**Business Leadership Group**

 **Wednesday 10th January 2018**

**1030 – 1230hrs**

**Plymouth Citybus, 1 Milehouse Road, Plymouth, PL4 3AA**

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)

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

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

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

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

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

Linda Middleton-Jones (LMJ) – Business Representative (International Trade Matters)

Cllr Harvey Siggs (CHS) – Councillor Mendip District Council

Stewart Horne (SH) – Rural, Agricultural Representative (West Devon Business Information)

Robin Daniels (RD) – CEO (DCBC)

Helena Davidson (HD) – LEP Communications

Presenting

Colin Bettison (CB) – Project Manager Growth Hub - Plymouth City Council

Supporting Officers

Ester Curry (EC) – Plymouth City Council

Jill Crane (JC) – Plymouth City Council

Apologies

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

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)

Eifion Jones (EJ) – LEP Strategy & Operations Manager

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

Heidi Hallam (HH) – LEP Partnership Manager

Paul Hickson (PH) – Somerset County Council

Alistair Handyside (AH) – Tourism Alliance

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|  | Agenda Item | Lead |
| 1 | **Welcome, introduction and apologies****RS** introduced the meeting and gave apologies as listed above. | **RS** |
| 2 | **Conflicts of Interest****CG** – informed the group that there will be more governance around conflicts of interest in line with new forthcoming transparency guidelines. | **RS** |
| 3 | **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising****AR** – PCC are considering having a SharePoint system, this will need to go through the system which could take 6 -12 months.**RS** – We need to ensure that we are getting good value in our meetings and a good use of time. We can use the meetings as a voice in an appropriate way to address issues. The business agenda is trying to fill the skills gap ahead. We are in a transitional phase. | **RS** |
| 4 | **Joint Committee Productivity Strategy – Going Forward****CG** – The LEP will be required to rise to new governance and transparency. The government need to know what the LEP is trying to deliver. There are currently 2 broad LEP reviews with a number of indicators of future direction with the Industrial Strategy and Government Funding Review already showing some preference to LEPs. There will be bi-annual meetings with LEP chairs and the Prime Minister, alongside the other leadership groups the Business Leadership Group needs to challenge themselves to be the best listening body they can be for the business community, and be able to eloquently translate the asks of the business community to Steve Hindley. **Future Agenda Item:** preparing brief for Steve Hindley on the key issues facing the business community and define clear views on what the group want from future funding.Governments are devolving programmes and funding to areas, rural areas and autonomy guidance are to come. Our priorities are:- Rural (being discussed in the Place Leadership Group), - Ideas / innovation: in the process of signing a MOU with Innovate UK, would be only the 2nd in the country to do so.- Key business opportunities: marine, nuclear, environmental data.Invited the group to input any more ‘*low hanging fruit’* into our devolved ask. **RS** – tourism is a key sector for us, we need to become clearer on what it is worth, size, makeup, shape.**GC** – include the food and drink sector.**LMJ** – need to understand our existing global trade and export links and where possible consolidate them.**AR** – sees 3 key future areas of progression for the Business Leadership Group:1. Export support: build on the tourism and food/drink sector and utilise broadband and online trading support.
2. Growth Hub: the contract expires in 12 months, the tender can be extended (if this is the case the procurement process needs to start within the next 2 months).
3. Innovate UK MOU: how we can work with them to influence the calls that they put out.

**Cllr HS** – concerns around skills and training, we are approaching a ‘*demographic* *time bomb’* and we are nearing full employment. Concern over impact of Brexit on this issue.**CG** – *Skills Advisory Board* is there to tackle this issue, currently modelling the demographics.**SWB** – *Building Plymouth* will have created over 10,000 jobs in construction over the next 10 years. Use it as a model of best practice. **RS** – **action:** create a one page document of where we are as a leadership group, where we’re going. Make it a punchy 1-2 sider collaborative document. **Action:** invited the group to consider an intel-gathering / central repository tool to monitor and use for information.**CG** – over time, when projects come under budget little pots of money appear. Would the group support this money going to the Unlocking Growth Fund or pursue other alternatives?**VG/SW** – Responded positively to this question.**CG** – the LEADER fund has been seen as a success, is there a programme that could be a successor?**AR** – LEADER programme has shown how successful small grants that are managed locally, and are easily accessible can be. | **CG** |
| 5 | **Update ESIF****AR** – In terms of ERDF all projects have now been allocated, there is no problem there. In terms of ESIF some projects are not spending, unless addressed the £20m underspend will be released with £5m to a local call and £15m to a national call. In terms of EUFRD there is money for the food and drink sector, could be urban? Torbay? Exeter?**RS** – Asked the group for feedback on what we should be doing.**LMJ** – Interested in the possibility of an event to promote Plymouth to Europe for future investment.  | **AR** |
| 6 | **Growth Hub Update****CB –** presented to the group the Growth Hub activities for 2017: 40 stakeholder meetings, 52 presentations, 1-2 events daily etc.The Growth Hub has a 3 year contract, if the service is to be continued it needs to be renewed within the next 2 months. Assured the group that the Growth Hub has to report back to government to ensure we meet requirements. We have contractual targets to meet. **RS – Action:** create a one side document with the case for extending the current system and one side with the case for a new tender, then take to the group for a vote.**CB** - The dashboard information will be circulated to the board at later date.**GC** – Recommended taking evidence from other Growth Hub models and look at LEP network to identify other models of best practice.**AR** – **Action**: Offered to make that an agenda matter for next meeting alongside a timeline of the thresholds. | **CB** |
| 7 | **Growth Deal and UGF Update**We have just completed the Plymouth Science Park Phase 5. We have just started the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre part two and the Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre (EPIC) in Paignton. Unlocking 8 projects; Highbridge, Devonport Market Hall, Well Tech Centre, Catsdown Blue workspace, and Claysland Torbay. We have sign off through SIP funding for South Molton Pathfields. | **CB** |
| 8 | **AOB**No other business. |  |
| 9 | **Date of Next Meeting**: 5 March 2018, 10.30-12.30 Exeter (tbc) |  |
| 10 | **Close of meeting** |  |