

North East Local Enterprise Partnership Board



Thursday 23 March

17.00 – 19.00

AGENDA

Items 5, 7 and 8 are confidential as the papers contain commercial information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation and they are not for wider circulation.

1. **Welcome from the Chair and apologies** (5.00pm)
2. **Declarations of interest** (5.00pm)
3. **Minutes of the last Board meeting held on Thursday 26 January** (5.05pm)
Board will be asked to agree the Minutes.
4. **End of Year Review – progress update** – paper attached (5.10pm)
Jen Robson to present to the Board.
5. **Fund management update** – confidential paper attached (5.25pm)
Paul Woods to present to the Board.
6. **Discussion paper: The future of the regional business support - will the UKSPF rollout address the private sector concerns and desires?** Paper attached (5.40pm). Colin Bell to present to the Board.
7. **Devolution update** – confidential presentation (6.10pm)
Henry Kippin to present to the Board
8. **Draft LEP devolution consultation response** – confidential paper attached (6.25pm). Richard Baker to present to the Board
9. **Chair and Chief Executive update** - paper attached (6.40pm)
Lucy Winskell to update the Board.
10. **Any Other Business** (6.50pm)
11. **Date and time of next meeting - Thursday 25 May from 5 - 7pm, Quadrus Centre, Boldon**

13 March 2023

Item 4: End of Year Review

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress we have achieved to date against the Annual Delivery Plan for 2022/23.
- 1.2 The End of Year Review is produced on a yearly basis in accordance with requirements that were set out in the Government's 2018 policy paper 'Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships' and must be submitted to government to show progress. The deliverables that we set in these documents are aligned with the programmes of delivery in the North East Strategic Economic Plan.

2.0 Looking back at our progress

- 2.1 The End of Year Review, attached as appendix one, provides a summary of what we said we would deliver in the Annual Delivery Plan for 2022/23 and reports progress against each action. The Annual Delivery Plan for 2022/23 was signed off by the Board in May 2022 and can be found at:
[NEL1276-NELEP-Annual-Delivery-Plan-2022-23-v19-1.pdf \(northeastlep.co.uk\)](https://www.northeastlep.co.uk/files/2022/06/NEL1276-NELEP-Annual-Delivery-Plan-2022-23-v19-1.pdf).
- 2.2 The End of Year Review 2022/23 will be subject to a few minor changes as we await final quarter 4 information particularly from the funding streams. The Board is therefore asked to delegate approval to the Chief Executive to agree minor updates and amendments before the document is submitted to Government to ensure it is accurate at the year end.

3.0 Looking forward to 2023-2024

- 3.1 The Annual Delivery Plan for 2023-2024 is currently being prepared by the executive team and will be shared at the May Board meeting. It will set out what we intend to deliver this financial year from April 2023 to March 2024.
Actions that are RAG rated red are primarily as a direct response to the change in role following government's publication of the LEP Review last year, where we were directed to focus strategic economic planning activity on evidence and data gathering rather than strategy development per se. We therefore paused the development of sector strategies as shown in the appendix.
We ask board to note that these points will be addressed in the Annual Delivery Plan for 23/24 or in the wider devolution discussions with the LA7 and transition team.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Board is recommended to:

- (i) Agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make minor updates and amendments to the End of Year Review 2022/23 document prior to it being submitted to government,
- (ii) Note the final End of Year Review 2022/23 document will be published on the North East LEP website,

5.0 Appendix

5.1 Appendix one – End of Year Review 2022/23

End of year review

2022/23



Representing the business voice: Embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
Fill vacancies on the North East LEP Board as they become available to ensure a strong representation of businesses across the North East.	Five new board members were appointed this year from a range of backgrounds to ensure they can represent the business voice across the North East. You can see details of our board membership here.	Green	Maintain board membership and transition the LEP Board into the business board within the new governance framework of the North East Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA).
Review the structure and remit of our advisory boards and sector groups to ensure their remit reflects the priorities outlined by government that they have strong business representation.	The advisory boards have continued a business-as-usual approach, continually reviewing their focus to ensure delivery and ensuring priorities have continued to be reflected in their workplans.	Green	Continue to review our sub boards' structure in 2023/24 as we transition including the membership now that new members have been appointed to the LEP Board.
Work with combined and local authorities to highlight business-led priorities and the priorities identified within the Strategic Economic Plan, to ensure they are integrated into future devolution proposals.	We regularly update the LA7 Economic Directors on our work and continue to work closely with the North of Tyne and North East Combined Authorities, Transport North East and Invest North East England to highlight and seek input into shaping our priority areas and vice versa.	Green	Continue with our key partners into 2023/24 with an executive group that will meet on a regular basis to continue to develop the transition plan for the new North East MCA.
Support the democratic institutions leading on strategic investment plans for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund by providing the evidence base to inform decision making, leadership, and to ensure business priorities are central to thinking.	We have worked with the LA7 and North of Tyne Combined Authority throughout the year to influence how the UKSPF is allocated and invested regionally, and have led on the business engagement consultation. This has been very challenging given the localised nature of the process. The effective continuation of regional business growth innovation and skills work is at risk of being uncoordinated and ceasing in some areas as the regional allocation process is lost.	Amber	Continue to work with the interim CEO of the North East MCA and the LA7 Economic Directors as the UKSPF programme(s) are being developed, to lobby for continued investment in business growth, skills and innovation regional programmes previously funded by EU funding and work collaboratively to join up the disparate allocation model.

Added value: Part of ensuring continued engagement with the business community requires the LEP to remain consistent with its strong governance and communications activity. In addition to the above, between April 2022 and March 2023, we will:

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>Ensure progress updates to the North East LEP Board reflect the new remit for LEPs as defined by government, and the progress of the North East Strategic Economic Plan to 2024.</p>	<p>The 2022/23 Annual Delivery Plan was structured to align with the roles assigned by government for LEPs. Progress has been reported to each LEP Board.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Make further refinements to reflect the mandated role of LEPs and the transition to the new MCA.</p>
<p>Hold a public Annual General Meeting.</p>	<p>Our Annual General Meeting was held on 14 March 2023 at Helix, Newcastle. It was attended by 170 people. It covered reflections on the past 12 months and a summary of the devolution transition plan. It also formed part of the consultation with business on the devolution deal.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to hold a public AGM. Date tbc.</p>
<p>Update the Assurance Framework in January 2023.</p>	<p>The LEP Assurance Framework was reviewed and updated in January 2023. Minor changes were reported to the Board and a refreshed document subsequently published on the LEP website.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Update when required to reflect integration into the new MCA governance structure in May 2024.</p>
<p>Continue to embed communications across our programmes and priorities, but specifically deliver strategic communications to ensure the revised role and remit of the North East LEP is understood by the business community and the wider community.</p>	<p>Communications continues to be implicit across all projects and programmes, with performance measured across the executive and report to each LEP board.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue the approach to corporate, programme and project communications, ensuring it is embedded in all services and programmes. We will work with partners collaboratively to align internal and external communications as we move through transition to the new MCA.</p>

Strategic economic planning: Lead the development of data, research and evidence for the North East economy

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>Provide a comprehensive state of the region evidence base, including place-based intelligence that is accessible and reflects the North East's economic performance.</p>	<p>We have trebled the amount of content available on the North East Evidence Hub, which includes new datasets, analysis and research outputs. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Manufacturing • Digital Tech • Net Zero • UKSPF <p>Our Economy 2022 took place in November and was attended by over 200 delegates. We published the state of the region analysis, with a focus on cost of living and launched the economic foresight analysis on future markets, available here.</p>	Green	<p>Continue this activity and look to expand our analysis on the region's economy and ensure the Evidence Hub, a regional asset, meets the needs of political leaders and other partners.</p>
<p>Review and produce analysis of the 2021 census data, ensuring a clear understanding of the North East's position post COVID-19.</p>	<p>We launched a Census 2021 spotlight page, which presents the latest available data and analysis on population, economic activity, industry sectors and occupations. We also published an insights piece on how census statistics help us understand the people and economy of the North East, available here.</p>	Green	<p>Continue this activity and look to expand our analysis as ONS publishes census datasets.</p>
<p>Develop and support delivery of collaborative analytical and evidence activities to support key projects for Strategic Economic Plan programmes, devolution, levelling up, UKSPF with our partners in combined and local authorities and through the Economic Evidence Forum (EEF).</p>	<p>We lead on the development of the UKSPF evidence base activities, including focus on communities, business and place alongside levelling up, review of ESIF programmes and what works.</p> <p>We have continued to update the SEP targets and have published an accessible page on the Evidence Hub to review progress, available here.</p> <p>We coordinated the North East Economic Evidence Forum which has hosted a number of regional and national speakers, including Office of National Statistics (ONS) and Insights North East. The group has also conducted its own research into areas such as the Levelling Up metrics which has been communicated to the Spatial Data Unit and ONS.</p>	Green	<p>Continue this activity and look to expand our evidence base activities to reflect themes outlined in the devolution agreement. There is an opportunity for partnership working and collaboration around data assets and existing evidence, which we will explore.</p>

<p>Systematise processes and governance for commissioning, publication and communication of evidence, data and analysis outputs and products on LEP platforms.</p>	<p>A corporate protocol has been developed as part of the Assurance Framework, to support internal commissioning of research and evidence.</p> <p>A process has been established for publishing and translating evidence and analysis on the Evidence Hub, and external expression of interest is now available here.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Review as part of the ongoing development of the North East Evidence Hub and transition to the new combined authority.</p>
<p>Deliver the preparatory activities for the final evaluation of the Strategic Economic Plan programme for 2014-2024.</p>	<p>A draft specification has been developed and approved.</p> <p>In preparation, we have increased our data collection and reporting via the CRM and evaluation activity across the organisation has improved, including on the Growth Hub, Made Smarter and High Potential Startups.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Start the procurement processes for the evaluation contract will commence and the contract will be awarded by the end of Q2.</p>
<p>Improve the accessibility, visibility and understanding of key North East data and evidence through the relaunch of the North East Evidence Hub.</p>	<p>Overall traffic of the Evidence Hub has increased significantly over the past 12 months, with more than a 95% in users and 94% in new users. Sessions have also increased 107% with an average time on page increasing 21.74%. The transition away from traditional methods of presenting reports (PDF or print format) has seen a significant increase in engagement on those reports displayed digitally.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to invest in the Evidence Hub and position it as regional asset.</p>
<p>Lead the development of the Northern Evidence Network (NEN) working with NP11 LEPs, TFN and government.</p>	<p>The NEN has developed three workstreams and agreed priorities. It has also supported the update of Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER), led by TfN.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>The work of the NEN will continue, and the team will continue to engage with the workstreams to ensure a North East presence at the northern powerhouse geography.</p>
<p>Work with Newcastle University and other partners to deliver strengthened academic contribution to the evidence base through the Insights North East (INE) programme.</p>	<p>We have supported the launch of INE, contributing to scoping sessions and programme priorities. We have also positioned the Net Zero INE priority to feed into Net Zero North East England and its expert academic advisory group.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Support the work of INE.</p>

<p>Build on existing co-operation and develop new opportunities for research collaboration with Durham University and Northumbria University.</p>	<p>We have developed and progressed with a research project to support regional energy masterplanning with regional partners including North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), Northern Gas Networks and Northern Power Grid.</p> <p>We have actively engaged with Northumbria University through the CAPE programme.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to work with our university partners to explore opportunities for collaboration.</p>
<p>Through the North East Economic Evidence Forum and other partners, develop a comprehensive analysis of the data, trends and causes of inequality and exclusion across the North East, including analysing the impact of recent economic events on standards of living and to 'map and gap' data and indicators related to White Paper missions.</p>	<p>We have hosted discussions on aspects of inequality including ONS and Insights North East, and have reviewed the Levelling Up metrics with partners to determine regional monitoring requirements and how this informs policy.</p> <p>The team has also participated in South Tyneside Council's Inclusive Growth Network.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Review the role and remit of the North East Economic Evidence Forum.</p>

Strategic economic planning: Strengthen regional collaboration

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
Support the region on the development of proposals for the next stage of the region's Strategic Economic Plan post 2024.	We have continued to develop the evidence base for a future strategic plan and feed into LA7 EDs and the devolution deal discussions as required.	Green	Continue to work on the evidence base as the devolution deal is implemented and the next regional economic plan is developed.
Continue to convene the Economic Prospects Group with the Bank of England as a regional platform to share data and information about the economy with key partners.	We continue to coordinate meetings of this group, in collaboration with the Regional Agency of the Bank of England. The group shares data and intelligence on a monthly basis about the development of the regional economy.	Green	Continue to support the Bank of England with this meeting.
Work closely with Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and other partners to drive forward the implementation of the Statement of Intent, the North East's response to the review of DMOs, and engagement with government's strategy to enhance the visitor economy to strengthen strategic coordination in the region for growing the Visitor Economy.	The North East was announced as the host of the pilot Destination Development Partnership (DDP) by the Department for Culture Media and Sport in December 2022 and will see a national investment of £2.25million to support this pilot activity. The project will be led by NewcastleGateshead Initiative in conjunction with other DMOs and a wider network of partners. The North East LEP has continued to support the development of the DDP proposal.	Green	Liaise with the DDP to understand where the LEP will best add value.
Working with local authority planning and economic leads, the Geo-spatial Commission and other partners such as Northumbria University, to develop partnership projects that can deliver strengthened spatial economic evidence to support economic development, investment in infrastructure, and regeneration.	A range of place-based datasets have been uploaded on to the Evidence Hub linked to Net Zero North East and transport programmes.	Green	This activity has been deprioritised and we will not be actively taking this forward.

<p>Collaborate with inter-governmental partnerships, think tanks and consultancies on strategic evidence and policy activities, including the What Works Centre and Productivity Institute.</p>	<p>We have developed strong links with ONS and ONS Local, which allows us to influence their future priority planning for the future dissemination of data. We are actively developing plans with both the Productivity Institute and the What Works Centre to continue working together on projects in 2023-24</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue as appropriate.</p>
<p>Work with the EU Exit Implementation Group to complete its report analysing the impact of EU Exit on the region, bringing forward recommendations for strengthening the outcomes for the region through international work and influencing domestic policy activities implementing the Free Trade Agreement with the EU.</p>	<p>The EU Exit group continued to meet throughout the year. A summary of activity and report was considered at the January 2023 LEP Board.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Close down the EU Exit Group as the workload is now embedded in business-as-usual activity.</p>
<p>Coordinate the North East Northern Powerhouse Working group enabling information sharing across Northern Powerhouse priorities with NP11, TFN and CLGU Leadership. This will include the coordination of the North East's response to the updating of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review.</p>	<p>Through the Northern Powerhouse Working Group we facilitate dialogue between regional and national partners, to discuss how Levelling Up and other government policies affect the Northern Powerhouse position.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Liaise with the LA7 to understand how best to feed in the northern powerhouse position, challenges and opportunities into the implementation of the devolution deal and future economic planning.</p>

Added value: Identifying opportunities using our convening power and ability to engage with the region to develop projects and programmes that make sense to delivery regionally has always been a strong role in our organisation and is consistent with our new mandate. Between April 2022 and March 2023 we will:			
Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
Support the ongoing development and launch of Net Zero North East (NZNE) as a collaborative regional programme to accelerate decarbonisation, develop a greener economy and secure a positive transition for our environment and communities.	The Net Zero North East England partnership was officially launched in November 2022. Operations of the partnership have been handed over to the North of Tyne Combined Authority to take forward.	Amber	Continue to influence through Partnership Board membership.
Work with the Department for International Trade (DIT), North East England Chamber of Commerce and Trade Strategy to drive forward implementation of the key workstreams in the North East Trade and Export strategy in the context of the UK Trade Strategy. Coordinate engagement with the Northern Powerhouse trade and investment strategy and programme, ensuring that the North East secures strong presence and outcomes from this work.	The International Trade Strategy was developed and published. Discussions are underway with DIT on whether there is any government funding or capacity to support the implementation in the region.	Green	Feed the work into the development of the new MCA portfolios.
Monitor and influence the ongoing development of the proposals in the Levelling Up White Paper and engage with new local institutions as they develop.	We have liaised with government to present a North East view of the Levelling Up metrics and we continue to influence the proposals through discussions with the Spatial Data Unit and ONS.	Green	Feed the work into the development of the new MCA portfolios.

Improving skills: Provide regional leadership and delivery on an integrated programme to increase partnership between education and employers to reduce the mismatch between skills supply and demand

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>Deliver the North East Ambition programme build and develop of true partnerships between SMEs and educators in the drive to lessen the gap between skills demand and supply through</p> <p>1) supporting all schools and colleges to meet the eight Good Career Guidance Benchmarks and</p> <p>2) linking employers to education through our Enterprise Adviser Network.</p>	<p>Delivery of Good Careers Guidance Benchmarks</p> <p>The average Benchmark score across the region continues to improve. We have more schools and colleges successfully matched with Enterprise Advisors and can demonstrate real impact from these ongoing relationships.</p> <p>We have developed resources to support progress against the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks including LMI toolkits, work experience frameworks and KS3 HE resources, promoting range of pathways including higher technical qualifications (HTQs) and degree apprenticeships. Click here to view the site.</p> <p>We continue to work with partners including North of Tyne Combined Authority and DfE to influence and explain the wider roll out of primary careers provision.</p> <p>Enterprise Adviser Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82 businesses in the Enterprise Adviser network • 122 schools matched with an Enterprise Adviser • 266 businesses in the wider/less formal capacity supporting careers activity, providing work placements and curriculum-linked projects etc 	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to deliver the North East Ambition programme, integrating learning from evaluation and research and focusing on key priorities: improving careers guidance for each and every student and providing high quality work experience and engagement with employers.</p>

<p>Deliver local Careers Hubs on behalf of the Department for Education.</p>	<p>The North East Careers Hub has expanded from 94 to 162 schools and colleges.</p> <p>This year, we have also secured additional funding to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship and Technical Education Project – supporting a cohort of year 11 and 13 students to search for and apply for apprenticeship vacancies • Ahead of the Game – working with South Tyneside Youth Justice Service to support a cohort of young people with business mentors • Teacher Encounters - a pilot providing trainee teacher with encounters with employers • SEND Hub, which has included continued delivery our Effective Transition Fund and a Middle School Forum. 	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to deliver a North East Careers Hub on behalf of the Department for Education</p>
<p>Deliver the Education Challenge programme, which aims to support teachers, school leaders, governors and employers to work collaboratively to integrate an understanding of the world of work and career opportunities into the curriculum. Delivery includes Opportunity North East, a two year careers and business engagement pilot; a CPD programme for careers professionals; supporting business leaders to take up opportunities as governors; and an employer engagement strategy.</p>	<p>We completed the delivery of Opportunity North East pilot, focusing on enhanced careers education and guidance for those at risk of being NEET. The final report is here.</p> <p>We secured additional funding to run Linking Curriculum Learning to the World of Work, a project funded by NOTCA focusing on supporting teachers of STEM subjects to establish relationships with employers for the benefit of their students.</p> <p>We have developed and are leading a Teacher Encounter project in partnership with Newcastle University, providing employer encounters for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students completing a PGCE in STEM and geography subjects.</p> <p>We are supporting teaching though resources published on North East Ambition website and through the Times Education Supplement.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Complete delivery of Linking Curriculum Learning to the World of Work.</p> <p>Disseminate case studies, resources and best practice to all schools in North East.</p> <p>Complete delivery of Teacher Encounter project and disseminate project outcomes with other ITT providers in the region.</p>

<p>Ensure the successful implementation of post-16 technical skills education policy across the region to ensure it addresses the imbalance between technical skills supply and demand in key employment sectors.</p>	<p>We are acknowledged as an exemplar nationally across technical education, leading to the North East hosting the first Government T-level Conference, representing the National LEP network on the Government Employer Advisory Panel and Apprenticeship committees, and being invited to deliver keynote addresses at the Gatsby T-level Conference and Higher Education Academic Teacher Conference.</p> <p>We have facilitated and extended membership of T-level Route Ready groups across digital, health, construction, engineering and manufacturing, resulting in 100% of industry placements being secured and the highest achievements rates nationally. d fFunding has been secured to test a new Industry Placement model for the NHS in region.</p> <p>We have developed new skills narrative, Skills 4:0, to support the Fourth Industrial Revolution requirements and presented it to a European delegation meeting in Lyon.</p> <p>We supported the governance and development of Institute of Technology activities to ensure they align with and maximise T-level Route Ready networks.</p> <p>We expanded the North East Ambition website to include technical education content and resources for employers and education communities</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Maintain relationships and national status to influence change and ensure North East needs are met.</p> <p>The North East LEP will contribute financially to the second phase of the NHS Industry Placement model.</p>
--	---	---------------------	---

Improving skills: Produce local skills analysis via Skills Advisory Panels, on behalf of the Department for Education

Initiative	Progress since last Board meeting	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>The Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) brings together local employers and skills providers to pool knowledge on skills and labour market needs, and to work together to understand and address key local challenges. The SAP will continue to deliver key functions that include advising the main LEP Board, providing oversight of delivery of regional skills, inclusion and progression programmes and projects, commissioning research into key skills challenges, and reporting into government.</p>	<p>The SAP continue to meet on a monthly basis and members are engaged. They provide challenge and guidance to the LEP skills team, programmes and wider policy. They work closely with the North East's employer representative bodies and on the production of the Local Skills Improvement plans.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to meet, and to provide challenge and expertise to address key local challenges and opportunities.</p>

Added value: Our skills programme has always considered the skills agenda, the importance of improving labour market activation, ensuring communities are connected and that there is an strong agenda to deliver employability across the region. We will continue our work in this area during 2022/23 by:

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>Support the rollout of phase three Skills Bootcamps in green skills and continue to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to businesses across the region.</p>	<p>Skills Bootcamps</p> <p>We have mobilised the £2.6million DfE Wave 3 Skills Bootcamp programme (2022/23), establishing a consortium of 11 green skills training delivery organisations, through lead contracts with two regional colleges. Outcomes to the end of March will include:</p> <p>631 learners benefiting from a Skills Bootcamp programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12% unemployed • 21% self employed • 43% employed and supported by their employer • 24% independent learners (not economically inactive) <p>65% of learners have successfully progressed to a job, a job with additional responsibilities/salary, or have secured additional service contracts.</p> <p>76 business have supported learners to attend a Skills Bootcamp programme (86% SMEs).</p> <p>807 job vacancies have been made available for Skills Bootcamp participants.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>DfE have awarded a further £7.4m to deliver a Wave 4 Skills Bootcamp programme 2023/2024 with a target of 1,800 learners engaged covering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Skills Technical Skills Pathways to Accelerated Apprenticeships Local Priority Skills Areas (Business and People Management and Skills for the Education/Training Sector)
	<p>Promoting apprenticeships</p> <p>Apprenticeship research has been commissioned and completed, and the results are available here. Research findings were launched at a high-profile business event attended by more than 100 SMEs and with Ministerial presence on first day of National Apprenticeship Week.</p>		<p>Translate the recommendations from the research report into a multi-agency project implementation plan.</p>

<p>Develop and publish a regional digital inclusion strategy and, together with partners, explore funding and delivery opportunities for the strategy.</p>	<p>The strategy has been finalised and presented to those who engaged in the consultation for discussion. It was positively received, with the agreement to form a Digital Alliance to take forward the recommendations.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Facilitate the Digital Alliance in the first instance and will work with partners to consider how to take forward the agreed priorities and recommendations.</p>
<p>Continue to support DWP's Fuller Working Lives initiative and work with key stakeholders and partners to support strategic regional programmes aimed at supporting disadvantaged groups into employment.</p>	<p>The Fuller Working Lives contract is now being delivered by DWP and subcontractors within the region. The LEP provided input and feedback based on pilot work and is keen to see good outcomes for our 50+ cohort.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Take no further action other than continuing dialogue with the contract delivery organisation in the region.</p>

Growing businesses: Deliver the North East Growth Hub on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>Secure investment to continue to deliver and develop the North East Growth Hub and the business and sector growth ecosystem.</p>	<p>Government confirmed a commitment to Growth Hub funding in 2023/24 on 13 March 2023. This has followed extensive lobbying by us and the LEP Network throughout 2022/23.</p> <p>We are awaiting confirmation of the North East's allocation.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Work with the LA7 to optimise the future potential of the Growth Hub in terms of building on the success of the model to date and securing UKSPF to enable consistent business access regardless of postcode.</p> <p>Preparations will be made to transition the Growth Hub into a new Mayoral Combined Authority in 2024/25.</p>
<p>In response to a 50% reduction in funding we will implement a new operating model for the North East Growth Hub which will fulfil government's requirement by continuing to provide a one-stop-shop for all businesses to access support and advice, whilst developing a more targeted approach for key growing sectors.</p>	<p>2022/23 key performance indicators were exceeded.</p> <p>Through our team of Growth Hub Connectors, we have provided medium intensity support to over 400 businesses, high intensity interventions to over 200 businesses and we have provided light intensity brokerage to over 10,000 businesses.</p> <p>We have developed a new online software benchmarking tool to help understand entrepreneur growth aspiration and ambition together with a diagnostic tool to identify business strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Adapt the Growth Hub to the new funding landscape and continue to adopt a sector-based approach which will feed into the LEP's role in representing the business voice.</p>
<p>Work with government, local authorities, and regional stakeholders to help shape the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and national programmes so that they collectively prioritise delivery of a more impactful, simplified, cohesive and better targeted business support ecosystem.</p>	<p>We have worked with each lead authority to understand their UKSPF plan under the local business priority.</p> <p>We have developed an operational model to reduce the impact of the more fragmented and confused landscape as we move from EU to UKSPF funding in order to respond to business frustrations about future access.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Continue to work with the LA7/lead authorities with an aim of minimising business confusion.</p> <p>Begin to design the operational framework for when UKSPF responsibilities transfer to the new MCA in 2025/26.</p>

<p>Develop an evidence base to inform the development of a regional and local enterprise strategy and interventions designed to level up the North East's business birth rate.</p>		<p style="text-align: center; color: white; font-weight: bold;">Red</p>	<p>Incorporate research and evidence themes into forward plan and integrate with business voice activities.</p>
<p>Develop an evidence base to inform the creation of a regional scaleup plan designed to build on the momentum generated in the North East over previous years.</p>	<p>Following reduced government core funding and the need to focus on UKSPF allocations and devolution deal preparations, these actions were not prioritised, as capacity was reduced and redirected.</p>		
<p>Establish the firm level drivers of productivity performance and consider how these drivers can be diffused across the wider business community by working with the Productivity Institute.</p>			
<p>Ensure that the business support framework and taxonomy support business resilience by supporting businesses to identify and mitigate areas of risk around net zero plans and the effects of rising energy prices as businesses adapt to new ways of working.</p>	<p>Net zero and sustainability has been incorporated into the North East Growth Hub , toolkits and diagnostic frameworks and incorporated by UKSPF lead authorities as a key support priority. Click here to view the toolkits.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to embed net zero and sustainability into the business support landscape.</p>
<p>Work with Invest North East England (INEE) to identify and convert investment opportunities to create more and better jobs for the region.</p>	<p>Invest North East England has continued to work on a healthy pipeline of investment enquiries with its local authority and national government partners. It has recorded key successes right across the sectors, albeit at a more modest rate compared to 2021/22. Enquires were generated through a variety of promotional campaigns, attending events, through the production of sector-specific materials and website development. Numerous company visits have been delivered and the team has worked extensively with DIT (now DBT) to ensure the North East investment opportunities are promoted globally.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Invest North East England will continue to act as the region's strategic inward investment agency, ensuring coordination and close collaboration with its public and private sector partners and ensuring a smooth transition to the new MCA. It will continue with a sector-focused approach to promote the region's investment opportunities and generate new leads and projects which it will manage through to investment.</p>

Growing businesses: Identify actions needed to support priority sectors, aligned to the relevant leveling up missions:

Our delivery activities have always focused heavily on areas and sectors of opportunity, specifically energy, tech, health and life sciences and advanced manufacturing. Our delivery activity in these areas is included below.

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
Energy			
<p>Accelerate regional low carbon energy projects across all seven local authority areas, to deliver on net zero goals.</p>	<p>Feasibility studies continue for Newcastle City Centre, Byker, Blyth and Cramlington heat networks and decarbonisation survey project. The Killingworth heat network and Northern Spire Park heat network feasibility studies are nearing completion. The deep geothermal scenario study involving both Newcastle and Durham Universities has started. One of the mine water boreholes (at Hebburn) has encountered difficulty establishing permeability (and therefore mine water flow) from the intended coal seam. Eight delegated decisions have been approved with grant offers of £150,000 in total.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Energy work transferred to NTCA to lead on behalf of the region</p>
<p>Work with partners in the North East and Yorkshire to ensure the successful transition of the Local Energy Hub to the Net Zero Hub, supporting the UK Net Zero strategy and wider Net Zero action.</p>	<p>The draft final evaluation report of the North East and Yorkshire Hub was considered at a full Board and Team away day in December 2022 and will be finalised in January in time for submission to BEIS. The visit from the region by Catherine Wright was successful and supported by a presentation of the work of the North East and Yorkshire Hub. The next three-year funding agreement for the Hub, which formalises the requirements of the transition to a Net Zero Hub, has been received from BEIS and accepted by the Board. A draft funding agreement for the North East LEP post has been received and is being reviewed.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Energy work transferred to NTCA to lead on behalf of the region</p>

<p>Coordinate the North East Energy Catalyst, enhancing collaboration through the partner and SME networks, and enabling delivery of the Energy Innovation Pipeline and an Energy Innovation Challenge Programme 2.</p>	<p>The second Energy Innovation Challenge programme has five regional SMEs in the cohort. A Catalyst board meeting was held where the project pipeline was shared, with an ask of partners to review and identify collaborative opportunities. Preparations have begun for delivery of the successful Clean Maritime Round 2 bid for the Clean Tyne project, the North East LEP assisting with dissemination. Consortium agreement has been signed off. A Spotlight on Green Hydrogen Event was hosted by Sunderland City Council in early 2023.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Energy work transferred to NTCA to lead on behalf of the region</p>
<p>Work with industry and public authorities to support cluster development in key energy and net zero sectors needed to level up the region, including offshore wind, EV and battery, and low carbon heat.</p>	<p>The Heat Network 22 conference was held in partnership with the Association for Decentralised Energy (ADE), the Danish Embassy and BEIS, with the aim of shaping a heat network cluster approach for the North East. The event was hugely successful and well attended by national industry, regional partners and government. . An action plan has now been developed to take forward the development of the heat network cluster, and a follow-up event will take place in 2023. An approach has been agreed to provide seven months' extension funding to the Energi Coast Offshore Wind cluster, to allow a longer-term funding strategy to be developed. The North East LEP energy team attended the Green Trade and Investment Expo, promoting the region's heat network opportunities.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Energy work transferred to NTCA to lead on behalf of the region</p>
<p>Position the North East as a lead region in energy and net zero, e.g. by leading the national geothermal and mine energy taskforce, and progressing an energy masterplanning approach.</p>	<p>The UK Geothermal White Paper project has commenced with the British Geological Survey, due to complete in March 2023. A draft report has been received for review for the Heat Network Investment opportunities study by Amberside Capital. The North East LEP has supported Newcastle City Council to prepare a direct-to-Government proposal for a regional deep geothermal investment programme. This will be tabled at LA7 Economic Directors.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Energy work transferred to NTCA to lead on behalf of the region</p>

Tech			
Establish a North East Tech Sector Strategy Group as part of the Business Growth Board.	A private sector-led group has been established and meets regularly to inform priorities within the tech sector.	Green	Incorporate business led sector group expertise into new governance arrangements.
Work with the strategy group to develop North East tech sector development plan.	The sector development plan has been progressed but work has paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Amber	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Publish the sector evidence base	A comprehensive evidence base has been published on the North East Evidence Hub, and is available here :	Green	Continue to update sector evidence base on an annual basis as part of the ongoing evidence base development plan.
Establish a tech sector development plan delivery group to deliver the plan.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Secure resources and funding required to deliver the plan.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.

Health and life sciences			
Following the COVID-19 pandemic, we will refresh the North East Health and Life Science strategy governance.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Modernise and grow pharmaceutical manufacturing by supporting diversification into new and emerging markets, supporting the adoption of industrial digitisation technologies and creating a framework to develop a pipeline of skills.	The Health and Life Sciences skills group created a skills framework and training routes for hard-to-fill job roles. Skills Framework: Publication: Exploring future skills needs within the Health and Life Sciences ecosystem - North East Evidence Hub (northeastlep.co.uk) Skills Shortage Training Routes: Career pathways for shortage roles - North East Local Enterprise Partnership (northeastlep.co.uk)	Green	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Increase the number of life science businesses that are born, grow and scale in the region by supporting the formation of university, NHS and corporate spinouts, developing a skills framework to create a skills pipeline that meets the needs of the sector and promoting the region's strengths.	There were 260 health and life sciences businesses in the North East in 2022, compared with 250 in 2021. See above re. skills framework and pipeline development.	Amber	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Ensure that the right infrastructure, connectivity and investment is in place to grow the sector.	Confidential discussions are happening relating to opening new air routes, with particular focus on the US market to improve connectivity.	Green	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Broker access to a range of expert support and services across the health and care sectors through the Innovation Pathways through development of the AHSN's Innovation Pathway Omnia brokerage system – integrating it into the North East Growth Hub to support sector innovations and to help businesses break into the NHS.	Innovation Pathway is featured on the Growth Hub website and relevant clients signposted to the service. We have created a profile for the LEP/Growth Hub through the AHSN's Innovation Pathway to highlight our Connector services.	Green	Continue to work with AHSN through ongoing North East Growth Hub activities.
Progress ecosystem development by completing the proof-of-concept study for the development of the Life Science Manufacturing and Innovation Zone and consider the findings and recommendations made.	Report completed in November 2022. Findings and recommendations were shared with the Health and Life Sciences steering group, innovation board, survey participants and Exec EDs in December 2023. We also shared details with partners including DIT, INEE, NGI (Biosphere 2) and specialist investors in life science infrastructure.	Green	Represent ongoing sector development needs, including the concept of a Life Science Innovation Zone through business voice representation.

Advanced manufacturing			
Mobilise and begin delivery of the three year Made Smarter digital adoption in partnership with government and Tees Valley Combined Authority to support regional manufacturers to adopt industrial digitisation technologies.	75 advanced manufacturing businesses have been recruited onto the Made Smarter programme - 25 more than anticipated. The £321,000 year one budget is committed.	Green	Continued delivery of the Made Smarter programme.
Establish a North East Advanced Manufacturing Strategy Group as part of the Business Growth Board.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Work with the strategy group to develop a North East advanced manufacturing sector development plan.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Establish an Advanced Manufacturing Sector development plan delivery group to deliver the plan.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Secure resources and funding required to deliver the plan.	Paused to ensure next steps are aligned with future governance and the role of the LEP.	Red	Take forward and incorporate into the LEP's refined role as representing the business voice.
Innovation			

<p>Stimulate new business opportunities through the North East Open Innovation Challenge, with specific delivery focused on the £880,000 North of Tyne project.</p>	<p>Two missions (Supporting Older People at Home, Work and Play and Delivering Energy Efficient, Net Zero Homes) were defined and launched by the Challenge North Tyne programme. The programme received 104 expressions of interest proposing solutions to the challenges.</p> <p>Our delivery partner, Innovation SuperNetwork, held 93 1-2-1s with interested businesses equating to 76.5 hours of support, between October and December which led to 92 unique businesses being invited to submit an application. This led to 92 applications (62 Supporting Older People, 30 NetZero) from 78 unique businesses.</p> <p>Following appraisal panels in early January 48 businesses with 50 solutions (29 Supporting Older People and 21 NetZero) were offered a place on the Challenge North Tyne programme alongside a £5,000 grant.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Continue to deliver during 2023/24 and conclude in January 2024.</p>
<p>Work intensively with the nine priority innovation projects to support them into delivery and understand how we can support 11 more to develop their business cases.</p>	<p>Innovation pipeline projects incorporated into the regional project pipeline.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Champion the business voice in the prioritisation of regional pipeline projects.</p>
<p>Work with regional partners to shape the region's response to the innovation component of the Levelling Up White Paper, to capitalise on the region's research and innovation capability and agree an approach to embed innovation into businesses across the region.</p>	<p>We were successfully awarded funding from Sunderland and Gateshead for open innovation challenges and market-making projects.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Represent business voice in future national, regional and local policy and strategy development.</p>
<p>Increase private sector investment into growing innovation businesses, ensuring innovation is positioned within the successor to the North East Fund, Venture North and Northern Accelerator.</p>	<p>We worked with the North East Fund Limited and North East Access to Finance to prepare for the British Business Bank consultation on the Northern Powerhouse successor fund 2024.</p> <p>In partnership with Innovation SuperNetwork, we successfully secured funding from North of Tyne Combined Authority to develop the access to finance ecosystem.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Represent business voice in future national, regional and local policy and strategy development.</p>

<p>Deliver the UK Community Renewal Fund project, 'future markets acceleration project' by October 2022, as awarded by Gateshead and Sunderland local authorities.</p>	<p>The Future Markets Acceleration Programme concluded in November and supported 39 businesses and 10 organisations in Sunderland via one-to-one support, events, workshops and grants which led to one business introducing a new product to market and 18 businesses/ organisations engaging in knowledge transfers.</p> <p>The programme supported 50 business and 11 organisations in Gateshead via one-to ones, support, events workshops and grants which led to four businesses introducing new products to market, 11 organisations engaging in knowledge transfers and one innovation plan being developed.</p> <p>While largely positive, the evaluation highlighted the difficulties associated with running an innovation support programme at a sub-regional level as opposed to being pan-regional.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>This activity has now concluded, it will not continue into 2023/24.</p>
<p>Work in partnership with local and combined authorities to highlight the investment opportunities from the innovation project pipeline to secure investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	<p>The Innovation Pipeline was brought together with the broader North East LEP priority projects pipeline discussion.</p> <p>We worked closely with the UKSPF lead authorities on the development of regional commissioning and programme framework and highlighted the innovation opportunities to support and add value where possible.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Feed projects into the regional investment plan as part of the new MCA.</p>
<p>Support seven Innovation Delivery Partnerships to develop their plans.</p>	<p>Six IDP delivery plans were prepared and reported to the Innovation Board on 22 June. The IDPs are now formed and have plans to take forward.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>The plans are being taken forward by business partners.</p>

<p>Publish the Economic Markets Foresight Analysis study and integrate findings into future strategy and funding development.</p>	<p>The Emerging Markets data was published on the Evidence Hub and officially launched at the Our Economy event in November. The fintech, autonomous and electric vehicles and bio-pharmaceuticals market profiles are the most popular profiles. A comms plan to promote the evidence base was launched in early 2023.</p> <p>The data was used to form the evidence base for the region's proposal to Innovate UK for an Innovation Launchpad Programme which focussed</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Integrate ongoing activity on emergent markets into the activities of the evidence and analysis team and continue to promote.</p>
<p>Facilitate connections and collaborations between national and regional partners including UKRI/ Innovate UK, NP11 and the Innovation SuperNetwork to boost innovation activity in the region.</p>	<p>The team worked with Invest North East England, seven local authorities, North of Tyne Combined Authority, Innovation Board and Tech Strategy Board to develop a proposal for UKRI's Innovation Launchpad programme.</p> <p>UKRI were involved in the appraisal process for the Challenge North Tyne programme where over 90 applications were reviewed.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Continue to look for opportunities to work with partners</p>

Managing funds: Monitoring and assurance pertaining to existing local growth programmes and funds for which LEPs are responsible

Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
<p>We will continue to manage the following funding streams in line with the North East Assurance Framework. Activity will involve working with partners to develop project business cases and agree investments, then ensure legal and financial compliance and documentation is in place for management and audit purposes. We will continue to monitor delivery and output generation with partners and report to government quarterly.</p>	<p>The assurance framework has guided all investment decisions during the year and was refreshed with minor changes that were approved by the Board in January 2023. Government's annual performance review of the North East LEP in January concluded that our governance arrangements and controls met national requirements. During the year the financial management, decision making, and reporting arrangements between the NTCA and the LEP was subject to an internal audit review to determine whether they adequately serve the NTCA's role as the LEP's accountable body. The report concluded there was significant assurance in regard to the framework of controls.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Update, when required to reflect integration into the new MCA governance structure in May 2024.</p>
<p>Local Growth Fund Legacy £9 million planned expenditure 2022/23.</p>	<p>The programme has exceeded its annual jobs targets with a forecast of c2,000 jobs by the year end. Outcome expenditure is down on forecast, at £7.1million, mainly due to delays on three projects: East Pilgrim St, Newcastle; Central Gateway, Newcastle; and the NE Inward Investment Fund.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Programme will continue to taper with a focus on collecting and reporting on residual project performance data. Remaining LGF resources of c£5million are planned to be spent in 2023/24.</p>
<p>Getting Building Fund legacy £11 million planned expenditure 2022/23.</p>	<p>The programme is well below the 700 jobs target for the year, with an outturn of c100 forecast. This reflects delays in the physical completion of most new commercial space projects. However, the programme has delivered c30,000sqm of new or refurbished commercial floorspace and two new renewable energy R&D and testing facilities totalling 2,492sqm. Expenditure for the year is down on forecast at £9.9million, mainly due to a CPIF pilot project not being delivered.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Programme will continue to taper with a focus on collecting and reporting on residual project performance data. Remaining GBF resources of <£1.5million are planned to be spent in 2023/24.</p>

Enterprise Zone sites infrastructure programme £25 million.	Forecast budget outturn at c£10.5million is well below the original forecast. This is due to delays on several sites including IAMP, Port of Sunderland, North Bank of the Tyne and Ashwood Business Park. More positively, Phase 1 works concluded on Tyne Dock where Equinor have developed their O&M Base to service the Dogger Bank Wind Farm. The number of jobs reported this year is forecast to be 368. At Jade Business Park a Phase 2 funding award this year of £2.6million is enabling the remainder of the site to be serviced. Business rates income for 2022/23 is remains on the original forecast of £6.5million.	Amber	The programme will continue as current, with live projects being monitored and pipeline project business cases being brought forward for determination. Business rates income and balances on the EZ account will be reported regularly.
North East Investment Fund programme £7 million Commercial Property Investment Fund North East Property Investment Fund schemes.	The budget outturn is forecast at £8million, reflecting the drawdown of funds into the North East Property Investment Fund. The NEIF has remained closed to new loans and 14 existing loans have been managed throughout this year. The Commercial Property Investment Fund was launched with an investment of £35million in January 2023, following the appointment of FW Capital as Fund Manager. The longer established North East Property Fund has cumulatively supported 325 new jobs and construction of 277 new homes.	Green	The programme will continue to receive loan repayments on existing NEIF loans, no new loans are planned. We will monitor and report on the performance of the arm's length North East Property Fund and Commercial Property Investment Funds.
Enterprise Zone surpluses programme £2 million (Project Acceleration Development budget allocation).	The balance of £2million on the approved PDAF budget of up to £4million has not been allocated through further project calls. The decision not to hold further project calls reflected a wish to review lessons from the earlier project calls and, more recently, the impending transition process into a new Combined Authority and introduction of other funds into the region.	Amber	There are no plans to use this budget in 2023/24.
Project Development Accelerator Fund £1 million planned expenditure 2022/23.	The budget outturn forecast is £1.1million and the programme will be substantially completed. Of the 18 live projects being supported, 15 will complete in 2022/23.	Green	Programme will financially conclude end of Qtr. 2 2023/24 with the remaining PDAF committed budget of £130,000 spent.

Added value			
Initiative	Year end position at March 2023	RAG status	Transition year position – during 23/24 we will:
We will work with partners to inform and support delivery of a number of regionally significant projects using the funding available to us.	The Project Development Accelerator Fund (PDAF) project development study awards have enabled a few projects to develop business cases and secure national funds including Tyne Coast College (£20million from DfE) and Sunderland College (£20million from the Levelling Up Fund). Bids are currently being considered by the DfT to construct the Leamside Line rail scheme, whilst the High Line access proposal at Forth Banks is included in a bid to the NTCA. EZ Development studies have been supported key sites including masterplanning at Newcastle Airport EZ site.	Green	Non-financial support will continue to be provided to support regional partners including letters of support for LUF Round 3.
We will lead the coordination of the regional access to finance work to ensure future programmes meet the needs of North East businesses. This includes preparation work to understand the supply and demand issues and reaching regional consensus to inform the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second tranche of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund for implementation by the British Business Bank in autumn 2023. • The successor fund to the regional North East Fund Limited for implementation in January 2024. 	Initial discussions are in progress with regards to the implementation of NPIF 2 within the North East and are expected to be completed during 2023/24. Work has been undertaken with regional stakeholders to extend the North East Fund, with agreement to reinvest NEIF resources over a longer period, initially to April 2025 and then to become available to invest into a regional successor fund.	Green	Continue to work with partners to extend the North East Fund ltd to 2025. Engage with the BBB to reflect the needs of the North East in NPIF2.

23 March 2022

Item 6: Discussion paper:

The future of regional business support - will the UKSPF rollout address the private sector concerns and desires?

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Having supported 120,000 businesses and individuals since 2017/18 to find the solutions, services and expertise required to reach their goals the North East Growth Hub has become the established gateway across the North East to business support.

1.2 The Growth Hub has played a critical role in cultivating the ecosystem to meet the objectives of the North East Strategic Economic Plan and to deliver a cohesive journey from start up to scaleup. Working with partners, the Growth Hub has identified gaps in the support landscape, design the programmes required to fill those gaps and attracted the funding required to deliver them, which has resulted in the establishment of:

- High Potential Startups – creating a pipeline of high growth and innovation led startups.
- Peer Networks – supporting businesses recovery from Covid19
- Supply Chain North East – engaging local businesses in supply chain opportunities
- Scaleup North East – helping businesses with scale up potential to achieve scaleup levels of performance.
- Growth Hub High Performance – embedding practices that drive high levels of productivity.
- Made Smarter – supporting the adoption of industrial digitisation technologies
- Challenge North East – using challenge led innovation to solve the economic, environmental and social problems.

1.3 The North East Growth Hub also plays a critical role in coordinating ecosystem development having created the Business Support Provider Network as a means of sharing best practice, encouraging cross referrals and a culture where there is 'no wrong door' for anyone seeking business support. The network allowed the North East to quickly respond to and put in place the frameworks required to support businesses through the Covid19 pandemic and EU Exit.

1.4 In addition, the systems, processes and methodologies developed by the North East Growth Hub are recognised as best in class nationally, and regularly adopted by others nationally, such as our Segmentation and Diagnostic platform which has been adopted by several Growth Hubs including Liverpool City Region.

1.5 The role we've played and the model that's been established in the North East is a recognised exemplar by Government as well as independent organisations such as the national Scaleup Institute. Our impact is proven through independent evaluation which demonstrates that since 2017/18, we have:

- Achieved an average annual improvement of £8.8k turnover per employee in businesses receiving high intensity assistance.
- Delivered £292million additional Gross Value Added and 4,435 additional jobs

- Connected businesses to opportunities for growth, innovation and internationalisation in markets such as offshore wind, electrification and health and life sciences as well as in established supply chains such as automotive.
- Coordinated collated and analysed intelligence to rapidly respond to and inform the response to economic events.
- Connected businesses with place through encouraging business leaders to become Enterprise Advisers, business mentors. establish apprenticeship programmes, adopt good work practices and volunteer.

1.6 As we transition from EU funding to the UKSPF the North East is fortunate that we have a solid base on which to build a more transformative ecosystem and take the Growth Hub work to date to the next level for the region. The fear is however that the way the UKSPF has to be allocated, there is a significant risk that as a region we do not leverage and build on our existing strengths and that we miss the opportunity to make things better through the implementation of UKSPF – a fear that is shared and regularly vocalised by the private sector in the region.

2.0 Private sector concerns and desires

2.1 Throughout the regional UKSPF consultation process the private sector and LEP's Business Growth Board voiced their optimism that the UKSPF presented an opportunity to strengthen and address the suboptimal ERDF. Specifically, the private sector and Business Growth Board advocated that:

- Business support, especially when related to sector development, innovation and scaleup is best delivered regionally.
- That UKSPF presents an opportunity to shift from a transactional to a transformative approach to business support.
- That a coherent and integrates 'system' should be introduced that facilitated business journeys from start up to scaleup.
- And that the builds on what works and nationally recognised and exemplary structures such as the North East Growth Hub.

3.0 Emerging picture

3.1 After reviewing the emergent UKSPF plans, it's becoming apparent that the areas of development and improvement advocated by the private sector are unlikely to feature in the emerging proposals, and that rather than address the frailties of the suboptimal ERDF programme, that they are likely to deepen them. Businesses report that the emergent issues include:

- Although pockets of collaboration will exist (via joint calls and the introduction of a Dynamic Purchasing System), it's unlikely that blanket regional coverage will be achieved leaving significant gaps in provision and inconsistency across the region.
- The emerging support specifications suggest a continuation of the status quo rather than a different and more transformative approach, which businesses say is a missed opportunity.
- Businesses in some areas risk being frozen out of the regional networks that support their growth and development.
- It is likely that fragmentation, confusion, and the feeling of a post code lottery will deepen and exacerbate businesses existing frustrations.
- In one Lead Authority area there will be no local offer for established businesses.
- Structures such as the North East Growth Hub have not been considered by Lead Authorities in local system design.

- It is unlikely that the support infrastructure will effectively and consistently facilitate the journey from start up to scaleup.

3.2 Whilst not being able to address all of the issues presented in the short term, the appended paper is designed to demonstrate how the North East Growth Hub is working with Lead Authorities to help manage the immediate risks and effects of UKSPF implementation.

3.3 The private sector is disappointed by the current approach and are keen to understand how their needs will be met as funding is devolved to the region and address the issues raised in this paper.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 That the board have an open discussion on:

- i. how to address the short-term issues presented in the paper;
- ii. note the current work with the LA7 and provide constructive challenge and feedback to input into the ongoing collaboration between the North East Growth Hub and the UKSPF Lead Authorities.
- iii. how to ensure the design and delivery of a best-in-class system for rollout for 2025/26

5.0 Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1: Working across the lead authorities to manage immediate risks and effects of UKSPF

Appendix 1:

Working across the lead authorities to manage immediate risks and effects of UKSPF

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following a presentation to the LA7 Economic Directors on the 3 January 2023 on how the North East Growth Hub could support regional coherence whilst enabling local flexibility, it was agreed that the North East Growth Hub team engage with each UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Lead Authority to inform how the North East Growth Hub model could best support UKSPF delivery and begin the process of designing a scalable infrastructure that can support regional delivery post 2025/26.
- 1.2 On the date of writing this paper each Lead UKSPF Authority has been engaged with excluding County Durham. A meeting will be held with County Durham on the 22 March 2023.

2.0 Market and system failures during the customer journey

- 2.1 When designing business support solutions, it's important to recognise that persistent market and system failures exist (BEIS - Middlesex University) and manifest at different stages of the customer journey (Awareness – Interest – Desire – Action - Impact).
- 2.2 Appendix 1 provides an overview of the failures, potential effects of UKSPF and the potential North East Growth Hub solutions at each stage of the customer journey.

Awareness	Interest	Desire	Action	Impact
Market failure 1	Market failure 2	Market failure 3	System failure 1	System failure 2
Fragmented and confused: businesses often complain that the landscape is overly complex, difficult to navigate.	Return on Investment: doubts about the benefits and value that businesses will receive in return for their time and money invested in business support solutions/services.	Lack of trust and confidence: in the support on offer and the providers ability to understand the needs of businesses, often due to poor previous experiences and being sold the wrong solution.	Duplication and inefficiency: business support providers, often funded from the same source, collect the same data through similar processes (expression of interests, diagnostics etc), from the same businesses in unintegrated systems.	Impact data transparency and availability: although impact and performance data exists (e.g. via ERDF programme summative assessment and evaluation) it's not made available to inform regional policy and system design. This lack of data means that the evidence is not available to identify which programmes have been successful in the past and should therefore be built on and sustained into the future.
Likely effect of UKSPF:				
Different business support offers in different areas: although evident areas of collaboration (e.g. Start-up, Innovation, Energy Efficiency and Grants) this is unlikely to result in blanket regional coverage and different offers will exist in different areas which is likely to increase levels of fragmentation, confusion and perceptions from businesses of a postcode lottery.	Promoting the benefits of business support: working with businesses to pinpoint their individual needs and establishing how targeted solutions could fulfil these needs helps businesses to understand the benefits that they are likely to receive through engaging in support. Although most Lead Authorities have 'boots on the ground' - largely through existing teams - the approach is not uniform and the level of experience in diagnosing need and brokering business support solution varies.	Provider led approach leading to a lack of impartiality: responsibility for stimulating demand for programmes is likely to vary and, in most cases, will reside with the programme deliverer. This can result in a programme push approach which can increase doubts about the benefit and value of the programmes being presented. Providers targeting the same businesses: it's likely that providers will be tasked with stimulating demand for their programmes which can result in multiple providers targeting the same businesses at a similar time. This approach can result in a lack of impartiality and the feeling of being 'sold to' and mistrust.	Service infrastructure and systems: There are a variety of different CRM systems and data collection methods in use across Lead Authorities, some plan to provide providers direct access, whilst others plan to collect and input data via claims processes. Where shared systems and automation are not in place duplication and inefficiency is likely to result.	Collaborative analysis: Local ownership of UKSPF presents an opportunity for Lead Authorities to collaborate and share impact and performance data to enable the identification of the good practice that could be incorporated into 2025/26 service design.
North East Growth Hub solutions:				
Presentation of local offers: building on the North of Tyne Growth Hub Micro Site there is potential to work with each Lead Authority to create their own Micro Site designed to showcase their local offer and to refine the Business Support and Finance Growth Hub search facilities to help users to identify the support available in their location.	Targeted marketing: using data driven segmentation tools, to identify and target the businesses from Lead Authority areas who are most likely to benefit from and respond to business support solutions.	Business Support Provider Network: continue to support the provider network and to champion a person/business led approach, to encourage cross referrals, case conferencing, collaboration and culture where there is 'no wrong door'.	Shared system design: Work with Lead Authorities to identify opportunities for shared systems (e.g. CRMs, Intelligence Gathering, Diagnostics) that could be piloted in readiness for post 25/26 regional delivery.	Monitoring and evaluation framework: work with Lead Authorities to create a consistent monitoring and evaluation framework that will enable the effective evaluation of UKSPF programmes and the identification of good practice.
Triage service: ensure that the Growth Hub Triage Team have clear referral routes for people and businesses based on their location.	Training and CPD via the Business Support Provider Network: deliver business diagnosis and action planning training to Lead Authority business engagement officers via the Business Support Provider Network.	Impartial diagnosis and brokerage: to grow awareness in people, businesses and providers of when impartial diagnosis and brokerage is required and to establish clear referral routes with Lead Authorities.	Integration of National Programmes: working with national programmes (e.g. International Trade, Innovate UK EDGE, Made Smarter, British Business Bank etc) to integrate them into local ecosystems.	Intelligence gathering: to coordinate the collection and analysis of business intelligence from across the region to strengthen the evidence base used to inform strategy and policy development.
Business Support Provider Network: maintain the Business Support Provider Network to ensure awareness of the collective offer, to encourage cross referrals, collaboration, and coordination.	Common diagnostic platform: provide access to a common diagnostic and segmentation platform to those Lead Authorities who wish to use it.			

23 March 2022

Item 9: Chair and Chief Executive Update

1.0 Background

1.1 The Chair and Chief Executive would like to provide an update to Board Members on some of the discussions and meetings that they have been involved in since the last Board meeting in January.

2.0 Chair's key meetings and discussions

2.1 Since the last Board meeting on the 26 January 2023, the LEP Chair has been involved in a variety of meetings and discussions as outlined below:

- Regular meetings with the North East LEP CEO;
- LEP Board member recruitment and interviews;
- North of Tyne Combined Authority Cabinet;
- BEIS/City and Local Growth Unit Mid Term Review
- Speaker at the North East LEP Apprenticeship Conference in National Apprenticeship Week;
- The signing of the North East Devolution Deal;
- Speaker at the Built Environment Conference;
- Speaker at Centre for Cities Conference;
- North East LEP AGM.

3.0 Chief Executive's key meetings and discussions

3.1 Since the last Board meeting, outside of the internal and external 'business as usual' and project meetings, the Chief Executive has been involved in a number of meetings that continue to move the regional economic growth agenda forward. These include:

- Meetings with the LEP Network;
- Meetings with government officials;
- Regional Economy Group;
- CPIF launch video;
- Net Zero North East Shadow Board;
- North East Devolution Consultation – Transport;
- Meetings with new Board members;
- NP11 Chief Executives Meeting;
- North East LEP AGM.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 The Board is recommended to note the report.

