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

**Date:** 22 November 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 19 September 2018.
- 1.2 To update the Board on key communications and marketing activities delivered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Communications and Marketing team in support of the LEP Board's objectives in August and September.

## 2. Information

### BCG meeting

- 2.1 It was announced that Peter O'Brien from Yorkshire Universities would be joining the group representing all of the higher education institutions across the region.
- 2.2 Andrew Logan from Gordons LLP provided an update about the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the key points for both businesses and membership organisations.
- 2.3 The main agenda item was an update on the LEP Review and development of a Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy for the City Region. Several BCG members had attended a meeting earlier in the month to seek views from business on options to change the LEP's geography in response to a national Government review of local enterprise partnership governance. It was reported that, on the basis of economic analysis and feedback from the business community, the recommendation being taken to the LEP Board was to expand the existing LEP geography by merging existing elements of the Leeds City Region and York and North Yorkshire local enterprise partnerships. This was broadly supported by BCG members, though it was noted that certain issues – for example representation of rural businesses and the impact on the

development of the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy – would need to be looked at further as proposals developed.

2.4 BCG members provided feedback on the key issues being raised by the businesses they represent – in summary:

- Concern about the lack of a **Brexit** deal and the uncertainty this is causing is causing some businesses to delay decisions/ activity relating to investment, expansion and recruitment.
- In addition, concerns were expressed about some of the **underlying weaknesses in the UK economy**, such as connectivity, skills and the availability of finance, and the fact that the ongoing Brexit discussions are limiting Government action to tackle these.
- High street banks are actively lending, though there is a perception among some businesses that **commercial finance** remains difficult to access.
- There was discussion about what measures can be taken to ensure economic growth in certain parts of the region benefits others.

2.5 The Chair of the BCG, Joanna Robinson, reminded members that the BCG is an important conduit of information between business and the LEP Board. Members were encouraged to bring forward any issues the businesses they represent are experiencing so that the LEP Board can consider appropriate action. Members were also asked to continue sharing information about support available from the LEP with their businesses, and to make businesses aware of opportunities to take part in consultation and engagement on key policy issues – for example the LEP Review and development of the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy.

2.6 The next BCG meeting will take place on 12 December.

#### Communications and marketing update

2.7 The communications and marketing dashboards for August and September are enclosed at Appendix 1 and 2. This dashboard summarises performance against key communications and marketing indicators, in line with the LEP's overall strategic priorities.

### **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 2.4 and appropriate responses.

**8. Background Documents**

8.1 None.

**9. Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1: Communications and Marketing dashboard (August)  
Appendix 2: Communications and Marketing dashboard (September)