

Press release: PM hosts Local Enterprise Partnerships Council

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister began by thanking the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Chairs for their valuable contribution to business and innovation in the UK developing skills, delivering infrastructure, and securing investment.

She noted the steady growth of the economy in recent years and the record levels of employment, crediting this progress to the joint efforts of LEPs, Government and private sector entrepreneurs in driving growth across the country.

Co-chair Mike Blackburn OBE, Chair of Greater Manchester LEP, praised the strong track record of delivery seen from LEPs so far. He welcomed the enthusiasm of the Chairs and the opportunity to build on the success of recent years by furthering the close collaboration between LEPs and government, particularly in delivering the modern industrial strategy across the country.

Guests discussed the particular strengths that LEP business leaders bring to the table, including their ability to broker new partnerships and connections, their importance in delivering the objectives of the industrial strategy within their communities, and their role in fostering strong collaboration between local institutions, individuals and government.

Attendees also reflected on recent successes such as the HS2 College in Doncaster – supported by Sheffield City Region – which is equipping local young people with the skills they need to build our future railways.

Attendees agreed that LEPs have a particularly important role to play in connecting the business and educational sectors. They emphasised the value of the partnerships LEPs bring in helping to enable people of all ages to develop the modern skills that our businesses require to thrive.

Welcoming the government's ambitious technical skills agenda, they also praised the opportunities for local innovation that the industrial strategy has launched.

Looking ahead, the business leaders considered key growth areas for the UK economy, highlighting the example of the medical technologies sector as an area where LEPs can help drive this expansion.

There was also discussion around the LEP review, announced as part of the modern Industrial Strategy last year. It was noted that it would be an opportunity to identify where government can strengthen and support LEPs further in their work across the country.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of ensuring that LEP leadership truly represented the communities they served, pointing to the progress made in the number of women on FTSE100 boards as an example to follow.

She also noted that this council will serve as a regular occasion for Chairs of LEPs to come together and talk openly about how they can work more closely with government to achieve shared aims.

The Prime Minister concluded by reflecting on the opportunities ahead to maximise the convening power of LEPs in delivering the modern industrial strategy for all.