

Black Country LEP Stakeholder Engagement Plan 2016-2021

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Definition

Stakeholder Engagement is the process used by BC LEP to engage with all relevant stakeholders for the purpose to achieve positive agreed outcomes as laid out in the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan.

Purpose

BC LEP strives to provide clarity of purpose and demonstrate commitment to engage with our Stakeholders.

Introduction

This plan identifies the existing stakeholders working with the Black Country LEP, as well as those who we wish to work with, to enable delivery of our strategic priorities. It determines the level of interest for each stakeholder and the Tool Kit available by the Team Black Country to bring clarity, purpose and impact in our forward planning. It will ensure interaction across our stakeholder community, providing a robust and measured process between BC LEP and those stakeholders potentially impacted by its work.

Engagement is a means to build better relationships and open dialogue with the societies in which BC LEP operates, ultimately resulting in improved planning and performance.

1. This Stakeholder Engagement plan sets out the rationale for the identification of stakeholders, how we aim to gain and retain each stakeholder's involvement and their interest and influence in the work of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) in achieving the priorities of its **Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)**.
2. The Plan defines a '**stakeholder**' as '**a person, group or organisation that has interest or concern in an organisation**', namely BC LEP.
3. This stakeholder engagement plan identifies existing and new stakeholders who have a role to play in relationship to BCLEP. We must ensure that they:
 - Understand the role of BC LEP: purpose and function
 - Understand their role and relationship with BC LEP and the SEP strategic priorities and actions
 - Understand who, why and how we interact with our stakeholders to ensure they are involved and engaged with at the most appropriate level of interest, affording transparency and influence across our strategic priorities by our partners
4. There are many stakeholders who have been involved with and influenced by Black Country work including:
 - The BCLEP Board
 - MP's
 - Local Authority Leaders, Chief Officers and senior officers
 - Strategic Partners including: The West Midlands Combined Authority, Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect, HS2
 - BC LEP Proposition theme Leads

- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), DCLG, LEP network, DIT, Government – national and regional
- University of Wolverhampton, Black Country colleges and schools
- Business led Organisations, e.g., BCCC, FSB
- Business community
- Voluntary & Community sector organisations
- Public Funded Award grantees
- Media

Context

The BCLEP Board provides the strategic leadership for the economic priorities across the areas of the City of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall and it operates as part of the Black Country Consortium Limited's governance arrangements. The Board advises Black Country Consortium Limited (BCC Ltd) on actions to ensure effective strategic, governance and operational management.

BCC Ltd is a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee; a diverse strategic economic team driven by economic intelligence, working with partners from public and private sectors to steer and support the delivery of the Black Country SEP.

The BCLEP SEP sets out the LEPs action plan to champion the activity required to facilitate the progress and delivery of its ambition: to positively impact on the social and economic growth of the Black Country.

BCLEP will undertake to do the following:

- We will provide the strategic leadership to bring together the right partners and resources for everyone in the Black Country to enjoy and benefit from economic prosperity
- We will be the system leader facilitating the conditions within which others can progress towards social and economic change
- We will act as the lead voice on the economic priorities for the Black Country with BEIS and the Government, and are able to promote the priorities for our area
- From our positioning as a partnership of BCC Ltd, we have the intelligence and analysis of data to understand the challenges within the Black Country
- We will apply intelligent design to solutions, addressing the links between the People, Place and Business priorities for the Black Country
- We will bring together communities, businesses and public services to deliver outcomes in the most effective and resource efficient way. Using our insight and experience of working with communities, we facilitate local, inclusive solutions
- We are strong advocates and influencers in delivering the Black Country's economic priorities
- We strive for improvement and impact through the quality delivery of services

BC LEP Vision for Stakeholder Engagement

1. We aim to be the Strategic Lead for economic priorities for the Black Country. The “System Leader” who facilitates the conditions for enterprise to flourish in the Black Country.
2. This is categorized as:
 - Seeing the larger system – the inter-dependencies and wider strategic priorities
 - Fostering innovation and reflection – learning from practice, good and bad
 - Evidence led
 - Co-creating the future economic and social prosperity of the Black Country
3. Our Stakeholder Engagement is fundamental in:
 - Gaining buy in to this positioning
 - Informing and influencing change in practice
 - Influencing policy and strategy change
 - Enhancing our reputation
4. As part of this, our role as a High Performing Company is critical and the traits that are consistent in how we operate:
 - Being passionate about the Black Country
 - Stimulate the sub-region by working in partnership
 - Work in a spirit of innovation, creativity and enterprise
 - Value the skills and integrity of our team.

Approach and principles

This plan is part of a series of documents that form the BC LEP Marketing & Communications Strategy & Plan and is supported by a comprehensive, timed and owned Communication Action Plan which ensures that all stakeholders are an integral part of the day-to-day activity of Team Black Country.

BC LEP is committed to:

Communication: getting the messages right and understood

Engagement: early, often, transparent and noted

Multiple Agenda adoption; know your stakeholders

Planning: deliberate and inclusive

Relationship management: with energy and time

Simple, but not easy: interact, listen and explain

Diverging priorities: weighted hierarchy

Understanding what success looks like; manage expectations

Managing Stakeholder Engagement

1. We have applied our stakeholder analysis against the following 4 tactics, which informs how we will work with particular stakeholders in the future:
 - Those powerful stakeholders BC LEP required to be willing to **engage**
 - Those who are essential to **collaborate** with to achieve our priorities
 - Those we need to **involve** and **consult** with
 - Those who we need to keep **informed**

2. We have applied the following simple framework to determine the functional position of our Stakeholders:

Tactics	Level of Interest	Level of Influence
Engage	LOW	HIGH
Collaborate	HIGH	HIGH
Involve & Consult	HIGH	LOW
Keep Informed	LOW	LOW

Appropriate tactical engagement channel or tool employed for each level of interest

Tactic	Format
Collaborate Partnership working Engage Involve and consult Keep informed Keep Satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Plans and Agreements including agreed outcomes • Monthly forward planning meetings with Boards and/or Chairs • Showcase of good work and good practice; regular briefings and quarterly bulletins including evidencing impact • Joint Ventures and Co-financing • Strategic planning and co-ordination • Strategy Summit • Policy Briefings • Development of Black Country groups • Annual Conference & Report • Promotion using portals and blogs • Ministerial Visits • Briefings and workshops • Annual / regular meeting e.g., MPs, BEIS • Business profiles and case studies • Social Media • Monthly newsletters • Attendance at initiatives and events • Gain signs up to strategy • Targeted PR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage stakeholders to champion campaigns • Joint campaigns
Engagement Tool Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing & Communications Strategy • Marketing Campaigns • BC LEP Website • Social Media Campaigns • Electronic newsletters • Conferences & workshops • Evidence led Impact reports • Publications

Stakeholder Engagement and Team Black Country

1. In delivering and controlling our Stakeholder engagement, we will encourage:
 - The sharing of stakeholder expectations, their challenges and issues
 - Clarity on what is it that engages each stakeholder
 - A focus on the discussion and the outcomes we are seeking to achieve
 - The management of the cultural and customer dynamics such as cultural misunderstanding, previous experience and how to manage them as they arise
 - The mitigation of tension to address any unexpected dynamics, concerns between participants
 - Commitment and endeavor, ensuring that there is an impactful engagement and working towards being solution driven
 - Avoiding misunderstanding

2. We will set the following controls to determine the impact and effectiveness of our Stakeholder Engagement including:
 - Production and distribution of our SEP, setting out our priorities and function and seeking their sign up
 - An Annual Conference and Annual Report setting out achievements and ambitions
 - Regular reporting, with meetings, decisions and successes held on BC LEP website and in the public domain
 - Regular E news and PR activity to keep all stakeholders informed with an opportunity to engage
 - Wider public engagement when required and appropriate

Conclusion

BC LEP recognise that stakeholder management is complex, especially coupled with recognition and willingness to work in even greater partnership with existing stakeholders and partners as well as extend the range of stakeholders, affording wider reach and delivery of SEP priorities and the ambition of the BC LEP informing and influencing the important role enterprise can play in meeting our SEP outcomes.

Stakeholder Engagement is effective when there is equal effort from both partners. This means that we need to prioritise our engagement to keep all stakeholders satisfied as well as collaborating with those who have the biggest impact on our delivery ambitions.

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