

Business Week 2016

Report to the Business Development Board, 8 March 2016

Report from Richard Kendall, Executive Director – Strategic Policy & Business Development

1. Summary

1.1. This paper proposes the LEP's approach to Business Week 2016, including organising a major one-off event on the Humber's role in the Northern Powerhouse.

2. Recommendations

2.1. That the Business Development Board approves the LEP's sponsorship of Business Week 2016 for £3,000.

2.2. The Business Development Board is recommended to approve the approach to Business Week 2016 outlined in the paper, including the organisation of a major event on the Northern Powerhouse, and delegate the LEP Executive to form a steering group for the event and move forward with preparations.

3. Background

3.1. The Business Development Board has always viewed Humber Business Week as a priority for its engagement activity and an opportunity for communicating the LEP's messages.

3.2. After a successful Business Week 2015, the Business Development Board agreed on the importance of planning ahead for 2016. This year's Business Week will be held 6-10 June.

3.3. Business Week is co-ordinated by a Steering Group, which the LEP is represented on, and administered from this year by the University of Hull.

4. Sponsorship of Business Week

4.1. The LEP has sponsored Business Week for several years at a cost of £3,000 per year, which in practice covers the costs of the printed brochure. The sponsorship includes mentions in publicity, on the website and at some events, in addition to a foreword and full page advertisement in the brochure. There are no other sponsors, but the organisations leading on the administration of the week (University of Hull) and publicity (Arrival PR) will be referenced.

4.2. The LEP rarely enters into sponsorship because of limited resources and the likelihood of displacing sponsorship available from other organisations, but the board has previously considered sponsoring Business Week to be a worthwhile exception given its alignment with the LEP's objectives and profile. The cost of the sponsorship can be met from the Business Development Board's delegated budget.

4.3. The Business Development Board is recommended to approve the LEP's sponsorship of Business Week 2016 for £3,000.

5. LEP events during previous Business Weeks

5.1. The LEP has previously organised its AGM, in the form of a LEP Forum, during Business Week. This included last year contributions from LEP board members, the

University of Hull and the Chief Economist of the Institute of Directors, and was well attended.

- 5.2. The timing fits well with the LEP's calendar with financial year end at 31 March and final performance information from 2015/16 available in mid-May. Publishing this information in an Annual Review is an important part of meeting the LEP's transparency obligations, and the event in Business Week to launch this provides an opportunity for questions and discussion – addressing engagement and accountability.
- 5.3. The LEP has also organised, or contributed to, various other events such as on skills in previous years.
- 5.4. The LEP has always been mindful in organising Business Week events of “doing what only the LEP can do”, i.e. not duplicating what other organisations will provide, and of doing what it can to support others' events.

6. Proposed approach for 2016

6.1. The proposed approach for 2016 is in two parts:

6.1.1. Support for the week as a whole

- Continue to contribute to co-ordination through the Steering Group and sponsorship, making more of the sponsorship than previously
- Increased promotion of the week and partners' events through the LEP's channels, reinforcing its sponsorship
- Support key events through attendance by board members and the Executive (to be determined when the timetable is finalised)

6.1.2. Organisation of specific events

- The LEP would organise, with partners, linked events on the Friday morning at the same venue on the theme of the Humber's place in the Northern Powerhouse. These are outlined below.

7. Northern Powerhouse events

7.1. Outline of events

7.1.1. The events would be in three parts with breaks in between, giving delegates the opportunity to attend some or all of them.

7.1.2. The Powerhouse Breakfast: Progress in the Humber over the last 12 months (approx 8.00-9.00)

- A slimmed down LEP Forum/AGM, lasting no more than an hour, briefly covering the Humber's headline economic performance and the key developments over the last year (with a particular focus on those involving the LEP).
- Formal launch of the LEP's Annual Review with publication of performance information.
- Opportunity to hear from and question a panel of LEP Board members.

7.1.3. The Humber Northern Powerhouse Business Summit (approx 9.15-12.30)

- The core one-off event to discuss the Humber's role in the Northern Powerhouse, aiming to attract a senior-level primarily business audience of around 200-300.
- Professionally facilitated with a mixture of speeches and panel discussions, and an emphasis on audience interaction.
- The line-up of speakers could include, for example, a Government minister, leaders/chief executives of major northern cities, chairs/chief executives of organisations such as Transport for the North or TechNorth, MPs and local leaders from business, education and councils.

7.1.4. The Power Lunches: Developing actions (from approx 12.45)

- 3-4 of these could run concurrently after the main event and provide an opportunity for further small group discussion with speakers and other delegates on particular topics. They would likely be invite-only and co-ordinated and paid for by sponsors.

7.2. Objectives of the events

7.2.1. From a LEP perspective, the outline objectives of running these events would be to:

7.2.1.1. Broaden and deepen the LEP's business engagement.

7.2.1.2. Communicate, develop and strengthen the Humber's position in the Northern Powerhouse – internally and, by bringing in high-level speakers from outside the area, externally.

7.2.1.3. Develop business leadership on the Northern Powerhouse economic agenda (linked to, but distinct from, the devolution agenda) and ensure the LEP is positioned within this debate as a collective Humber voice.

7.2.1.4. Demonstrate and extend through attendance and sponsorship the LEP's links with local business and other partners, and Government and other places in the North.

7.2.1.5. Improve perceptions of the Humber, and Humber partners, by delivering a professional event and developing a co-ordinated business agenda for the Northern Powerhouse that matches or exceeds any which may be found elsewhere.

7.2.1.6. Communicate the LEP's role and the commitment of public and private sector partners to the common Humber economic agenda.

7.2.2. For attendees, the events would be an opportunity to learn more about the emerging Northern Powerhouse and contribute to the development of the Humber's position within it. It would be clearly focussed on business, the economy and the Humber looking outwards. Clear actions would be identified, and there would be opportunity for attendees to get involved with taking these forward.

7.3. Resource implications

7.3.1. This would be an ambitious programme to organise. In order to deliver this it would require prioritising in the Executive, and importantly also significant contributions from partner organisations. Delivering such an event in partnership of course only adds to its credibility.

7.3.2. An outline budget is being prepared. The main costs will be venue/catering, facilitation and audio/visual. It is not anticipated that any speakers would require paying, but professional facilitation is considered to be essential for an event of this format and scale.

7.3.3. It will be necessary to cover most of the costs through sponsorship. Again, with appropriate sponsors, this would benefit the event's credibility. For simplicity, and to ensure attendance is open to businesses of all sizes, it is not proposed to charge for attendance.

8. Conclusion and recommendation

8.1. Contributing to Business Week along the lines of last year, with the main LEP event being a LEP Forum/AGM, is feasible and would address some of the board's objectives.

8.2. The more ambitious option is for the LEP to lead, with partners, the organisation of a one-off set-piece event on the Humber and the Northern Powerhouse. The LEP is uniquely well-placed to lead this, and doing so successfully would deliver a much greater impact – inside and outside the Humber.

8.3. The success of the event will depend on attracting sponsors, partners and speakers of the appropriate calibre. In order to do this, preparations will need to advance quickly. It is suggested that a small steering group, under business leadership and involving key partners, would be the best way of driving this forward.

8.4. The Business Development Board is recommended to approve the approach to Business Week 2016 outlined above, including the organisation of a major event on the Northern Powerhouse, and delegate the LEP Executive to form a steering group for the event and move forward with preparations.