Business Leadership Group Meeting – Minutes

Thursday 9th November 2017, Plymouth Citybus

Present

Richard Stevens (RS) – Chairman/LEP Board member/ Business Representative (City Bus)

Amanda Ratsey (AR) – LEP Theme Lead (Plymouth City Council)

Noel Stevens (NS) – ESIF Committee Representative/ Business Representative (Alder King)

Paul Thomas (PT) – Local Authority (Devon County Council)

Victoria Gage (VG) – Local Authority (Devon County Council)

George Cowcher (GC) – Business Body Representative (Devon Chamber)

Julia Blaschke (JB) – Local Authority (Plymouth City Council)

Steve Warren-Brown (SWB) – Business Representative (YGS Landscapes)

Heidi Hallam (HH) – LEP Partnership Manager

Guests

Alison Ward (AW) – Regional Partnerships Manager

Supporting Officers

Ester Curry (EC) – Plymouth City Council

Apologies

David Ratcliffe (DR) – Business Body Representative (DCBC)

James Gilgrist (JG) – Local Authority (Somerset County Council)

Martha Wilkinson (MW) – Social Economy/LEP Board member (Devon Community Foundation)

Chris Evans (CE) – R&D and Innovation (University of Exeter)

Adrian Dawson (AD) – R&D and Innovation (University of Plymouth)

Brendon Noble (BN) – R&D and Innovation (University of St Mark and St John)

Chris Garcia (CG) – Chief Executive Heart of the South West LEP

Eifion Jones (EJ) – LEP Strategy & Operations Manager

Carl Wyard (CW) – Upper Tier Local Authority (TDA)

Sue Wilkinson (SW) – Business Body Representative (FSB)

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|  | **Agenda item** | **Lead** |
| **1** | **Welcome, introduction and apologies**RS introduced the meeting and gave apologies as listed above. Changes to group membership were declared. RS introduced new member SWB to the group. |  |
| **2** | **Conflicts of Interest**None |  |
| **3** | **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**Correction: Sophie Francis was not present at the last meeting; Victoria Gage had attended in her place. |  |
| **4** | **Growth Hub Overview and Mapping Update**Heat Map showing penetration by business per capita was not received by all members. **Comments:*** Thoughts that the map could have sectorial breakdown, and have business stock context to the map.
* Growth Hub map business support, 135 forms of business support, networking alone.
* **GC –** too inaccessible, Growth Hub needs to work more with private sector. Future Growth Hub needs to focus on how to present *themselves and public and private offers* to businesses without confusion to businesses. This feeds into one of the key findings from the Mapping Report: that there is a void between private sector provision and support.
* **NS –** there needs to be more engagement the other way round too, more signposting to the actual Growth Hub for SMEs. This was supported by SWB who hadn’t heard of GH till recently, and who supported the importance of the Growth Hub for younger businesses that would need free or subsidised support, especially in the construction industry. **Suggest Sherford as an opportunity to flag up the benefits of the Growth Hub to SMEs.**

**Action:*** Reports will be re-sent to the group
* The group mailing list will be updated following changes in membership
* Explore the feasibility of setting up a share point system
* Explore how to increase awareness of Growth Hub with Sherford/construction businesses.
 | **JB/EC** |
| **5** | **Growth Summit and Great South West Funding**The group were briefed on the Growth Summit and the need for the Great South West brand to deliver a successful project.The group discussed potential areas of work where the Great SW could support. It was suggested that there needs to be greater focus on road provision, all current dual carriageway improvements should be made to motorway standards with the ultimate aim of extending the m5 past Exeter and into Plymouth. Connectivity to Plymouth is especially important when you consider the presence of the Naval Dockyard (directly employs 11,000 and 75,000 across the wider SW – needs to be better connected). |  |
| **6** | **Devon County Council Economic Development Restructure** PT updated about developments at DCC. New team supports HotSW 3 Key themes: 1. Business Growth
2. Business Development
3. Productivity

Restructure about emphasising:1. Attracting inward investment
2. Supportive network
3. Trading standards

**Trading Standards and Business Support Innovation team**The group were presented with ‘*Business Support, Funding and Recruitment Opportunities’* (see attached) and briefed on the different business support schemes available. **Comments:*** (HH) - ‘*Buy with Confidence’* programme could be used by Growth Hub to help with signposting
* (RS) – Recommend raising the profile of these changes with the Devon Chamber, PABC etc. Recommend swapping round the order of the title: Business Support and Innovation should be the hook, not Trading Standards which might scare some businesses off.
* (GC) – A need to integrate planning and business premises further into the restructure. A need to stress the importance of sustaining business growth and integration of business support. Needs improvement on marketing and the communication of ideas.
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| **7** | **Productivity Strategy Presentation**(see file attachments for slides):Comments from the group on presentation;* It was felt by the group that the Productivity Strategy was lacking in strategic focus.
* Felt by the group that the order of the cross-cutting themes within the strategy could be reordered into this order:
1. *Maximising the potential from digital technologies*
2. *Building on our unique opportunities*
3. *Valuing our natural capital*
4. *Inclusive growth for our communities and places.*
* Feeling from the group that the questions in the presentation (taken from the official LEP feedback) would be too difficult to answer without the Delivery Plan, asking if it is possible to reach the target without much input on how it will be achieved is difficult.
* Felt that the theme names were missing the hooks that would attract capital investment.
* Need to stress how businesses have a responsibility to take ownership of this strategy to increase their productivity.
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| **8** | **AOB**ESF (European Social Fund) Meeting – there has been an under-spend in the area. Group endorsed a broad call for businesses across all sectors to collaborate on this and to send out a broad letter of support.Comments:* There is now an urgency with publishing EU funding opportunities when considering Brexit
* Be more specific about the locations and let the markets react.

Sector Deal Intelligence – First sector deals to be announced before the Autumn Statement. Nuclear sector deal is being worked up.There are rumours of up to 60 potential sector deals. The following 3 potential deals could also be important for the HotSW:1. Tourism
2. Digital
3. Marine

The group was updated on the extraordinary council meeting held in regards to the future of Devonport Dockyard and the rumours of the decommissioning of HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark. The group was asked if they could support the future of Devonport, if and when needed in the future.The group was updated on the Scale Up Report – the report had the highest response rate in the country, one of the key findings from the report is that *skills* remain a fundamental barrier to businesses scaling-up. |  |
| **9** | **Date of Next Meeting** 10 January,  |  |