

MPs welcome MK becoming centre of enterprise

Mark Lancaster has pledged his support for a boundary-pushing project which puts Milton Keynes at the centre of enterprise

Along with MP for Milton Keynes South, Iain Stewart, Mark has praised the benefits the new Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will bring by uniting MK with neighbours in counties such as Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire.

Formed by councils and business groups and supported by a raft of organisations after an invitation from the Coalition Government, the South East Midlands LEP aims to bring together the private and public sectors.

The move came about after artificial boundaries imposed by the Labour government, which created the much-criticised Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), were scrapped.

Mr Lancaster said: "In a great example of decentralisation, the Coalition scrapped RDAs. But they haven't just been replaced with another type of regional government. Cities like Milton Keynes have been liberated from bureaucratic constraints to form their own bottom-up, antonymous LEPs. This is just what we need after a recession to ensure our area prospers."

The Government has received proposals for 56 LEPs across the country and structures should be in place by April 2011.

Mr Lancaster believes the approach will allow Milton Keynes, which is very strong in some areas of industry but lacks in others, to share resources and expertise with its neighbours.

Mr Stewart added: "After so many years of Government-dictated boundaries it is great to see these groups come together and form a business-led partnership of their own design. The best thing is that Milton Keynes, with the highest economic output of all the authorities, is also the geographical centre of gravity. I don't see why this cannot be the best LEP in the country."