

Regulation pathfinder project

Promoting growth through better regulation at the local level

Better Business for All: a project led by Leicester and Leicestershire LEP

The scope of the project

In March 2011 the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP (LLEP) embarked on a project to develop a new relationship between businesses and regulators across the LLEP area. This project was designed to explore how an effective and efficient regulatory system can support business growth through removing both real and perceived regulatory barriers. The project aims to develop a range of activities and products that will enable better regulation and promote local growth.

In addition to the local authority regulatory services working through LLEP structures to achieve these goals, the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, HMRC and the Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Services are also actively engaged in the project. This project is supported by the Local Better Regulation Office, which is working with LEPs to identify regulatory approaches that support local enterprise and to share this learning

What are path finder projects?

Through a process of shared learning, path finder projects will help local enterprise partnerships maximise the benefits of working within the new local economic growth framework. Aims of the approach are to:

- Support partnerships to refine and sharpen their ambitions around their key economic objectives
- Understand better the capability of partnerships undertaking specific economic roles and help national policy leads better understand how LEPs can play a major role in economic development at the local level
- Share best practice

The timing of the project

The official launch of the 'Better Business for All' project will take place on the 29th September. The first products from the partnership are due to be rolled out in the autumn. Subject to successful implementation, the project outputs will be adopted by all the organizations involved for inclusion as a core activity within their service planning for 12/13.

Progress so far

Meetings have been held between local businesses, business support organisations and regulatory services which explored the existing regulatory relationship to understand what works and what doesn't. A local business survey was undertaken which showed that businesses would seek advice from regulatory services if it was easily accessible and they did not fear enforcement action being taken.

The outputs of the business-regulator engagement and survey activity indicated four key strands of activity to be pursued. With the unanimous support of all partners, task and finish groups have now been established, with representatives from businesses, business support organisations and regulatory services.

These groups have worked to develop practical approaches to enable the improvement of the regulatory environment at a local level:

- Advice and support to businesses – improving access to advice, rewarding compliance and supporting start-ups
- Culture and competence – helping regulators to understand business pressures and to act as ‘enablers’ rather than ‘enforcers’
- Improving communication and coordination across regulatory services
- Developing a stronger ongoing partnership between business and regulators

The findings of these group discussions were put forward as recommendations to the LLEP Board and these were approved at its July meeting. An LLEP Board Member has also been nominated to Chair the project’s Steering Group, which will meet for the first time in September. Organisational awareness and culture change training has been arranged for over 170 local authority regulatory services officers and this will be delivered in the autumn.

Lessons learned so far

- Map all potentially interested parties and encourage their participation from the outset.
- Develop proposals jointly in true partnership with regulators and businesses working together on an equal footing.
- Collaborative proposals maximize partnership buy-in.
- Understand and fully consider the challenges that regulators face too.
- Identify quick wins to build enthusiasm
- Be mindful of the need to measure benefits and that the intention is to actively drive growth without adding costs for the agencies involved.

For additional information about this project, please contact Kathryn Preece at kathrynp@bizbuild.co.uk

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