



Damian Hinds
MP for East Hampshire

News release

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For immediate release

Local Businesses' Key Concerns Include Skills, Red Tape and Office Costs

Damian Hinds has hosted the Board of the new Local Enterprise Partnership for north and mid Hampshire and west Surrey, Enterprise M3, during which the priorities and aims of the Partnership were presented and discussed. Board members include Chair, Geoff French of URS Scott Wilson and Vice-chair, John Copley of Farnborough Aerospace Consortium as well as representatives from higher education, business, the public sector and the voluntary sector.

Local Enterprise Partnerships are partnerships between local authorities and businesses and play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking work to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. They are also a means for local authorities to work together with business in order to quicken the economic recovery.

The meeting, which took place in Parliament, was attended by several other Hampshire MPs as well as East Hampshire District Council leader Patrick Burridge, who sits on the board of Enterprise M3.

The meeting heard how local research has helped shape the focus of the partnership. Key sectors and priorities for growth were identified including defence and aerospace, IT and communications and tourism.

A survey of local businesses found that 60% of respondents listed getting people with the right skills as a vital enabler of economic growth. A further 50% said that red tape was a major obstacle to local business growth. This was in addition to concerns raised about the cost of office space raised by 60% and road congestion by 50% of respondents.

Enterprise M3 has also formed several 'Action Groups' to drive forward economic growth in the area. These were formed around key areas such as Skills & Employability, Rural Issues & Broadband, Finance & Business Support and Planning & Infrastructure.

Speaking after the meeting, Damian Hinds said

"Local Enterprise Partnerships are an important part of driving economic growth at a local level. Enterprise M3 has made great efforts to identify barriers to local growth and to pick out the best ways we can encourage business to flourish in our region.

"When there is good collaboration between government and business we can take real steps towards making our area fertile ground for businesses to grow.

“Having a forum where collaboration is possible on infrastructure, development and transport policy means we can see a coordinated approach across local authorities and this can only be good for our making our local economy more sustainable.”

Patrick Burridge, leader of EHDC, said

"The M3 Local Enterprise Partnership represents a fantastic opportunity to encourage economic growth in the region and make a real difference to people who live and work in this area.

"There is huge demand for an organisation that can bring together local government and local businesses to work as one in stimulating prosperity and creating jobs.

"EHDC has a strong record in supporting business and is dedicated to helping Enterprise M3 achieve its aim of economic success across the region."

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Notes to editors:

Images to follow separately by email

Enterprise M3 covers 14 District Council areas across two County Councils. More than 1.5 million people live in the area which is also home to 72,000 businesses sustaining 780,000 jobs.

More information can be found at <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/browse/business/business-support-and-advice/lep.htm>

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