



# **An introduction to the Business Board Network**

**Mark Bretton MBE TD DL,  
Chair**

**Connecting local growth**

- LEPs no longer directly funded from April 2024.
- Not a reflection on performance or delivery – more realpolitik.
- Instead, Upper Tiers to take on the functions of:
  - Business Representation.
  - Local Economic Planning.
  - Delivery of Government programmes.
- But required to put a **Business Board** in place.
- Choice of model is a local decision

**Connecting local growth**

- Strong, **independent business voice** embedded in decision-making.
- New business board members appointed through an **open process**.
- Provide **challenge and insight** on business impact of public sector initiatives
- Provide **delivery expertise**
- Shape **business, trade and investment** support around local business needs
- Demonstrating a strong business voice an **eligibility requirement** for some HMG programmes e.g. Growth Hubs.

**Connecting local growth**



- Chaired by business leader, Lou Cordwell OBE, Professor of Innovation and Special Advisor to the President and Vice-Chancellor, UoM.
- Mayor of Manchester Andy Burnham on the Board
- Greater Manchester Business Strategy co-designed with business, communities and social enterprise etc and sets priorities.
- Initiating trade with Japan, expanding skills, boosting growth funding.

**Connecting local growth**



- Business and Enterprise Board chaired by David Meyerowitz, former CEO Haier Europe – also sits on CA Board as a non-voting member.
- Board is advisory in nature and more specifically provides the CA with insight on sector intelligence, supply side issues, opportunities of growth, line of sight to different funding initiatives.
- Board members appointed by open competition and for 3 years, possibility of 2<sup>nd</sup> term, can co-opt additional members for periods of up to 12 months.
- Represent voice of business in key LCR partnerships and stakeholder groups.

**Connecting local growth**



- Arm's length board not in a CA, retains 'LEP' title and structure.
- Delivers services negotiated under council contract, operational control lies with Oxfordshire County Council.
- Chaired by Professor Alistair Fitt (Vice Chancellor Oxford Brookes) and Nigel Tipple as CEO.
- The board is supported by four sub-groups, Business, Skills, Enterprise Zone, and Culture & Visitor Economy.

**Connecting local growth**

## ALIGN WITH BUSINESS BOARDS

---

- To reflect these changes evolving the LEP Network to **Business Board Network** and aligning to needs and circumstances of this ‘new’ membership.
- Need to focus on business board priorities, and make sure local business voice is heard and acted on within new government.
- Establishing a re-focussed Business Board Network will help do that and has the mandate from both Whitehall and its members

**Connecting local growth**

HMG said to council CEOs in April:

“The government supports the principle of maintaining a network that continues to represent the local business voice to help strengthen the aims of devolution and economic growth.. and to that end hope you will support the evolving Business Board Network”.

**Connecting local growth**

- Private company limited by guarantee.
- Funded by HMG and Members.
- Comprises Chair, CEO, Policy, Comms, Exec.
- Governed by Board including MCA and business reps.
- Works apolitically – in the interests of business investment.
- Work in partnership with trade bodies, BROs, CCN, LGA etc.

**Connecting local growth**

Covering all emerging models:

- MCAs
- Combined Authorities
- Upper Tier Authorities
- Also contracted LEPs – Cheshire & Warrington, Bucks

**Connecting local growth**

- **Convenors** of regional & pan-regional business leaders/officers
- **Support** economic leaders to collaborate, share best practice
- **Communicate** business data/analysis that informs opportunities
- **Channel** for comms with Ministers, Whitehall & Parliament
- **Connect** Skills teams and Growth Hub teams
- **Engage** with stakeholders and think tanks on mutual issues of concern
- **Monitor** Parliamentary activity/opportunities

**Connecting local growth**

- **Build** new relationship with government.
- **Focus** on lead priorities of devolution, Industrial Strategy and Local Growth Plans.
- **Strengthen** integration (where happening).
- **Support** emerging Business Boards and contracted LEPs.
- **Ensure** private sector/local business is engaged and connected.
- **Build** Business Board Network with focus on business voice.
- **Collaborate** with CCN, LGA, FSB, DCN, trade bodies (Retail, SMMT, Regen).

**Connecting local growth**

- We **support Business Boards** – we are here for you
- We are about empowering the **local business voice** - speak as one
- **Channel to new government** for local business interests
- Work in **partnership** to build strong network
- Communicate **business analysis + investment opportunities**
- Convene **regional business leaders/business sector interests**

**Connecting local growth**



**Connecting local growth**



Mark Bretton MBE TD DL,  
[chair@businessboardnetwork.co.uk](mailto:chair@businessboardnetwork.co.uk)  
+44 7740 924159

**Connecting local growth**