



Seminar for Local Enterprise Partnerships operating in the East Midlands

17 May 2011

This was the first meeting of the 6 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) operating in the East Midlands, as well as the Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership. The audience was a mix of Local Authority leaders and officers, alongside LEP officers. The meeting was held at the *emda* premises in Nottingham, and Jeff Moore, Chief Executive of *emda*, took the opportunity to thank local authorities for all their support in making the work of *emda* a success over the past decade, and to offer his staff's ongoing support as we move to the new LEP arrangements.

New Arrangements for Managing ERDF

Andrew Morgan from *emda* gave a presentation setting out the process for moving to a new Local Management Committee for ERDF in the East Midlands. (This can be found at <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/LEP-seminar>).

He confirmed that the new Chair is Mark Carroll, a Director from the Department of Communities and Local Government, reflecting the department's role as managing agent for the programme in England. A key post will be that of Deputy Chair, and whilst East Midlands Councils has written to all Local Authorities asking for the nomination of a democratically elected representative from each LEP, and Mark has written to a wider audience inviting nominations, it is now likely that a slightly more formal process of expressions of interest followed by interviews will take place. Other members of the new Local Management Committee will also be identified, with a desire to keep some continuity from the existing Programme Monitoring Committee.

RDA Assets

Andrew also updated the group on progress with the disposal of *emda*'s assets, work which is being led by Diana Gilhespy. Diana has been in individual discussions with local authorities who have first refusal, but the main point is that *emda* can only transfer such assets to local authorities at market value. Former Coalfields sites in the East Midlands are being transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency in line with national policy. There are ongoing discussions about contingent assets. More information is available on the BIS website.

BIS Local

Rowena Limb, Director for BIS Local East Midlands and South East Midlands, explained the role of her new team in working with businesses, local authorities and LEPs in the area, providing advice and guidance and using local

experiences and expertise to influence policy development. Contact details are on Rowena's presentation at <http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/LEP-seminar>

Regional Growth Fund

Rowena gave feedback from the first round of the Regional Growth Fund which was heavily over-subscribed and which saw only two winning bids in areas with LEPs operating in the East Midlands. Her key message was that the winning bids nationally were those that most followed the criteria; that the panel were looking for bids that would bring sustainable new jobs quickly to an area; that possibly as this was more difficult to achieve for infrastructure projects which had not been so successful; and that the criteria for Round 2 are broadly the same except that this time LEPs can submit a programme rather than individual project bid. Questions from the audience revealed concern about the speed and quality of feedback from Round 1, and about whether areas within the East Midlands would carry the priority of other, northern areas. Rowena promised to take these messages back. There will be a roadshow for Round 2 to take place on 6 June 2011 at Pride Park, Derby. Full details can be found at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/economic-development/regional-growth-fund/attending-a-rgf-roadshow>.

Enterprise Zones

Rowena emphasised the point that bidding for an Enterprise Zone was a competition with final submissions required by the end of June. Even LEPs with an Enterprise Zone such as D2N2 can put a bid in for another. Key considerations include the need to avoid displacement from one area to another, and the need to consider barriers to growth and how these can be overcome through the EZ mechanism.

LEP Support

Rowena's presentation gives details of recent announcements on further support to LEPs via the Capacity Fund, Start-Up Fund and Toolbox.

LEP Round-Up

At the end of the meeting, LEPs shared information on their progress to date. Whilst LEPs are at different stages in terms of Board appointments, all reported good engagement with the private sector and ongoing work re bids for Regional Growth Fund and Enterprise Zones, as well as LEP led work to tackle particular issues key to the LEP area. In response to a question about access for LEPs to the intellectual property legacy of *emda*, colleagues explained that the research and intelligence generated by *emda* was being made available through Nottingham Trent University for at least the next ten years.

Future meetings

Delegates reported that the meeting had been useful and East Midlands Councils will take further soundings on the format, timing and audience for any future meetings.