

LA / LEP INTEGRATION PLAN TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDANCE

Government has [confirmed](#) that Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) core functions – namely, business representation, local economic planning, and the delivery of Government programmes where directed – from April 2024 should be delivered by local authorities.

This template is intended to aid the process of integration and inform the direction of any future government funding. This document should be read in parallel with the [guidance](#) published on the integration of LEP functions into local and combined authorities on 4 August 2023. Government expects decisions on the transfer and delivery of current LEP functions to be made locally.

Government expects functions to be delivered over current or potential devolution deal geographies so far as possible. Outside of areas with an agreed devolution deal, it is expected that functions will be exercised by the upper tier local authority, working with other upper tier local authorities as appropriate. Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate within an area, only one return is necessary. The authority which submits the return on behalf of the whole area should ensure all upper tier local authorities have agreed to the return and copy it to the LEP Chair.

It is recognised that the formal process of transferring any assets, loans, investments, or liabilities between existing LEP(s) and local democratic institutions will require agreement between both parties. All parties must follow the relevant laws and regulations that apply, including having due regard for the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Any commercially sensitive information may be submitted in parallel to the main integration plan. The use of annexes is also recommended for non-sensitive issues where more detail is required.

Completed plans should be sent to the central LEP Integration inbox (LEP.Integration@levellingup.gov.uk), copying all relevant parties (all upper tier local authorities and LEP Chair) and the relevant Area Lead in the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

The deadline for submission of this plan to Government is **23:59hrs on Thursday 30 November 2023** or earlier if possible, to help inform future funding decisions.

SECTION 1: CORE INFORMATION

Core details and current arrangements	
1.1 Name of LEP which is to be integrated.	<i>Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP)</i>
1.2 Name(s) of upper tier authority or authorities into which LEP functions are being integrated.	<i>Cumberland Council Westmorland and Furness Council</i>
1.3 Current relationship with the LEP	<i>An elected Member from each Authority are non-Executive Directors of CLEP. Westmorland and Furness Council acts as Accountable Body for CLEP.</i>
Integration leads	
1.4 Contact details for integration leads	<i>Jo Lappin, Chief Executive, CLEP Alison Hatcher, Assistant Chief Executive, Westmorland and Furness Council Angela Jones, Director of Thriving Places, Westmorland and Furness Council Darren Crossley, Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport, Cumberland Council</i>

SECTION 2: GEOGRAPHY

Geography
<p>2. Please set out the proposed geography for the delivery of LEP functions from April 2024. Answers should confirm whether the proposed geography is coterminous with the current LEP geography. If not, answers should confirm that the proposed geography constitutes a functional economic area (FEA), with reference to the size of population, local travel to work areas (TTWAs) and any other relevant drivers of the local economy.</p> <p>Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate across the proposed geography, you should confirm the governance arrangements and that service provision will be ensured across the whole geography – no authority should be left out and all parties should agree the arrangements.</p> <p><i>The proposed geography is for the delivery of LEP functions is the former county of Cumbria that is co-terminus with the current CLEP boundaries and fully inclusive of the two new unitary Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Council areas.</i></p> <p><i>The approach to joint governance is set out in 3 below which confirms a robust partnership approach between the two Councils and CLEP to deliver a smooth transition.</i></p>

SECTION 3: BUSINESS VOICE

Current and future activity

3. Please set out how you intend to embed a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice into local decision-making across the area. Answers should cover the following points:

- (a) Proposed model & governance structure** (e.g., a stand-alone business board, sub-board, or other structure)
- (b) Membership** (including the mix, balance and diversity of independent business members and any other partners drawn from outside of the business community)

Following Local Government Reform in Cumbria, the two new unitary authorities formed a Joint Executive Committee (JEC) to provide oversight for hosted services that continue to operate on a shared basis across the Cumbria geography. The JEC met on 13th November 2023 and agreed in principle to extend the remit of the committee so that it can provide the democratic leadership for strategic economic planning in the county. This aligns with Level 1 of the Devolution Framework. To meet the requirement for Local Authorities to take on delivery of key government-funded programmes from 1 April 2024, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness will ensure robust mechanisms are in place to deliver a seamless service. Locally it has been agreed that Cumberland will take on Accountable Body responsibilities as well as hosting the CLEP team and being responsible for delivery of pan-Cumbrian programmes.

These include;

Growth Hub (including Barrow Town Deal business support programme and Westmorland and Furness UKSPF business support)

- *Careers Hub*
- *Skills Bootcamps*
- *Department for Business and Trade Key Account Management*
- *Local Energy Hub*

Discussions are continuing at pace with Working Groups established to look at Delivery, Strategic Impact, Governance and Legal and Contractual issues. Final decisions will be underpinned by advice from Legal and Finance to ensure contractual compliance and vital considerations such as TUPE are complied with.

The CLEP Board and elements of its governance structure will continue to operate on an interim basis through the transition period. Through the interim arrangements, CLEP Board members will be the primary consultative and advisory body to the Joint Executive Committee on strategic economic growth for the functional economic area of Cumbria. The existing CLEP Board is made up of local business leaders and representative bodies. CLEP's wider governance structure also brings together businesses, third sector representatives and young people from all key sectors, of all business sizes, all parts of the Cumbrian geography and are representative of groups with protected characteristics. The existing Board would be able to provide insight and advice in shaping the future Economic Growth Board, as well as providing continuity of knowledge and expertise.

The Board's interim role would include, but not be limited to, the following key elements;

- *Providing strategic direction for the development of a new pan-Cumbrian Economic Strategy.*
- *Ensuring future structures have businesses representative of the Cumbrian economy fully embedded.*

- *Providing input to major policy development, large-scale funding programmes and initiatives.*
- *Acting as a consultative and engagement forum for central government.*
- *Ensuring delivery of funding programmes, policies and strategies aligns with local business need and opportunity.*
- *Providing continuity of knowledge on delivery of legacy and current revenue programmes.*

This approach has a number of benefits including the ability to meet the key government requirement of a transition of activities by 1 April 2024, providing continuity of delivery of existing LEP activity and inclusion of a ‘business voice’. It is currently anticipated this interim arrangement will last for a period of 6 months.

SECTION 4: PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

Current and future activity

4.1 Please list the projects, programmes and services currently delivered by the local LEP. *In each case you should indicate whether, subject to receiving equivalent funding, the upper tier local authority/authorities would continue to undertake each activity. Where a different set of functions/services is being delivered for a neighbouring area, you should repeat the exercise for that area. You do not need to include LEP activity delivered in a private capacity.*

Title	Short Description (1-2 sentences)	Will the activity continue once the LEP is integrated? (subject to future funding)	
		Yes	No
Growth hub	Provision of free at the point of access, government funded business support.	x	
Skills Bootcamps	Delivery of sector-specific skills provision to meet key local economic needs.	x	
Careers Hub	Delivery of government-funded careers advice and guidance coordination and support.	x	
Dept for Business and Trade Key Account Management	Provision of key account management service for foreign-owned businesses HQ in Cumbria.	x	
Low Carbon Hub	Delivery of coordinated advice to develop low carbon projects.	x	
Local Growth Fund	Ongoing management of monitoring requirements for the fund to 2025 – this will transition to local authority.		X
Getting Building Fund	Ongoing management of monitoring requirements for the fund to 2025 - this will transition to local authority.		X

Growing Places Fund	Ongoing management of the evergreen fund including programmes delivered using its funds - this will transition to local authority.		X
Other Local Priority Programmes			
UKSPF Business Support	Provision of business start-up and support across Westmorland and Furness aligned with BEIS Growth Hub.	x	
Barrow Town Deal	Provision of targeted business and social enterprise support in Barrow.	x	

SECTION 5: DELIVERY AND APPROVALS

Governance of the integration process
5.1 (a) What mechanisms will be in place to manage the integration process at the local level?
<p><i>Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils have an established Joint Executive Committee (JEC) which is responsible for the ongoing management of activities linked to the Local Government Reorganisation process. The JEC is attended by senior elected members and officers including the Leader and Deputy Leader from both Authorities.</i></p> <p><i>The integration of LEP activities will fall under the purview of the JEC to ensure integration and alignment with wider pan-Cumbria activities, aspirations and needs. The CLEP Chair will be invited to join the JEC in a non-decision-making capacity to ensure the views, advice and guidance of the CLEP Board and its wider business network are fully considered.</i></p> <p><i>The JEC will be supported by an officer working group led by the Assistant Chief Executive, Westmorland and Furness Council and Darren Crossley, Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport, Cumberland Council, together with the S151 Officer from the Accountable Body which will meet on a regular basis and will also include senior specialists from economic development, legal, finance and HR. The Working Group will consider and respond to key items including, but not limited to the following;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Delivery of existing LEP projects and programmes including legacy responsibilities, performance and risk.</i> <i>• Future priorities, activity and opportunity.</i> <i>• Company requirements and liabilities.</i> <i>• HR, staffing and TUPE.</i> <i>• Financial implications.</i> <i>• Business engagement.</i> <i>• Data, economic forecasting and modelling.</i> <i>• Stakeholder management.</i>
5.1 (b) If the existing LEP is intending to formally cease operation and dissolve following its integration, who will be responsible for managing the transition and any legacy issues?
<i>The Directors of CLEP are working closely with the Local Authorities to agree the optimum timeline to cease operations, In doing so, discussions are centred around two key aims; 1) to wind up the</i>

company with full regard for all legal, financial and personal liabilities and 2) to provide any necessary interim support to enable a seamless transition to the new arrangements.

The workstream is led by the CLEP Chief Executive with close support from both S151 officers, Legal and HR reflecting the assurance implications involved with transferring not only LEP activities, but public sector finances.

Approvals

5.2 Has this integration plan been agreed by the relevant boards/persons in both the local LEP(s) and local authority/authorities?

Yes

No

Please copy all relevant parties (including the Chair of the local LEP(s)) when you submit this plan.

Yes.

Agreed at JEC Meeting 13 November 2023.

Considered at CLEP Board 24 November 2023. Delegation provided to CLEP Chair to review and agree final submission and actioned 30/11/23.