

Interim Evaluation of Leading Places Phase 1

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Aims and objectives of Leading Places

“To build and transfer best practice in collaborative leadership between local authorities, universities and other local anchor institutions. In many places formal and informal relations already exist between universities and their civic partners. But common institutional barriers and related challenges often make working in partnership harder. Leading Places uses **Action Learning** to design and deliver practical solutions”

| Pilot | Project Theme(s) |
|---|--|
| <p>Greater Manchester: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester LEP, Cheshire and Warrington LEP, New Economy Manchester, University of Manchester, University of Salford, Manchester Metropolitan University and Bolton University</p> | <p>Health & Social Care</p> |
| <p>Coventry: Coventry City Council, the University of Warwick and Coventry University</p> | <p>Health & Sport</p> |
| <p>Gloucestershire: Gloucestershire County Council, the University of Gloucestershire and the Royal Agricultural College</p> | <p>Strategic Partnership</p> |
| <p>Bristol: Bristol City Council, the University of the West of England and the University of Bristol</p> | <p>City Office Project</p> |
| <p>Brighton: Brighton and Hove City Council, the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex</p> | <p>Health & Social Care</p> |
| <p>Newcastle: Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle University, and Northumbria University</p> | <p>Health & Planning</p> |



Achievements

- Provided a framework to take forward shared opportunities and challenges, and to identify practical ideas and actions
- Helped to broker strategic dialogue between HEFCE, LGA and UUK
- Encouraged place-based local partnerships and leadership
- Senior leaderships stimulated creativity and innovation and helped to build momentum within projects
- Evidence of local leadership at all levels of institutions and actors
- Local leadership groups worked well when based on existing collaborations, but also evidence of Leading Places being catalytic
- Genuine optimism about the sustainability of local partnerships



Challenges

- Difficulties over timelines, milestones and outputs
- Limited opportunity for reflection
- Lack of 'infrastructure' to implement activity through Action Learning
- Patchy local capacity, especially project management and co-ordination
- Facilitation, at times, was pulled into project management
- Blurring of strategy and delivery
- Intermittent communications amongst local partnerships and between national and local partners



Recommendations

1. HEFCE and the LGA should ensure that Phase 2 is visible within their respective 'leadership programmes'
2. Local partnerships should be more inclusive, and strengthen their engagement with business, local communities and others
3. Leading Places should be sensitive to local geography (broadest sense) to build traction and sustainability in place-based leadership and collaboration
4. Local areas should have more flexibility to determine how projects operate, but consideration should be given to the range of themes proposed in Phase 2
5. Additional core support (especially project management) for local partnerships should be put in place



Recommendations

6. A clearer distinction should be made between strategy and delivery, but equally recognise symbiotic relationship between the two
7. Horizontal and vertical communications should be improved between national and local partners and amongst local partnerships
8. Consideration should be given to strengthening peer-to-peer learning and maintaining a 'community of practice'
9. National and local partners should 'invest' in building the foundations of collaboration as a basis for establishing effective place-based leadership
10. The timescales for implementing Phase 2 should be carefully considered



Conclusions

- Leading Places has provided a valuable mechanism for local institutions and actors to work together on particular issues/challenges
- Place-based collaboration requires vision, strategy, individual and cross-institutional learning and capacity and resources
- Place-based collaboration is more than just resource efficiency
- Also about stimulating and nurturing new forms of innovation, resilience, long-term stability and effective civic leadership
- Requires a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes and mechanisms



Any Questions?
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