

The Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable MP  
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and President of the Board of  
Trade

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP  
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

2 June 2010

Dear Secretaries of State,

The coalition's programme for government set out a clear position on the replacement of Regional Development Agencies with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Members of both our organisations welcome this and business and local government look forward to working together to make a success of the new arrangements. We are writing jointly to seek your support for a vision for LEPs that will ensure they make a difference in promoting prosperity and supporting business effectively.

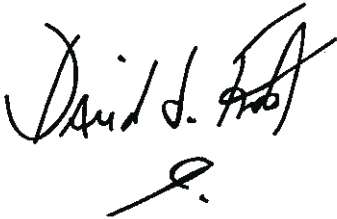
We believe LEPs need to show from the start that they have the potential to add value in ways that business needs. If LEPs are seen as yet another addition to a crowded landscape of local partnerships and initiatives, or confined to a narrow discussion about a handful of business support schemes, they will struggle to win the engagement of councils and Chambers, let alone of the business we want to help.

In our view, LEPs will need to provide joint business and local authority leadership on the full range of interlinked issues that affect local economies, such as local transport provision and infrastructure investment, planning decisions, businesses' skills needs and the shape of publicly-funded employment and training provision. Where strong models of joint leadership already exist, and where businesses and councils want to continue with them, we would hope that they can take on the LEP role swiftly without the need to set a new body up especially to suit a nationally-imposed formula. Similarly, it will also be necessary for the LEP model to be flexible enough to suit different areas; we know that some places may want to operate at the level of regions or conurbations, while others will want to be more local. Allowing local initiative on the way LEPs work will be important.

We hope that you can support this vision for LEPs, and ensure we have the scope that both councils and businesses need in order to avoid creating yet another limited, single-focus public sector partnership. LEPs will need to have the authority required to lead economic growth in their areas, and share that authority between the public and private sectors. In doing so we believe LEPs can play a central role in

rationalising the public sector and making savings, as well as in supporting local businesses to create jobs and help secure our economic recovery.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David D. Frost' with a stylized flourish below it.

David Frost  
Director General, British  
Chambers of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Margaret Eaton'.

Councillor Dame Margaret Eaton  
Chairman, Local Government  
Association