



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

28th September 2017

Dear Mark,

An immediate proposal for the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership Board

I am greatly concerned by the position the Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership finds itself in. I understand that the significant growth funding that has been secured for the area is frozen and regrettably the organisation appears to have the lost confidence of local and national stakeholders.

It is clear, that GCGPLEP is no longer able to fulfil the purpose for which it was established and specifically to provide much needed help and financial support for local businesses. Furthermore, the current position is creating reputational damage and will inhibit the ability of the area as a whole to attract inward investment at a time when we face such a huge deficit in our infrastructure.

It is important that we provide leadership and act urgently and decisively to restore trust, including that of the wider business community and central Government.

My offer is to work with you to create a new model of local governance that will have at its centre a really powerful relationship between business and local democratic leadership. This will enable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to deliver the substantial dividends it is capable of achieving.

I should like you to call an urgent, extraordinary meeting of your Board and I would expect to attend that meeting to present the proposals in this letter. These proposals envisage that the LEP Board and the Combined Authority will retain their distinct legal identity and business focus whilst acting under a single umbrella to deliver shared strategic objectives. The features of a new governance structure would include:

- **Strong Business leadership** – specifically I envisage a Business Board with representation from the key sectors that will deliver the national and local industrial strategy. A more diverse, respected and powerful group focused on

strategy and the programmes that will make a real difference to the growth of the area;

- **Democratic leaders working together with Business** – Leaders would sit alongside business leaders as part of a rejuvenated Business Board to create a shared agenda for delivering the industrial strategy, and agree the core growth priorities;
- **A definitive economic evidence base and independent economic advice** – the independent Economic Commission that we have established under the chair of Dame Kate Barker can provide an economic evidence base and strategic economic advice for the Combined Authority area and the Local Enterprise Partnership area;
- **One Assurance framework** – revised governance arrangements leading to a single pot approach to funding as outlined by Government in its Local Enterprise Partnership National Assurance Framework guidance. A single pot funding approach allows Local Growth Funding streams to remain separately identified and targeted at business growth whilst complementing the investment of consolidated, multi-year transport settlements and allocations of grant-based investment funds by the Combined Authority. The real strength of this arrangement would lie in being able to assess the totality of funding available to the area, and to ensure there is an integrated approach to investment across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and the wider LEP area;
- **A shared approach to spatial planning** – the area’s local industrial strategy complemented by the Combined Authority’s non-statutory spatial plan will act as a framework for planning across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- **A single administration** – shared officer structure of the Combined Authority and LEP, whilst keeping of the operational independence of the Combined Authority and LEP. This will be more efficient and effective, provide better value for money for the tax payer, deliver a more coherent and joined up response to businesses, and demonstrate public service reform.

I have considered the geographical issues, and while co-terminosity would be advantageous I do not see this as an impediment. I believe that business and democratically elected leaders will be able to operate seamlessly across boundaries.

Let me re-iterate that there is a need for us to act urgently. Democratic Leaders and I envisage a future where the Combined Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership operate under a single umbrella, presenting ourselves to businesses and residents with shared ambition, objectives and delivery focus. We can shape and

implement a new generation of Local Enterprise Partnership that residents and businesses expect and deserve.

I am copying this letter to all members of the GCGP LEP Board, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Jake Berry MP Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Palmer'.

James Palmer

Mayor

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

