

## Communications Plan 2014/15

creating prosperity for all



**Introduction  
/ Research**

**LLEP Background**

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) formed in 2011. It is one of 39 LEPs in the country set up by Government following the cessation of RDAs.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) area is a two tier sub-region combining nine authorities, including seven district councils, a city and county council. It is governed by a board which comprises a mix of public and business members with a cross section of sectors represented.

The LLEP provides local government, the business community and other partners, the opportunity to come together to lead economic development and regeneration activities and to drive forward economic growth.

**LLEP's overarching ambition:**

Create a vibrant, attractive and distinctive place with highly skilled people making Leicester and Leicestershire the destination of choice for successful businesses

**LLEP's Targets:**

By 2020, the LLEP will:

- Create 45,000 additional private sector jobs
- Attract £2billion private sector investment
- Increase Gross Value Added (GVA) from £19bn to £23 billion

**Delivery**

Delivery of targets will be through the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which is aligned to our City Deal approved in March 2014.

Within these strategies, three flagship programmes are outlined which will bring require immense resource and strategic promotion in conjunction with the relevant partners :

- Businesses (Leicester & Leicestershire Business Growth Hub)
- People (Leicester & Leicestershire Employment and Skills Hub)
- Place (Infrastructure to support our Growth Areas and Transformational Priorities).

**Potential influencing factors that may affect the LLEP in 2014/15:**

- Change of private sector board members and Chair (June 2014)
- New Director and team restructure (June / July 2014)
- SEP funding (June 2014)
- The Autumn Statement
- Mayoral elections 2015
- Talks of LEPs merging

Since it was established in 2011, there has been a general misconception with the business community about the role of the LLEP, with many thinking that LEPs fulfil the same function as Business Link or RDAs did.

This perception is not really helped by the local press which as well as having a general lack of understanding about the ambition and purpose of LEPs, actively promote that the LLEP is governed and dominated by the public sector.

Despite great headway being made with the local media, particularly those more involved directly with business (such as Insider; Business Link) and less involved with the local

	<p>authorities, there is still much groundwork to be done to affect a behavior change to achieve positive advocates across all media.</p> <p>A strong private sector board could assist with this, moving forward, as well as a strategy to deliver more proactive communications. This has in the past been often been restricted by public sector involvement.</p> <p><b>LLEP Communications</b></p> <p>This is the third year that there has been a communications plan for the LLEP. Although there has been a communications plan in place for two years, only in the last year has there been there been a full time resource allocated to the LLEP.</p> <p>Prior to this, in-kind communications support was offered on a part-time basis by Leicestershire County Council. This was carried out as effectively as possible, albeit remotely from the rest of the team. This, at times, impacted on the understanding and awareness of projects and developments of the ever-changing landscape of the LLEP.</p> <p>Being based permanently within the LLEP team environment (since April 2013), has enabled the effectiveness of LLEP communications to improve dramatically. This is demonstrated in the 2013/14 end of year report.</p> <p>During the first year of a full time, permanent communications role, there was a good deal of time spent building up contacts and developing networks across the audiences, from businesses, partners and other government organisations (BIS, cabinet office press officers etc) to the local media and universities/ colleges etc.</p> <p>A solid foundation of contacts and networks has been established and has made way for a future of improved proactive communications. This is further outlined in the strategy.</p>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<p>Communications and stakeholder activity will align with the overall LLEP strategy, to develop reputation of the partnership and improve engagement across the target audiences.</p> <p>LLEP communication will also aim to synergise with priority cross-government campaigns to foster a cohesive overall approach to the delivery of local and national economic recovery.</p> <p>Targeted communications will specifically :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Improve the reputation of the LLEP</b> on a local and national level through regular dialogue, cross-promotional and cross-border opportunities, collaborative working with partners, other LEPs and agencies and increased engagement with target audiences.</li> <li>2. <b>Assist in the delivery of the LLEP’s programmes and targets</b> by raising awareness of specific schemes, projects and programmes to targeted stakeholders through appropriate channels.</li> <li>3. <b>Improve employment opportunities</b> by communicating details of LLEP and partner-led skills development and employability schemes and wider programmes which lead to overall job creation and economic growth.</li> <li>4. <b>Increase opportunities for local development</b> by improving the reputation of the area as a prosperous one and by increasing awareness of LLEP and partner-led opportunities that can facilitate change and encourage growth.</li> </ol>

## Strategy

The communications strategy for the forthcoming year will employ an effective approach to meet the communications objectives set out above and build on the foundations made in 2013/14.

There will be a core strategy to:

**Improve the reputation of the LLEP** by reaching, engaging and positively influencing key stakeholders. Specifically, this will entail:

- Cementing and further expanding existing relationships
- Increasing LLEP business engagement and exposure by officers and board members through events, networking and face to face meetings
- Developing and forging positive relations with the local media ensuring value for money and return on investment.

**Work diligently to deliver a robust, cost-effective campaign that will maximise low cost approaches.** Specifically,

- Seek to work with partners wherever possible, and capitalise on partners' channels, networks and on-line resources to help deliver LLEP messages and disseminate key information.
- Identify advocates to champion the work of the LLEP
- Bring influencers and partners on board (e.g. board members) to increase impact and deliver key messages, which will raise the individual profiles and also raise awareness of the LLEP
- Maximise partner relationships by reciprocated communication arrangements

**Increase proactive communications activity by using data, statistics intelligence and forward planning mechanisms to:**

- develop communications to assist 'thought leadership' of key spokespeople
- increase proactive communication across all channels and using new and up-to-date communications tools, for example, infographics.

### Message and style

Our **key messages** mirror the aims set out in the SEP. They are set out as simply as possible and should be used consistently across the partnership, to reinforce our leadership in the economic development field.

*"The LLEP aims to deliver economic growth across the city and county through assisting with business expansion and creation, increasing employment opportunities and attracting inward investment. By 2020 the LLEP will :*

- *Attract £2billion private sector investment*
- *Increase Gross Value Added (GVA) by £4 billion to £23 billion*
- *Creating 45,000 additional private sector jobs"*

Tactically, these key messages should be inherent in all press releases, publications, social media, events and web content as well as through stakeholder engagement and networking opportunities.

These strong, consistent key messages will also enable partners to become ambassadors for Leicester and Leicestershire in their individual and collective roles.

Messages from individual partners which are not coordinated or timely may confuse and dilute the strength of Leicester and Leicestershire's visibility.

## Audience

Knowing our audiences enables us to target the right people – to influence opinion at a local and national level – and reach the decision makers to attract and champion investment and support.

Three core target audience are identified. These are not exclusive or exhaustive. Messages will be communicated through a variety of channels and will be tailored, depending on the objective of communication.

### 1. Principal Audience

- LOCAL BUSINESSES
- Financial services
- Property developers
- Regulatory bodies
- Training Providers
- Residents

### 2. Stakeholders/Influencers

- Board members
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- District councils
- Councillors
- Chamber of Commerce
- UKTI
- BIS
- MPs
- Universities , Schools and Colleges
- Business Council

### 3. National Audience

- LEP Network
- Other LEPs
- Government & Ministers
- Local government networks e.g. District Councils network, Local Government association, Government Communication

## Channels

Communications will cut across as many as channels as possible, extending, not exclusively to:

- Marketing
- Media
- Social media
- Online

<b>Implementation</b>	<p>The implementation plan identifies an overarching programme of targeted communications and engagement from April 2014 to March 2015. General and regular communication activity will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the delivery of the SEP, City Deal and other overarching LLEP work areas</li> <li>• promote the LLEP’s leadership role in economic growth</li> <li>• ensure all audiences are clear on what the partnership stands for and what its objectives are.</li> </ul> <p>Specific <b>sub-campaigns</b> will be developed for larger / key work programmes, as required, along with a clear timeline for campaign delivery.</p> <p>The following channels and tools will be used to achieve the communications objectives and reach the target audience groups. Existing networks and channels will be used where at all possible, to reduce duplication and reach opinion formers more cost-effectively.</p>
-----------------------	---

#### Implementation Plan(General)

Channel	Tool	Audience
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>‘Business Newsletter’</b> issued every 6-8 weeks, via e-blast to Evolutive database of approx. 7,500 businesses. Including content management, copywriting and approvals.</li> <li>• <b>‘Stakeholder bulletin’</b> issued on an ad-hoc basis, via e-blast to Stakeholders/Influencers via Evolutive database. Contains updates and information not necessarily relevant to the Principal Audience</li> <li>• <b>Editorial</b> - copywriting of all editorial for media and partner publications - as required (e.g Leicester Mercury supplements, articles / editorial for partner publications and channels)</li> <li>• <b>Marketing Materials</b> – create content, copywriting and managing the production of any marketing materials that fall outside of the sub-campaign areas (this could extend to ‘Anniversary’ flyers, infographics, generic exhibition materials – banners / flyers etc., production of strategic plans and documents etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Exhibitions / Events</b>- manage the organisation of LLEP-led events and co-ordinate the LLEP’s presence at stakeholder/partner and other appropriate events and exhibitions (particularly those at zero cost). This includes event organisation; staffing and/or providing marketing/ business support materials.</li> <li>• <b>Advertising</b> - manage ad-hoc advertising on opportunities where return on investment can be demonstrated.</li> <li>• <b>Awards</b> – research potential opportunities to enter award submissions on appropriate LLEP projects, programmes and work to enhance the LLEPs reputation. Includes crafting award submissions, seeking approvals and sourcing all relevant support material.</li> <li>• <b>Housekeeping</b> - carry out a review of the Evolutive database with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) data - cleansing / updating / inputting</li> <li>b) as an effective communication tool</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Stakeholders/ Influencers</li> <li>• National</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• All</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Stakeholders/ Influencers</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Stakeholders/ Influencers</li> <li>• All</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Stakeholders/ Influencers</li> </ul>
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact point</b> - be the single point of contact for the media, to prevent different partners from contradicting each other and inconsistent messages emerging in the public domain</li> <li>• <b>Proactive media</b> - generate tactical media opportunities that</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>

	<p>generate positive coverage which therefore reaches key audiences. These can include press releases; media briefings; media launches, media statements and quotations and co-ordinating LLEP 'spokespeople'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reactive media</b> - seek where at all possible to minimise negative publicity and manage contentious stories to limit the reputational damage to LLEP and its partners. But in the event of negative media, provide a statement or response from the LLEP</li> <li>• <b>Media forward plan</b> - develop a media calendar to ensure a regular flow of information to the media and avoid bottlenecks.</li> <li>• <b>Develop media relations</b> – continue to enhance and nurture relationships with the media and broaden the media network to increase exposure of the LLEP</li> <li>• <b>Partnership media opportunities</b> - gain maximum exposure for the LLEP by exploring joint - media opportunities with partners and stakeholders.</li> <li>• <b>Media Protocol</b> – develop a media protocol to safeguard the reputation and assure the recognition of the LLEP where it has had involvement or is a partner. Ensure this is communicated appropriately to all partners and followed where at all possible.</li> <li>• <b>Thought leadership</b> – provide board members with key information and opinion statements / guidance (where required) for media interviews; generate quotations, comments and articles on behalf of board members, in media releases and articles</li> </ul>	
Web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Publishing</b> – oversee all content and publishing on the LLEP website <a href="http://www.llep.org.uk">www.llep.org.uk</a> ensuring accuracy, use of appropriate 'web' language and published in a logical place.</li> <li>• <b>Training</b> - seek to train interested team members to manage the publishing of articles and pages relating to their specific work areas.</li> <li>• <b>Partners</b> – work with partners and stakeholders to provide web content for partner sites in order to disseminate LLEP messages as widely as possible. Also to manage reciprocal web content from partners and stakeholders.</li> <li>• <b>Reporting</b> – monitor web trends and analyse data using Google analytics, reporting in quarterly and annual communications reports.</li> <li>• <b>Review of functionality</b> – undertake a review of the usability of the website and oversee any programming amends by the supplier (enough maintain reasonable functionality) ensuring that any changes are cost effective and in-keeping the forthcoming 'Business Growth Hub'.</li> <li>• <b>Housekeeping</b> - continual review of all content to ensure text is current and relevant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary</li> <li>• National</li> </ul>
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guidelines</b> - develop social media guidelines for other members of the team to ensure consistent messages and standards for members of the team who are already using Twitter and Linked In</li> <li>• <b>Twitter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage other members of the team to tweet about their work areas (e.g. live from events etc).</li> <li>○ Ensure a regular flow of Tweets are posted to @LLEPnews</li> <li>○ Retweet appropriate partner messages to show support and promote events and news linked to the LLEP's overarching</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>

	<p>strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LinkedIn</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure a regular flow of posts to LLEP group including news articles and press releases.</li> <li>○ Utilise other groups and networks to promote specific messages as appropriate and show support of partner messages and promotions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Bitly</b> – shorten URLs by using Bitly links to enable click throughs to be monitored.</li> </ul>	
--	---	--

Evaluation	Indicator	Target
	<p><b>Reputation</b></p> <p><b>Media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of releases</li> <li>• Points (measuring the impact and influence of media coverage)</li> </ul> <p><b>Business Newsletter</b> (unable to monitor open rate using current Evolutive system)</p> <p><b>Stakeholder bulletin</b> (unable to monitor open rate using current Evolutive system)</p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits to llep.org.uk (Specific pages monitored on a sub-campaign basis)</li> </ul> <p><b>Twitter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase followers</li> </ul> <p><b>LinkedIn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase members</li> </ul> <p><b>Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue 4 proactive press releases p.m.</li> <li>• Media points totalling 500 points p.a.</li> <li>• Increase media points by 20% on 2013/14</li> <li>• Issue 6 newsletters p.a.</li> <li>• Click through rate to website of 15%</li> <li>• Increase in recipients by 10%</li> <li>• Issue at least 4 newsletter p.a.</li> <li>• Click through rates of 10%</li> <li>• 20% increase YOY</li> <li>• Update weekly to enhance SEO click throughs</li> <li>• Train at least 2 members of the team to be able to web publish</li> <li>• Increase followers by 30% YOY</li> <li>• Train at least 2 members of the team to use Twitter on a regular basis</li> <li>• Increase Bitly click throughs by 5% yoy</li> <li>• Increase by 10% YOY</li> <li>• Train at least 2 members of the team to use Linked In on a regular basis</li> <li>• Increase Bitly click throughs by 5% yoy</li> <li>• Exhibit at 6 business events p.a.</li> </ul>

<b>Resource and Budget</b>	<p>Resource: <b>Communications Manager</b></p> <p>Budget allocation <b>£XXXXXX</b></p>
----------------------------	--

<b>Approvals</b>	
------------------	--