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LEP Review

10th November 2017

Dear Jake

Thank you for your letter of 20th October and for your company at the recent dinner of Local Enterprise Partnership Chairs. It is clear that we have exciting times ahead and I am delighted that the LEP Review is being undertaken in that spirit.

I should take this opportunity to offer the continued input of my LEP, the country's biggest, into the review and the SELEP team is ready and on hand to provide you with contributory inputs to the work. I know that the SELEP Managing Director has already been active in providing information to your team.

However, I must also take this opportunity to raise the major **issue of LEP core funding** with you – in terms of both timeliness and level.

It is imperative that officials quickly confirm their continued **financial backing of LEPs – ideally for a period of longer than the forthcoming financial year**. For the short term, this is quite simply to avoid me having to put every member of our small and high-performing team at risk of redundancy. In the longer term, it is to enable us to attract a wider range of applicants to LEP roles by virtue of being able to offer permanent rather than time-limited contracts. And, ultimately to allow ourselves to resource in a way concomitant with our enhanced responsibilities post the LEP Review.

An even more serious issue exists around the **levels of core funding** provided to LEPs. It is patently unfair to fund LEPs of different geographies to the same level. The South East LEP – covering six upper tier authority areas including three major counties – receives the same by way of support than every other, in some cases single county, LEPs. Inevitably this means that the secretariat team is stretched to the absolute limit, is unable to resource many of the activities that it would like to, and that additional time resource is requested from partners and third parties, which is far from ideal and detracts from our corporate impact.

It is clear to me that the goodwill of our local authorities in particular is becoming exhausted in respect of the contributions that they can make to the LEP (currently £200k in match funding between them). Unlike those single county LEPs, we operate on a pseudo-regional geography and, as such, are unlikely to ever derive the same level of support from those upper tier local authorities who could only ever feel like part of the SELEP geographic area.

We can demonstrate that we do an excellent job. Furthermore, the progress that this LEP has made is well documented and reflected by our massive community of partners.

What we need now is for Government to back the LEP properly, to follow up on Eric Pickles' original promise to the political leadership of our area and to provide us with the tools to have the maximum possible impact on the growth of our area. UK plc will not succeed without a successful South East and we are a force for good in making the area prosper.

I hope that you are able to back us in the way that our economy deserves.

Yours sincerely



Christian Brodie
Chairman
South East Local Enterprise Partnership