

**Panel Chair:** Rashik Parmar  
**Authors:** Racheal Johnson

---

**Report to:** LEP Board

**Date:** 29 November 2017

**Subject:** Business Communications Group (BCG) update

---

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide LEP Board members with an update on business engagement, marketing and communications and activity undertaken since the last Board meeting.
- 1.2 To outline the planned activity for the coming months, in line with the agreed communications and marketing strategy.

## **2 Information**

### **Business engagement**

- 2.1 The last Business Communications Group (BCG) meeting took place on 20 September. The key points raised by members were:
  - Catherine Lunn, Apprenticeships Manager at WYCA. This was well received by BCG members in light of feedback that there is still uncertainty among some businesses, both large and small, about the implications of the recent apprenticeship reforms.
  - Comments about trading conditions were generally positive, levels of export activity continue to rise and the domestic market is slowly picking up with small increases in orders and sales.
  - Concerns were expressed about the general squeeze on margins caused by rising input costs and a reluctance to pass on increases to customers.
  - Recruitment difficulties remain across most sectors, particularly in areas such as York where there is virtually nil unemployment.
  - The Brexit negotiations continue to cause uncertainty and businesses want clarity quickly about the use of overseas labour. Similar clarity is sought about the future of the Common Agricultural Policy.
  - In more rural areas the lack of broadband and mobile connectivity remains an issue.
- 2.2 There is a new representative on the BCG from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) – Barney Mowatt. Further new members are likely to be appointed as a result of the recent LEP Board recruitment exercise.

- 2.3 The next meeting of the BCG will take place in early December and is being hosted by the University Technical College (UTC) in Leeds. The theme of the meeting will be productivity in the Leeds City Region and how this might be improved. A representative from the LEP's Business Innovation and Growth (BIG) Panel has been invited to attend to provide an update about the push to increase levels of innovation and research and development (R&D).
- 2.4 In addition to the next formal BCG meeting, a workshop is being planned for new members with the aim of seeking their views and fresh perspective on the developing proposals around a new policy framework for the LEP, bringing together both the SEP and a City Region Inclusive Industrial Strategy that responds both to the objectives of the Government's Industrial Strategy and the LEP/ WYCA's ambitions for inclusive growth (this proposed policy framework will be discussed in detail at item 8).

#### Communications and Marketing

- 2.5 The Board is asked to note the below performance updates in relation to the LEP's key communications and marketing channels for September and October 2017. As noted in previous Board updates, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Communications and Marketing team now covers the full breadth of the Combined Authority/ LEP agenda and the media statistics presented below refer to coverage across this full range of activity.

#### Media coverage (September 2017)

Media mentions:	538
Estimated reach:	25,166,547
Estimated Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)	£739,066

#### Media coverage (October 2017)

Media mentions:	889
Estimated reach:	83,750,554
Estimated Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)	£1,750,901

- 2.6 Select recent media highlights are included at **Appendix 1**.

#### 2.7 Website (September)

	<b>www.the-lep.com</b>	<b>www.investleedscityregion.com</b>
Primary audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Region businesses (primarily SMEs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential investors in the City Region</li> </ul>
Sessions	6,935	2,379
Page views	18,201	5,374

### October:

	www.the-lep.com	www.investleedscityregion.com
Primary audience	• City Region businesses (primarily SMEs)	• Potential investors in the City Region
Sessions	5,872	3,190
Page views	17,571	7,339

## 2.8 Social media

### Twitter – September:

	@LeedsCityRegion	@InvestLCR
Impressions	65,200	37,600
Profile visits	3,641	283
Follower growth	113	45

### October:

	@LeedsCityRegion	@InvestLCR
Impressions	97,400	92,400
Profile visits	3,615	972
Follower growth	164	73

## 2.9 Key communications and marketing highlights

- According to early results from the 2017 LEP Business Survey, marketing of the **Growth Service** and associated business support products has increased awareness of the LEP's support for businesses. 49% of businesses in the region are now aware of at least one LEP business support product, up from 39% in July 2015.
- Leeds City Region has attended **MIPIM UK** with a private sector delegation including 17 sponsors. This is a result of a bigger and bolder approach to MIPIM that reflects the vibrancy of the City Region. The Marketing team is proactively pursuing sponsors now for MIPIM 2018, which currently has 25 confirmed sponsors and commitment from civic leadership is strong.
- The **#4Sparks campaign** to attract Channel 4 to locate in Leeds City Region has so far reached over 472,769 people through its media relations campaign to date and achieved an estimated advertising equivalent media value of £17,102.32
- Marketing support for the **LEP Board recruitment campaign** in September resulted in a strong response from the private sector, including more applications overall compared with previous recruitment rounds, a more diverse set of applications including more applications from women and BAME applications, and more applications from the digital sector, which the LEP Board had singled out as a priority.

- Work has been undertaken to link the Combined Authority's **transport offer to businesses** more clearly with the LEP's business support products, including cross-promotion of these activities via the Growth Service and rebranding business-focused transport products in line with the LEP's overall business-facing identity. Example visuals are enclosed at **Appendix 1**.
- The **business advice pop-up cafes** have continued throughout September and October, with highly positive feedback from the businesses attending. The September pop-up in Batley was attended by local MP, Tracey Brabin, who was very complimentary about the programme. Roger Marsh has since written to Ms Brabin and is due to meet her to discuss the LEP's/ Combined Authority's business support activities.
- **Growth Deal media stories** – progress on delivering the LEP's £1bn Growth Deal continues to generate significant media stories. Growth Deal stories in September and October include: the £325k grant award for Bradford Odeon to bring the heritage building back into use as a music and events venue; the opening of the NORDEC dental training centre in Bradford, funded with £250k of LEP Growth Deal money to provide state-of-the-art dental training at Bradford College; the unveiling of new £50m flood defences in Leeds (which uses UK-first technology), supported through £3.8m of Growth Deal funding; the opening of the £7m Advanced Skills and Innovation Centre at Wakefield College, which has benefitted from £3.3m Growth Deal funding; and the topping out of Dewsbury Learning Quarter which has received £11.1m LEP/ WYCA investment.

Forthcoming activity:

2.10 The Board is asked to note the following activity planned for the coming period:

- **Smart Cities World Congress (November 2017)** – Leeds City Region will have a stand at this year's international Smart Cities showcase in Barcelona, and is leading a delegation of public and private sector partners to promote the opportunities which exist in the region.
- **#4Sparks** - The #4Sparks campaign to attract Channel 4 to relocate to Leeds City Region will continue over November.
- **MIPIM 2018** – Leeds City Region will have a significant presence at the property and investment showcase MIPIM 2018 in March, and is continuing to attract substantial sponsorship for the event from the private sector.
- **Continued roll-out of Let's Talk Real Business campaign** – including continued release of media and video case studies, targeted advertising and events, including business advice pop-up cafes. In addition to promoting the support available to businesses via the Growth Service, the campaign also has a specific focus on encouraging more SMEs in the region to consider exporting.
- **Labour market report and LEP business survey** – a series of stories, blogs and other communications activities are being planned for November and early December around the publication of two influential LEP research reports on

developments in the Leeds City Region labour market and the comprehensive 2017 LEP business survey.

- **Growth Deal and other key media stories** – following significant recent media and other communications activity related to Growth Deal-funded projects, stories are planned between now and Christmas covering the following Growth Deal and other programmes: the topping out of the Growth Deal-supported Nexus innovation centre at the University of Leeds, further progress on the Tackling Fuel Poverty programme, which covers the whole City Region, and the anticipated launch of the Energy Accelerator programme, which will help bring forward low carbon energy schemes across the City Region.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 That the LEP Board notes the feedback from the BCG in section 2.1 to 2.4 and consider how this feedback may inform the work of the LEP Board and related WYCA panels and committees.
- 3.2 That the LEP Board notes the highlight report in section 2.5 to 2.9 on recent communications and marketing activity.
- 3.3 That the LEP Board notes and comments as appropriate on the planned activity in section 2.10 onwards.

### **4. Appendices**

- 4.1 Appendix 1: select communications and marketing highlights for September and October 2017