

Growth Deals, Strategic Economic Plans and Transport

Background

1. Since the last meeting of the Board, further details of the proposed Growth Deals and associated Strategic Economic Plans have started to emerge, although the full picture is still far from clear.
2. The Government is committed to negotiating a Growth Deal with every Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with the starting point being the new Strategic Economic Plans that each LEP is preparing. Based on the strength of their Plan, each LEP will be allocated a share of the Local Growth Fund to target at their priorities for delivering economic growth within their area.
3. The Local Growth Fund is not new funding, but is drawn from other budgets. For 2015/16, the total national pot is £2,019m, with over 50% of this being drawn from transport (£819m from Local Authority major schemes, £100m from Local Sustainable Transport Fund and £200m from the Integrated Transport Block for Local Authorities).

Transport and Growth Plans

4. The Growth Fund is aimed at the key drivers of local growth – housing, skills and transport. As such, the Government expects that the LEPs will reflect these themes strongly within their Plans.
5. In the case of transport, the Department for Transport (DfT) has made it clear that it expects LEPs to work closely with Local Transport Boards (LTBs) if they are to be effective in securing additional resources for transport through the Growth Deals. DfT also expects Strategic Economic Plans to reflect wider transport needs beyond just major schemes. This could include smaller scale transport projects that unlock job opportunities.

6. Further detailed guidance on Growth Plans and links to Local Transport Boards has been promised by the Government. As part of the development of this guidance various workshops have been held across the country. Officers from the Greater Lincolnshire LEP and the County Council (in its role as local transport authority) have attended these as necessary.

Timetable for Growth Plans

7. Currently, the timetable for the production of the Strategic Economic Plans and associated Growth Deals is as follows:
 - December 2013 – first draft of Strategic Economic Plan shared with Government
 - March 2014 – final version of Strategic Economic Plan submitted to Government
 - July 2014 – Local Growth Fund offer made to Local Enterprise Partnerships
8. Clearly, it will be important that this Board is involved in the development of the Strategic Economic Plan for Lincolnshire. Once further guidance is available, this will be shared with the Board.

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.