



## Terms of Reference

### **Independent Review by Sir Andrew Witty of Universities in their Local Communities: Enabling Economic Growth**

The purpose of the review is **to focus on how universities can drive growth in their areas and for the benefit of the wider UK and to disseminate knowledge and best practice.**

The review should build on the Wilson Review of Business-University Collaboration, taking into account developments since the Wilson Review was published including:-

- a) the development of the Government's industrial strategy;
- b) developments in the local economic landscape including the Government's response to the Heseltine Review;
- c) developments in the EU's approach to structural funds including "smart specialisation".

It should explore the range of ways that universities contribute to their local economies including as agents of research and innovation, as providers of skills, employers, purchasers of goods and services, and as facilitators bringing people together. It will explore the link between global comparative advantage, regional excellence and how to create an integrated strategy between the local and national players – all building on the already established industrial strategy.

It should take into account the ways in which university collaboration with both large businesses and SMEs can contribute to their local economies.

#### **Questions the Review Might Wish to Explore:**

The questions below are intended to provide a guide to the areas the Review might wish to explore.

1. Where universities provide the UK with global comparative advantage, how can we make sure that local economic development plans reflect these strengths?
2. What are the strengths of universities and how can we harness the diverse contributions that universities make?
3. Taking account of their diversity, how can universities best work with LEPs and other local actors to drive economic growth?
4. How can central Government best promote effective collaborations while respecting local leadership of the local economic growth agenda?

### **Regional scope**

The main focus of the review and its recommendations should be on England; however there may be useful lessons to be drawn from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and, indeed, wider afield. The review team is encouraged to engage with the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **Reporting**

The report findings will be presented to the Business Secretary and Economic Affairs Committee, in the summer, to ensure that the findings can inform LEP strategic plans and EU investment plans.

### **Background**

The Wilson Review of Business-University Collaboration included a chapter on *Universities in their local communities: enabling economic growth*. A key finding was that LEPs have a key role to play in local economic growth and have the potential to be invaluable in helping universities improve their collaborative relationships with business, especially in supporting ambitious SMEs, a market that many universities find challenging. The report stated that the potential of LEPs needs to be realised if universities are to contribute to local economic development in an optimal manner.

Since the Wilson Review, the Government has further developed its approach to industrial strategy, emphasising the importance of partnership working between government and industry with an initial focus on 11 sectors and eight technologies in which Britain has the potential to be globally competitive.

On 18 March 2013, Government announced that LEPs are being tasked with taking on a much greater role in driving economic development. Specifically, they will develop multi-annual strategic plans for their area and will have access to greater resources and levers decentralised from Whitehall. A majority of the EU structural funds for England in 2014-20 will be nominally allocated to LEPs, who will develop EU investment plans as part of their overarching strategic plan. The plans will have to address the key EU funding priorities, a major one of which is innovation, through the lens of an EU-wide approach to 'smart specialisation'

The review is therefore a timely opportunity to build on previous work, in the light of the significant new role that Government envisages for LEPs from April 2015.

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