

# Learning from LEP peer reviews

2019/20

Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

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## About the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

CfGS is a social purpose consultancy. We passionately believe that better governance and scrutiny leads to more effective decision-making, reduced risk and ultimately improved outcomes. Our work spans corporate decisions impacting on **the public, to how tax payers' money is spent. We focus on** behaviours and culture, as well as design and delivery.

Our work championing governance and scrutiny in public, **private and voluntary sector organisations is for everyone's** benefit. The challenges facing businesses and organisations now and in the future, require collaborative approaches.

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The proposed methodology for 2020/21 reviews has been provided as a separate document.

# 1. Introduction

During 2019/20, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (previously known as the Centre for Public Scrutiny) worked with LEPs across England, and with the LEP **Network, to carry out peer reviews for England's 38 LEPs. The LEP Network** approached CfGS to carry out this work in 2018, following the Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships Review. This approach, led by the LEP sector, forms part of a broad range of activities and commitments around self-improvement, which is designed to engage with and complement Government-led oversight arrangements through the National Assurance Framework and Annual Performance Review.

The methodology was developed by means of a short piloting process in summer 2019. Three pilot peer reviews were carried out with different methods, designed with varying levels of alignment with the themes in the Annual Performance Review. These experiences were reviewed by CfGS and used to inform the development of a method for a national process later in the year.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the peer reviews conducted in late 2019 and early 2020. The paper will evaluate:

- Whether the overall objectives were met;
- Whether the process was a useful and productive one for participating LEPs;
- Whether the process worked smoothly in a logistical sense.

The evaluation is limited in scope, due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. In particular, given that the peer review exercise was conducted immediately prior to the pandemic, it has not been **possible to carry out a “lessons learned”** exercise which reflects fully on changes that LEPs have put in place in consequence of their peer review experience, as attention has been directed very differently in the intervening period.

Because of the ongoing capacity pressures faced by LEPs, our intention has been to limit expectations on individual LEPs in terms of their contribution to this exercise. Analysis was carried out in the following way:

- Paperwork for all peer reviews was reviewed;
- Feedback was secured from CfGS consultants and others who participated in facilitation, or who were otherwise present at peer review meetings;
- Interviews were carried out with stakeholders in six areas, with names suggested by the LEP Network;
- Feedback was secured from a number of other areas, following a general call for evidence put out by the LEP Network in September 2020.

## 2. Main findings

### 2.1 Were the overall objectives met?

The national objectives were to:

- Ensure peer reviews were aligned to the APR process;
- Be centred on key identified metrics, KPIs and strategic issues.
- Be particularly concerned with the need to draw on a diversity of voices;
- Be transparent, ensuring LEPs are clear on the objectives and metrics being challenged.
- Form part of a continuous improvement process. Peer review sessions will provide the opportunity for the beginning of a relationship between participating LEPs, with agreed actions being anchored into this relationship. Peer review sessions will not be standalone;
- By way of the above to:
  - Provide constructive and robust mutual challenge. Peer review should be challenging and uncomfortable. It should challenge assumptions; it should introduce an element of grit and tension into the system. The peer review process should provide an opportunity to align this element of the improvement process with others – for example, external scrutiny;
  - Provide practical actions and ways forward on improvement.

Discussions in peer reviews used the APR as a foundation for what was in many instances a more general conversation about stresses, pressures and opportunities. Conversation generally did not focus on specific KPIs, but looked more broadly to economic priorities and actions to address local need. In this sense, the process was thought to be valuable because it engaged with broader local economic priorities in a way that the APR process does not necessarily do, while using the APR process to provide context.

#### 2.1.1 Main pressure points

Analysis of paperwork produced around peer reviews suggests that particular pressure points exist in four areas:

- Leadership and future planning – due to funding uncertainties (in particular around the future of the Local Growth Fund (LGF)) the extent to which the LEP was able to articulate a clear and consistent vision for the future, and the extent to which it was able to put practical measures in place to deliver that vision;
- Partnership working – connected to the point above, building a sense of common understanding of both current challenges and future objectives – building partnership working both within the LEP and outside it;
- Resourcing – having in place the staff capacity and time, and the capacity amongst partners, to work effectively;

- Governance – strength in systems and processes, and the presence of a strong culture that recognises the importance of open and honest decision-making.

Many LEPs appear to have started successfully managing and overcoming these pressures, reflecting the maturing of LEPs as institutions. This offers a contrast to earlier research carried out by the NAO and others, which suggested that significant gaps and challenges existed, especially around governance. It also suggests the embedding of many of the priorities in the APR process. It should **however be stressed that neither the peer review process nor this “lessons learned” exercise is of sufficient detail to demonstrate anything other than a broad, national direction of travel on these issues.**

This is not an exhaustive list of pressure points – other factors were drawn out in certain review exercises.

## 2.1.2 The robustness of peer review processes generally

Some interviewees sought comparison between this process and that adopted in local government, where the LGA places a peer review team into individual authorities to carry out multiple interviews over a two to three day period, producing a narrative report **on improvement at the end. This is the “gold standard” peer review and has evolved over nearly a decade, having developed from similar Improvement and Development Agency peer reviews carried out over the course of the previous decade. The LGA’s process** forms a significant plank of the sector-led improvement arrangements for local government and is accordingly supported by fairly substantial Government funding. It is determined through independent evaluation to have been effective over multiple years. It is a process effective in local government because:

- As institutions, councils are more similar – in terms of basic business processes and statutory responsibilities – than LEPs, making it easier to draw together plural peer teams who can make effective contributions;
- Councils have core capacity to engage with work of this intensity. This involves a hosting authority putting substantial resource into supporting a five-person team on a physical visit as well as peers themselves giving up multiple days to engage in the process;

This capacity issue strikes us as being the main barrier to the implementation of a similar system for the LEP sector. However, we will continue to consider if lessons can be learned from the local government experience which could be built into the methodology for LEPs.

## 2.1.3 COVID impacts

Assessment of COVID impacts has been extrapolated from documentary evidence, and covered explicitly in interviews. For those LEPs to whom we have spoken, the focus at the moment is engaging with partners sub-regionally to

understand the economic impacts and to plan for recovery. The operational response is ongoing, and those to whom we spoke were keen to have an opportunity to reflect on this in the coming months – so long as the timing is right.

## 2.2 Was the process useful and productive?

One of the primary areas of focus for the initial 2019 piloting exercise was in determining the right level of engagement for the peer review process with the APR process. It has been expressed – and was expressed again as part of this process by a number of LEPs – that APR has shortcomings which limit its practical value to LEPs, notwithstanding its utility to Government in providing assurance and oversight. The peer review process was, we have been told, useful to LEPs inasmuch as it allowed them to discuss and reflect on their wider economic priorities, their challenges, strengths and weaknesses, and how they intersect with the APR process itself. In this sense, peer review process can be said to have found the most **appropriate balance with LEPs’ formal accountability requirements**.

Overall, in a substantive sense, there is a sense that the process was useful. But experiences were variable. The peer review meetings themselves were described to us as providing a useful opportunity to share, and reflect on, practice. The challenge and rigour of this varied from meeting to meeting, however. Some found reviews to be a challenging exercise, and appreciated this challenge. For others, this novel process could have been more robust. A few respondents considered that the process felt a little too comfortable, although this was by no means a widespread view. One respondent suggested that this could have been because of a nervousness about having candid and frank conversations. The pre-work was designed to address this risk, but in some instance it clearly did not do so fully. It was we think inevitable that, this having been the first time that work of this type had been carried out in the LEP sector, reflections on the experience **would highlight people’s uncertain expectations at the outset**.

**We knew from the beginning that the way that “pairs” of LEPs were selected** would have an important impact on effectiveness, and this proved to be the case. Going by the experience of those to whom we have spoken, success in fact seems to hinge on effective pairing. This is a challenge, because this appears to be less about geographic and economic similarity and more about the culture of the respective LEPs – making pairing more of a challenge. It may be that this will need to be addressed more comprehensively in the 2020/21 exercise. It was suggested by a few individuals that a more robust dynamic would have been provided by reviews being an exercise between three LEPs – this may be worth exploring further and we plan to think of ways to bring this dynamic to bear on 2020/21 reviews.

## 2.3 Did the process work smoothly?

Feedback was that the process worked smoothly and was understandable, although there were a couple of instances where it proved difficult to convene

physical meetings (as a matter of diary co-ordination, but also because some LEP chairs and CEOs were very new in post at the time the exercise was being carried out). Expectations for the process need to be made clear at the outset, and it may be that logistical arrangements for arranging meetings and circulating information need to become more systematised.

## 3. Substantive issues

The general discussion and sharing of views was seen as one of the most productive parts of the process although (as noted below) some saw this happening at the expense of more robust challenge. One interesting outcome was, in some cases, more clarity on the kinds of asks that should be made of Government, deriving from a clearer sense by participants of their and their **peers' barriers and constraints on leadership.**

### 3.1 Leadership and future planning

Uncertainty was a principal theme, and the need to discuss with other LEP peers strategic priorities **and risks. LEPs continue to receive “just in time” funding on an annual basis:** this makes strategic planning difficult, especially in an environment where by definition LEPs are expected to make long term decisions on investment and other matters.

The profile and visibility of LEPs was highlighted as an issue. Particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic, it was felt that LEPs would need to exercise local leadership in articulating a future economic vision for the area, probably together with local authorities (see below). Board diversity was spoken about as a potential risk issue on leadership (also see below). Some LEPs have moved forward far more than others on issues such as branding and communication, and this was one area where we saw assistance being provided to LEPs who had taken less action in this area.

Leadership on the development and implementation of Local Investment Strategies was a consistent issue; many peer meetings delved into this issue in some technical detail. Leadership on the LGF, and approaches that LEPs had taken to expand their strategic priorities beyond the terms of the LGF, was also a pressing issue for many. This intersected with the dissatisfaction with the APR process that we mentioned above, and the lack of engagement from APR on these broader business activities.

### 3.2 Partnership working

In some areas LEPs found themselves challenged by the complexities of partnership working. Less well resourced LEPs (see below) naturally found this a challenge, particularly those serving areas adjacent to large urban conurbations, or those in areas whose functional economic geography was complex.

**There was some general discussion of LEPs' “convening power”.** Some participants considered the possibility of establishing broader advisory boards to bring in expertise from a wider range of organisations than the Board alone could provide (and which could provide some form of solution to the need, experienced by some LEPs, to take steps to engage more SMEs, where a commitment to full

engagement in LEP governance might be a challenge). This could be important as LEPs seek to exert influence in a mixed operating environment which may involve a large number of partners.

**Government's preferred funding routes continued to provide a challenge to** partnership working, as LEPs are often required to compete for access to funds. This is seen as promoting competition, rather than collaboration, which can work against close working, especially in areas where economies are interlinked. It was noted that LEPs were better able to speak up for otherwise overlooked areas than might have been the case in the days of RDAs (where the sense was that investment was funnelled into urban areas to take advantage of perceived agglomeration benefits), but that this inevitably had the potential to cause tension.

### 3.3 Resourcing

This continues to present a key challenge for a number of LEPs, and is one of the primary points of variability between different areas. Some LEPs benefit from a funding position which allows for an effective corporate capacity; others not. In some instances a gulf in capacity and resourcing presented problems for peers in identifying areas of commonality.

Discussion of the likely resource position on the expiry of LGF funding – and the lack of core funding for LEPs overall – was a common theme, and uncertainty around the replacement funding. This is likely to be a particular pressure for 2021 and beyond and may need to form a focus for the next round of reviews. LEPs are grappling with the issue of attempting to procure expertise from external sources to support their work, or whether to increase core staffing. The uncertainty of the funding position, as well as significant cultural challenges, work against the latter, but the former presents risks around long term capacity and direction.

### 3.4 Governance

There was a recognition that some LEPs had experienced some significant governance weaknesses in the past, and that this had precipitated some of the **national concerns about LEPs' effectiveness, particularly those concerns** expressed by the NAO.

There was a focus on governance systems and processes at many peer reviews; LEPs are confident in their compliance with governance requirements although it should be noted that these requirements reflect a baseline.

One principal issue was on the potential for tension between LEPs and their accountable bodies on strategic matters – particularly the management of finances and risks and **the management of projects considered “novel and contentious”**. While not universal, it was felt that some accountable bodies were not sighted properly on the specific duties and roles of LEPs, leading to professional advice being offered which did not reflect **either LEPs' priorities or,**

importantly, their risk profile and risk appetite. Some participants felt that **Government was also not sighted on this significant restriction to some LEPs' freedom.**

There was also seen to be the risk of confusion on the private sector side, as the complexity of risk profiling for capital programmes and other major projects could be seen as unpredictable by some used to different approaches to financial control. In general however it was seen that this was more likely to be an issue about the approach taken to risk issues by different organisations more generally **rather than a “public” vs “private” sector divide on risk matters.**

Another matter was on Board diversity, and diversity of voices in the LEP decision-making process more generally. This was about diversity in terms of the types of businesses reflected on Boards, and in the individual characteristics – age, ethnicity, disability – of those in senior positions. A number of participants saw this as a pressing issue, affecting the ability of LEPs to be able to draw on a wide range of perspectives and to strategise and decide accordingly. Different LEPs have adopted different solutions to this problem – there is huge variation in Board recruitment arrangements, for example, and in the practice of co-option onto Boards to fill obvious skills gaps. There is also significant differentiation in **Board induction, with core staff capacity making a real difference to LEPs' ability** to effectively induct new Board members. In some instances, induction is thought not to be especially effective, with minimal ongoing development support being provided to Board members. We are advised that the LEP Network is developing a national induction programme which will address this.

Finally, in many meetings there was detailed conversation about project evaluation and review. This resulted in some quite technical discussions, and sharing of different models and approaches between LEPs. For many, this seems to have been one of the most practically useful outcomes of the peer review process.

## 4. The peer review process itself

There were risks at the outset that the peer review process would prove onerous, that the essentially voluntary nature of the exercise might mean that some areas **would not engage constructively, and that aspects of the process were “too cosy”** – that constructive but robust challenge would prove difficult between peers.

### 4.1 Commitment of time and resources

#### 4.1.1 In general

The convening of physical meetings proved a challenge for some reviews; for the leaders of LEPs, finding an entire day to devote to the review exercise (not to mention time required for preparation and followup) is difficult. In some cases it proved challenging finding a time when all participants were available. In some cases there was negotiation over which individuals would best attend. In some instances, diary challenges meant significantly delay. For the 2020/21 peer review exercise, we expect these issues to be significantly lessened given the expectation that business will be conducted remotely – but for further exercises, the reintroduction of physical meetings will need to be considered carefully.

There were differences of opinion on the overall time commitment required. For some, it felt slightly onerous (particularly the pre-work – see below). Overall, though, most felt that it was reasonable, and reflective of the job at hand. Some participants said that they would have liked to have spent more time on preparation; there was an understanding that you get out of the process what you put in.

#### 4.1.2 Making arrangements to meet

Most peer reviews were carried out in a window lasting from November 2019 to March 2020, but a couple were significantly delayed. Some interviewees felt that the logistical process for securing dates for meetings should have been managed centrally over a shorter timeframe, and that letting LEPs take the lead allowed for a sense of a lack of urgency to take hold. This reflects points made elsewhere about the perception from some LEPs that their peers took varying approaches on the importance of the process, which came across in the planning and transaction of the meetings too.

#### 4.1.3 Pre-work

The overall nature of pre-work carried out varied widely, as did the volume of material prepared and distributed. In some cases LEPs produced bespoke covering material to provide context for the exercise, but this did not happen in every case. It is unclear whether inconsistencies in material circulated beforehand hindered discussion in the meetings or not; interviews suggested that

it may be precluded detailed discussion of individual projects. Those interviewed expressed mixed views on the utility and volume of information presented beforehand, suggesting that it could be more effectively streamlined and curated.

Pre-meeting interviews were carried out for all reviews. These proved particularly useful to meeting facilitators and other participants felt that they helped in focusing minds on what was to be talked through at the meetings. One respondent suggested that some of the preparative work should cover more **explicitly LEPs' mutual strengths and weaknesses, so that participants are better aware of the dynamics in play.**

The plan that pre-work would identify a specific project or projects for each LEP that could be picked over seems to have had mixed results. The logic was that this would provide the focus for challenge – a stress-test for delivery systems based on a practical example. However, in many cases, the discussion of a specific project, where it did happen, was a jumping off point for a more general and strategic discussion. These discussions (as we have noted elsewhere) in many cases proved extremely fruitful – but the shift in direction that resulted may have coloured the experience of some participants who may have been hoping for and expecting something more forensic.

A particular focus of pre-work was to have been the identification of a diversity of voices to speak to their experiences on the LEP. To this end, it was suggested that one of the interviews by phone be with someone not in a position of leadership/responsibility within the LEP. The idea was that this would bring further challenge to the process. We were unable to determine whether this, consistently, had the required effect – these conversations would have fed into **the facilitator's approach in each meeting but it may be that these insights needs** to be drawn out more formerly in future.

#### 4.1.4 In the meeting

Meetings were generally between 2.5 and 3 hours long. This places significant demands on attendees on attentiveness and engagement for what is an intense meeting covering a range of complex issues. Participants felt of the meeting itself that:

- It was a useful experience providing challenge – one respondent described **it as “cathartic”;**
- It was particularly useful in identifying areas of both commonality and difference between different areas, with participants taking the opportunity to reflect on the different solutions adopted to common problems by their peers;
- It was also useful in identifying different approaches to negotiation with Government on funding and support;
- It highlighted a number of practical opportunities for improvement on which some participants were able to take immediate action;
- Changes made as a result of matters discussed have not been major, but may have involved tweaks to systems, processes and approaches to

engagement with partners – there was useful discussion on challenges and solutions relating to relationship issues;

- It provided a useful networking opportunity, with some participants having sustained the relationship with their paired LEP for some time after the meeting, providing a useful sounding board for ongoing activity.

Although many of these (and other) comments were positive, they reflect a general sense of meetings which allowed participants to tease out mutual problems and concerns and have reflective discussion on those issues, rather **than meetings focused on “challenge”, per se. Some, thinking on this, still felt that the process was too “cosy”, although experiences were variable, with some feeling that the process brought challenge to their approach. Much seemed to depend on:**

- The similarities, and differences, between the LEPs involved;
- The confidence and experience of those participating;
- The personal characteristics of those attending and what they hoped to get out of the process. Despite pre-work, it is notable that hopes and expectations of the experience did vary – not hugely, but possibly enough to present risks of some participants not being satisfied.

**One interviewee stated that although the meeting itself was “fascinating”** and useful in allowing reflection, it was difficult to point to specific outcomes.

It was felt that facilitators managed and convened discussion effectively, and that the presence of an independent facilitator was particularly important for keeping discussions on track and providing structure, as well as in posing challenging questions.

## 5. Thoughts on the 2020/21 cycle

We asked interviewees about their thoughts on the focus of the 2020/21 peer review cycle. We proceeded on the assumption that it would need to focus on pandemic recovery, and that the likely publication of the Devolution White Paper in the winter could introduce risk. Generally those who expressed an opinion felt that:

- A specific focus on the pandemic (in particular, taking stock on the experience) was necessary;
- A focus on economic recovery and long term economic prioritisation would sidestep the uncertainty arising from the WP – long term economic planning will be necessary notwithstanding any structural changes in the interim.

## 6. Actions

The LEP Network and CfGS should address the following issues:

- Whether more of the peer review process should be asynchronous. The convening of a single meeting to transact most of the work proved challenging in some cases. Communication (including review of documents) offline might provide a more focused and constructive approach – supplemented by a more streamlined meeting. This links to the challenge below about remote working;
- How the process can be made more mutually challenging. Expectations about the robustness of challenge could be made clearer at the outset;
- How the process can be used to highlight the need for further diversity, and to draw in a more diverse range of voices;
- Whether the parts of the process requiring face-to-face communication can be predominantly or wholly remote. In the coming months, it will be challenging to convene physical meetings – this issue can be looked at in concert with the idea of asynchronicity.

In terms of the focus of the 2020/21 round of peer reviews, the following is suggested:

- **A stocktake on “where we are now”** – the last nine months and how the LEP has managed the pandemic – essentially, an interim debrief;
- **Reflection on “where we are going”** – a consideration of strategic plans for economic recovery, shifts in priorities and how this affects the current risk profile of projects being delivered, and in the pipeline.

The proposed methodology for the 2020/21 review process addresses all of these issues, and is set out in a separate document.

This more targeted focus will allow for more directed pre-work and the agreement of clusters of questions, and discussion points, which will allow for a more rigorous and challenging process.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: methodology used in 2019/20

### Objectives

The national objectives were to:

- Ensure peer reviews were aligned to the APR process;
- Be centred on key identified metrics, KPIs and strategic issues.
- Be particularly concerned with the need to draw on a diversity of voices;
- Be transparent, ensuring LEPs are clear on the objectives and metrics being challenged.
- Form part of a continuous improvement process. Peer review sessions will provide the opportunity for the beginning of a relationship between participating LEPs, with agreed actions being anchored into this relationship. Peer review sessions will not be standalone;
- By way of the above:
  - Provide constructive and robust mutual challenge. Peer review should be challenging and uncomfortable. It should challenge assumptions; it should introduce an element of grit and tension into the system. The peer review process should provide an opportunity to align this element of the improvement process with others – for example, external scrutiny;
  - Provide practical actions and ways forward on improvement.

Peer review sessions will form part of the peer review process. Sessions themselves will have three stages:

- Planning and pre-work
- The session itself
- Post-work: actions and follow-up

**Before the process begins, LEPs will be “paired” by the LEP Network.**

### Planning and pre-work

Participating LEPs will:

- Set out to each other and to the LEP Network key areas on which they consider they require support across the following strategic areas:
  - Strategy;
  - Delivery/funding;
  - Convening power;
  - Advocacy
- Make available key strategic documents. This should include at a minimum:
  - The APR letter and internal documentation relating to APR, including active improvement plans;
  - Strategic risk register(s);
  - Documentation setting out project pipelines, at a relatively high level, alongside documentation demonstrating how priorities are identified and acted on.

- Depending on the priorities of the participating LEPs, background documentation may also be reviewed, to provide further context. This may include:
  - Performance and financial monitoring information;
  - Material sufficient to allow others to understand the process and progress of a particular project, ideally one whose outcomes have either been a) sub-optimal or b) particularly exemplary. Individual projects will only be reviewed (through pre-work) to draw out commonalities and key themes, not to carry out a full debrief of the project in question.
- Make key individuals available for pre-interviews, and assist in identifying one or two individuals who will provide a different perspective on LEP business for interview.
- Read and reflect on the material produced by the other participant and by the facilitator.

The facilitator and those involved from the LEP Network will:

- Review the information provided and draw out some key themes under each of the strategic heads that provide the focus for the peer review process. This will be a light touch exercise. It will aim to draw out commonalities, and to support and challenge LEPs' **identified objectives from the exercise**;
- Carry out brief telephone interviews with at least three people from each LEP area. This will usually be:
  - The Chair
  - The Chief Executive
  - Another individual selected to provide a different viewpoint.
- Provide a short readout of the above to participants shortly in advance of the meeting, suggesting how they might use it to frame the discussion. As more peer reviews are transacted, this process can be simplified, streamlined and refined. It will be more resource-intensive at the start of the process.
- Highlight as part of this readout the overall objectives of the process, the links back to the APR process, and the need to identify clear actions and outcomes;
- Identify which individuals will attend to chair and facilitate the session itself. Generally this will be:
  - A facilitator from CfPS, who will chair;
  - A LEP Network representative who will contribute to the discussion,
  - An independent person – the chair / chief executive of another LEP who has been through the process and ideally whose LEP has demonstrable strengths across the APR areas.

## The meeting itself

Timings given are minimums (for meetings approx. 2 hrs long). Optimum length will be 2.5 – 3 hrs, with a consequent increase in time available for substantive discussion.

- Welcome and introductions (10 mins)
- Brief discussion to confirm objectives (15 mins). Pre-work will have helped the facilitator and participating LEPs to identify these objectives within the framework of the broader national objectives identified above.
- Substantive discussion of themes for challenge. These should number two or three. The pre-work will provide evidence to support this discussion. Discussion should be free ranging but the facilitator will need to focus on identification of outcomes.

- 40 minutes per theme
- 20 minutes at the end to extract and refine actions
- Identification of next steps and follow up (10 mins)

Total: 125 minutes

Participating LEPs will:

- Ensure attendance by at least the Chief Executive and Chair, alongside another senior individual with a relevant specialism (for example, a Board member or member of staff with a responsibility for an issue likely to be under discussion);
- Respond positively and reflectively to challenge when it comes;
- Challenge the other participating LEP;
- Come to the session with a general idea of where general themes and actions might lie, and be ready to commit to actions at the end of the session.

The facilitator will:

- Chair the discussion;
- Ensure that discussions remain focused on the overall APR framework in the context of the specific objectives of the participating LEPs;
- Use material gathered during pre-work to challenge participants on their performance and priorities relating to the substantive matters under discussion;
- Drawing in different perspectives and opinions gathered as part of the pre-work;
- Ensure that all present have an equal opportunity to speak;
- Lead participants through to the identification of actions.

The LEP Network representative and independent person will:

- Contribute to the discussion as necessary;
- Support the facilitator by drawing together themes and commonalities, and assisting in the identification of actions on the basis of the discussion.

## Post work

The facilitator and LEP Network representative will:

- Work together to pull up key points and actions. This will not be a transcript or minute of discussions;
- As part of this note, identify and expand upon key actions agreed on at the meeting;
- Invite participants to commit to those actions and to follow up activity.

The participating LEPs will:

- Actively engage in refining the action points and agreeing them;
- Commit to follow up activity.