on data and intelligence; commissioning bespoke research and evaluation as required to drive economic growth activity and maximise impact.
- Integrated – providing a clear voice for business, strategic connectivity, and oversight across the business growth agenda, whilst working collaboratively and effectively with our five Local Authorities and the Combined Authority.

Specific proposals for how the aims are to be delivered are detailed in the attached Integration Plan, and include:

- A greater emphasis on private sector representation and strategic leadership.
- Amendments to the Combined Authority's governance and policy-making framework, including the development of current advisory groups and creation of new advisory groups to allow greater strategic leadership from the local private sector.
- The development of a new brand and identity for the Local Enterprise Partnership.

These proposals will require amendments to the Tees Valley Combined Authority constitution which are set out in Appendix 1.

The Integration Plan was submitted to government on July 29th 2022, with extensive consultation having previously taken place with existing LEP members, and the five Tees Valley Local Authorities. The Plan stated that its implementation was subject to formal approval by the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet.

A formal response from government is awaited.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Levelling Up White Paper (2022) makes clear that it is the intention of government that LEPs integrate with Mayoral Combined Authorities where they exist. Relevant changes to reflect new ways of working will be made to TVCA Constitution, as set out in Appendix 1.

RISK ASSESSMENT

LEP Integration is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION

The current Local Enterprise Partnership Board has been consulted throughout the development of the Integration Plan

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Public Sector Equality Duty was considered in developing the Integration Plan.

The existing LEP has publicly committed to – and achieved – a gender balanced membership. This commitment will be maintained under the successor body.

The current LEP also has a dedicated Diversity Champion, a member with a specific role for ensuring equality and diversity is at the heart of Combined Authority decision making. This position will be maintained under the successor body

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The Integration Plan has been discussed and agreed by the existing Local Enterprise Partnership Board. This included the Chair personally consulting all existing members – including business leaders, Tees Valley Mayor, Local Authority Leaders and Educational Representatives.

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