
Report to: Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP Board)

Date: 20 September 2018

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

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide LEP Board members with an update on the meeting of the Business Communications Group (BCG), held on 20 June 2018.
- 1.2 To provide Board members with an update on communications and marketing activity in support of its objectives, delivered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Communications and Marketing team.

2. Information

BCG meeting

- 2.1 The meeting welcomed two new BCG members: Beckie Hart, Regional Director (Yorkshire and Humber) of the CBI and Paul Varley, Area Director for Lloyds Bank.
- 2.2 Joanna Robinson, Chair, provided feedback about the recent LEP Board to BCG members.
- 2.3 The main agenda item was an update on the LEP's Growth Service and specifically support for apprenticeships, as requested by BCG members at their March meeting. Attendees welcomed the updates and key discussion points included:
 - Whether information is being collected about enquiries to the growth service that can't be supported, so that gaps in support can be identified to support future funding bids.
 - Whether job creation/ safeguarding is the main priority for support, and whether improved productivity should also be a target, given the focus on this in proposals for the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy.

- Support for apprenticeships remains unclear following the recent reforms, and the LEP should continue with its work to help clarify the situation.
- 2.4 Since the BCG meeting took place a report on the impact of the Growth Service in 2017-18 has become available and has been distributed to all BCG members, alongside information about the new Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE). A monthly briefing on Growth Service performance has also been produced in response to feedback received at the meeting, and this will be shared with BCG members going forward.
- 2.5 BCG members provided general updates on issues and opportunities that are impacting upon business in the City Region. The key themes raised were:
- **Brexit** – the lack of clarity about a settlement continues to cause great concern and is impacting upon investment and growth decisions. Concerns were also expressed about what seems to be a lack of urgency to reach a Brexit settlement, and that the Government’s focus upon Brexit is having a detrimental impact on other areas of government that still need to function properly.
 - **Devolution** – business remains concerned about the lack of a local/regional devolution settlement for the region and would welcome more engagement/consultation with the business community about the proposals for devolution.
 - **Key sectors** – some sectors, such as parts of manufacturing are starting to see a slowing down of orders and sales, whereas other such as the electronics sector remain buoyant.
 - **Recruitment** – difficulties continue for businesses looking to recruit skilled staff in key sectors, with the Construction and Logistics sectors facing particular shortages. There has been a lower than expected take up of apprenticeship opportunities in some sectors.
 - **GDPR** - there remains a lack of clarity about the practical implications of the recently introduced GDPR legislation.
 - **Clean Air Zone, Leeds** – at a local level the proposals for the introduction of a Clean Air Zone in Leeds are causing concern for SMEs who own/operate non-compliant vehicles.
- 2.6 BCG members also received an update on the City Region’s bid to host the new headquarters for Channel 4 and expressed their support for the bid.
- 2.7 The next BCG meeting takes place on 19 September.

Communications and Marketing

- 2.8 The Board is asked to note the below updates in relation to the LEP’s key communications and marketing channels for June and July. 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 (June 2018)

Stories issued:	26
Media mentions:	598
Estimated reach:	26,004,292
Estimated Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)	£1,310,377

Media coverage (July 2018)

Stories issued:	24
Media mentions:	905
Estimated reach:	38,756,118
Estimated Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)	£1,939,323

2.9 Select recent media highlights are included at **Appendix 1**.

2.10 Website (June)

	www.the-lep.com	www.investleedscityregion.com
Primary audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Region businesses (primarily SMEs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential investors in the City Region
Sessions	5,357	1,769
Page views	15,855	5,124

Website (July)

	www.the-lep.com	www.investleedscityregion.com
Primary audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Region businesses (primarily SMEs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential investors in the City Region
Sessions	4,017	2,158
Page views	17,526	5,210

2.11 Twitter – June:

	@LeedsCityRegion	@InvestLCR
Impressions	52,200	35,400
Engagements	582	158
Follower growth	116	121

Twitter – July

	@LeedsCityRegion	@InvestLCR
Impressions	141,000	104,000
Profile visits	2,220	2,030
Follower growth	129	121

2.12 Key communications and marketing highlights:

- A campaign marking the **Growth Deal halfway point** was delivered during the first two weeks in June. Focusing primarily on social media case studies and infographics, the campaign hashtag #LCRGrowthDeal generated in excess of 750,000 Twitter impressions, secured significant social media support from partners and generated regional media coverage for two stories, focusing on the overall impact of the Growth Deal to date and the topping out of the new Leeds City College Quarry Hill campus, funded through the Growth Deal. Two ministerial quotes were also secured from Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry MP.
- The monthly **partner eNews** on the key news stories from the LEP and Combined Authority has seen increased open and click-through rates since its launch in January. The open rate for the most recent newsletter has risen to 35%, which is the highest level of engagement of any Combined Authority/ LEP e-newsletter. An example of the most recent edition is available at: <https://mail-westyorksca.com/t/3LTT-FPEX-4782RMB83/cr.aspx>. Meanwhile, the **LEP SME eNews** continues to be distributed monthly to 12,000 businesses across the City Region with an average open rate of 13% - this is an increase on the previous average of 10% and is within the industry average of 10-15% for an e-newsletter targeting such a large audience. The latest edition is available at: <https://mail-the-lep.com/t/3LTT-FFI7-4782RMB83/cr.aspx>
- The **#4sparks campaign** to bring Channel 4 to the region has continued with social media endorsements from TV writer and director Kay Mellor, Channel 4 presenter Amar Latif and Kaiser Chief band member Simon Rix. Advertorials with a focus on support for young Leeds City Region talent to succeed in TV skills are featuring in Broadcast (a TV industry publication) for two weeks in August. The decision as to the location for the Channel 4 National HQ will be announced in October.
- A campaign to promote the new **LEP Apprenticeship Grant for Employers** was launched on 1 August. The campaign was developed following market research targeting SMEs in the region, and includes campaign creative, marketing collateral, website development, social media and media relations. Campaign results will be reported to a future meeting.
- The **Discover Digital campaign**, promoting career opportunities in the City Region's fast-growing digital sector, launched on 15 August. A dedicated campaign website, supported by key digital employers in the

region, has been created at discoverdigital.org.uk. Campaign updates will be brought to a future meeting.

- An engagement exercise encouraging businesses, partners and individuals in the City Region to have their say on the emerging **Digital Framework** for the City Region was launched last month. To date over 100 survey responses have been received. Outcomes from the engagement will be reported to a future meeting.
- An engagement exercise has also been launched around the **LEP Review**, giving businesses and business representative bodies in the region the opportunity to help shape proposals for revised geography and governance arrangements as a result of the Government's LEP Review. Details are available at: yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/lepreview

2.13 Planned activity over the coming quarter:

- The Apprenticeships grant, #4Sparks and Discover Digital campaigns will continue into the autumn. A campaign will also launch imminently around the City Region's **Career Learning programme**, encouraging people in the region to improve their skills through various mechanisms. Information will be hosted on the LEP website.
- **An updated LEP impact review** is being developed over the summer and early autumn for launch at the end of 2018. This will build on the well-regarded LEP impact report of 2015, which secured the endorsement of the then Prime Minister, setting out the impact that the LEP has achieved in partnership with the Combined Authority over the past three years.
- **Development of the LEP website and brand** will also begin over the summer and early autumn, as part of a project to bring all of the websites across the LEP/ Combined Authority "family" onto a single platform. This project will realise benefits in terms of making the relationship between the various parts of the LEP/ Combined Authority's work clearer for audiences and delivering substantial cost savings.
- There will be continued communications and engagement support around the LEP Review and the outcomes of proposals ultimately agreed by the LEP Board in September.

3. **Financial Implications**

3.1 None.

4. **Legal Implications**

4.1 None.

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 None.

6. External Consultees

6.1 None.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That LEP Board members note the contents of this report.

7.2 That members offer comments on the business challenges and issues raised by BCG members in section 2.3 and appropriate responses.

8. Background Documents

8.1 None.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Select media highlights