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The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Minister for Decentralisation

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Dear Stephen,

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LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

Thank you for arranging for you and colleagues to meet with the Secretary of State and myself to discuss local enterprise partnerships. We were greatly encouraged by the energy and ambition of all present to make local enterprise partnerships a success.

Local enterprise partnerships have a critical role to play in creating the right conditions for businesses to flourish and in rebalancing our economy back towards private enterprise.

On funding, the Government has always been very open about the funding position and as set out in the Local Growth White Paper; local enterprise partnerships should self-finance support costs. I was pleased to hear of your plans for the future to secure funding and I am confident that partners – in local government and the business community – will support the work that you are doing over the next three to six months.

We touched on the New Homes Bonus - exploring how the proceeds of the scheme might locally be top-sliced to support economic development would be a fruitful avenue to pursue.

Facilitating Discussions Across Government

There is a growing enthusiasm for local enterprise partnerships across government – for example the Department for Transport announced in their White paper their intention to work with local enterprise partnerships going forward on strategic transport issues and the Permanent Secretary here have recently written to all local enterprise partnerships to outline the Government's commitment to involve them in ERDF decisions locally.

The Secretary of State and I undertook to support your ambitions with respect to real devolution. I have asked my officials to work with yours on the case for change.

Association of Local Enterprise Partnerships

Reflecting on the very positive examples of good work underway already there is a need to share good practice across local enterprise partnerships. I am considering establishing a funded Association of partnerships to allow local enterprise partnerships to network with each other. I would welcome your thoughts and those of copyees on such an approach, including interest in assuming this role on behalf of the local enterprise partnerships network.

Finally, you raised the importance of Government continuing to champion local enterprise partnerships. The Secretary of State and I are both happy to do this and would be interested in upcoming opportunities to do so. You will also be aware of the recent announcement by the Prime Minister to host a summit with local enterprise partnerships which will be a very good opportunity to again showcase the work of local enterprise partnerships and demonstrate the government's ongoing commitment.

I am copying this letter to other attendees of the meeting – Jim Hakewill, Martin Traynor, Baron Frankel and George Beveridge; and to lead contacts in all other local enterprise partnerships and to Mark Prisk MP, Minister of State for Business and Enterprise.

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GREG CLARK MP