

## Business School lecturer gives evidence at the House of Commons

Posted on Monday 5th August 2013

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Growth, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Enterprise Zones, chaired by local MP James Morris, met in July at the House of Commons to hear evidence on the leadership capacity of Local Enterprise Partnerships.

This was in the light of Lord Heseltine's review of growth which suggested that LEPs take on greater and more formally defined responsibility. Heseltine's recommendation was for a 'single pot' of local growth funding devolved from Government departments to be made available to local areas. Building on City Deals, LEPs are to develop multi-year growth strategies which will be used to negotiate 'local growth deals'.

In giving evidence, [Gill Bentley \(/staff/profiles/business/bentley-gill.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/business/bentley-gill.aspx) of the Department of Management, utilised the Tuckman 'Forming-Norming-Storming-Performing-Adjourning' model to argue that although in their third year of operation, the 39 LEPs are heterogeneous and are at different stages of development. Research indicates that only the LEPs that have reached the Performing stage display full leadership capacity. These are those that generally had a pre-existing partnership of local authorities which were then able to carry out work for the LEP. Some LEPs, still embroiled in the Norming and Storming phases, and lacking sufficient resources and staff, are not in the position to take on additional roles.

Currently financial accountability for public expenditure, and the new local growth fund when it comes on stream, is channelled through local government and not LEPs. There may a need for LEPs to be formally legally constituted as well as for the establishment of Combined Authorities, for LEPs to be able to take on more functions, including the management of European Structural Funds in the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Group's third inquiry, run in partnership with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), will report in September 2013.