



Ministers to ask councils to submit LEP plans

Jamie Carpenter, Regen.net, 28 June 2010

Ministers will tomorrow write to local authorities inviting them to submit proposals for establishing a new type of economic development partnership with which the Government intends to replace the regional development agencies.

A spokeswoman for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills confirmed that the Government would tomorrow invite councils to submit proposals for setting up new local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).

Under plans set out by the coalition Government, RDAs would have to surrender their powers to councils that group together as an LEP. These are described in the coalition deal between the Conservatives and Lib Dems as "joint local authority-business bodies brought forward by local authorities themselves to promote economic development".

Last week's [Budget report](#) said that all RDAs would be abolished through the Public Bodies Bill. The Bis spokesman said that the Government expected that the RDAs would close by March 2012.

Business secretary Vince Cable has said that RDA in the West Midlands and the North would ["continue in pretty much the way they did before"](#).

But according to a [report](#) in Saturday's *Yorkshire Post*, after crunch talks between all 22 councils in the Yorkshire and Humber region, it was agreed that smaller LEPs should be created in place of RDA Yorkshire Forward.

One partnership is likely to cover Leeds and the surrounding area, while another would cover the Sheffield city-region, according to the newspaper.

Last week it emerged that local authorities in the South-East are to ask ministers to abolish the South-East England Development Agency and devolve its funding to the region's town halls.

At a meeting of membership organisation South-East England Councils, all but two of the region's local authorities [voted to abolish RDA Seeda](#).