

Business Leadership Group

Thursday 8th November. 2pm – 4pm.

Impact Lab, Met Office HPC Complex, Upper Richardson, Exeter Science Park EX5 2FS

Present

Richard Stevens (RS) - Chairman / LEP Board member / Business Representative (Citybus)

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

Colin Bettison (CB) – Local Authority (Plymouth City Council)

Cllr Harvey Siggs (CHS) - Councillor Mendip District Council

Daniel Newman (DN) - Torbay Development Agency

David Ralph (DR) – CEX Heart of the South West LEP

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

Steve Warren Brown (SWB) – Business Representative (YSL Landscapes)

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

Hedi Hallam (HH) – LEP Partnerships Manager

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

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

Sue Wilkinson (SW) – Business Body Representative (Federation of Small Businesses)

Richard Adams (RA) – University of Plymouth

Ester Curry (EC) – Plymouth City Council

Supporting Officers

Robert Kathro (RK) – Environmental Futures and Big Data Impact Lab

Hayley Wallbank (HW) – Inward Investment HotSW.

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Corinne Matthews (CM) – Nuclear Coordinator HotSW

Debra Steele (DS) – Innovation in Healthy Ageing

Apologies

Julia Blaschke – Local Authority (Plymouth City Council)

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

Karl Tucker – Business Representative (Yeo Valley)

David Ratcliffe - Devon and Cornwall Business Council

Stewart Horne (SH) – Business Support Representative (Business Information Point)

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

Robin Daniels (RD) – Business Body Representative (South West Business Council)

Alistair Handyside (AH) - Tourism Alliance

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1	Introductions, Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
	The introductions and apologies were made. PT cited a conflict as line manager to guest speaker Debra Steele. RS cites a conflict in relation to the Growth Hub as Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.
2	Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising
	No alterations needed for the previous minutes. The recently announced High Streets Fund should form a future agenda item. DR added that someone from the team would be going to CCLG to discuss this and the meeting would be reported back. Cllr HS recommended the Grimsey Review and asked for coordination as a LEP in relation to this.
3	Environmental Futures & Big Data Impact Lab
	RK introduced the Environmental Futures and Big Data Lab, home to the Met Office informatics team and providing deep technical consultancy for SMEs across Devon, funded by the EU. The Lab pull in academics from partners (Exeter University, Exeter City Futures, Met Office, Plymouth University, PML, Rothamsted Research and Plymouth College of Art). The Group were presented with three case studies of businesses that the Lab had engaged with. The focus of the Lab is on the deep technical capability and engaging scalable businesses with academics. Another dimension is encouraging 'giants' to the region and getting them to engage with SMEs. The identification of the 'giants' is quite ad-hoc, the Lab are currently in the process of writing up their business plan and using the Met Office to network. Similarly with the SMEs, identification of these businesses is ad-hoc, the Lab is listed on the Growth Hub so get referrals from them. It is believed that there is scope to commercialise the offer. AR noted the LEP's involvement in this project through writing the ESIF bid and the funding for the road infrastructure. The project only has funding for 2 years, to avoid any cliff edge RS asked what support could be offered by the Business Leadership Group. RK believed that the Local Industrial Strategy could be a key driver and asked in the drafting of the LIS that the Impact Lab is approached if there is any need for good case studies.
4	Inward Investment Update
	HW announced a 38% uplift in successful FDIs landed (including expansions) with a pipeline of 45 of which 21 are active. At the same time there was recognition that inquiries into the UK have dropped off with DIT seeing a 50% reduction, is it time to look at other channels.

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	<p>The Group were presented with the Inward Investment strategy template which is comprised of the '4 Ps':</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product (distinctive offer of HotSW and reasons to invest) 2. Process (process for handling leads / enquiries across the area) 3. Place (maximising the potential of and filling key sites) 4. People (Ambassadors programme to bring in the private sector and give delivery capacity) <p>Key upcoming dates: 22nd November – using the embassy network to promote the region Lead generation services to identify potential investors and deliver a matchmaking service. HW is currently talking to a couple of companies to create an ambassador company so that they can advocate on behalf of the LEP. Once these steps are completed then we can then start to work towards creating a brand. They are looking to commission research to map FDIs in the region. Asked if the group could help with any elements of the project HW responded that incorporating any additional technology into the strategy would require additional funding. LMJ noted there was another dimension that could be added onto the ambassadors programme, one where the ambassadors could be people travelling out of the region and country. HW said that the programme was still being defined and will have multiple components. PT asked for collaboration with councils as DCC has an active ambassador scheme, HW is currently working with Jamie to ensure they won't be competing projects. JG asked about the coms of the strategy and asked on the status of the Invest South West brand. HW felt that the brand doesn't say a lot about us and needs to be changed, but it is important to get it right. There are 7 investment brands across the SW which can be confusing, yet at the same time they have worked hard to generate a presence in the market.</p>
5	Nuclear South West Update
	<p>The annual report had been sent to group. CM set the scene of the Nuclear South West cluster development programme which was set up 3 years ago. A report was commissioned to better understand the Nuclear offer of the region. This report showed that although Hinkley was a significant asset, the region had a lot more to offer spanning new build, existing assets, decommissioning and defence. Through the Hinkley Supply Chain Programme over £15m worth of contracts have been won by local firms who have worked directly with the programme. Earlier this year NSW attended the World Nuclear Expo in Paris and garnered a huge amount of interest. Following attendance at the event the region now has a pipeline of 48 'warm' leads which are in the process of being followed up, part of the journey of addressing the balance between the South West and North West. The HotSW LEP was involved heavily in the recently published nuclear sector deal which allowed us the opportunity to position our region as place leaders. This deal includes a £10m supply-chain programme which can be levered down into the region to support our current supply-chain programme runs out in 2020, just one year off peak construction at Hinkley. The deal looks to support those businesses suffering from the nuclear project (SMEs who are losing their staff and contracts to the Hinkley project). RS – there was concern last year about a meaningful legacy of the Hinkley supply-chain project. CM answered that if the project's funding runs out in 2020 then there will be a real risk to the legacy of the project.</p>

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	<p>RS – has the recent Toshiba announcement (pulling out of Cumbria’s Moorside nuclear power station) aided our position? CM – Wylfer station also might now not happen as EDF seem to want to take their supply chain to Sizewell. However this will have an impact on the reputation of the fleet of stations that were promised. However the government seems more interested in smaller nuclear reactors.</p> <p>LMJ asked about the likelihood of having these SMRs within the South West. CM responded by saying that we have the most nuclear licensed sites compared to any other region in the UK. However the Welsh are pushing very hard on this and are in the process of putting together a SMR Prospectus.</p>
6	Healthy Aging
	<p>DS introduced the Innovation in Healthy Ageing Programme. The programme is ERDF funded and looks into how small-medium enterprises and social enterprises could be supported to invest in research and innovation with an emphasis on promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking and clusters through smart specialisation.</p> <p>Devon County Council formed a partnership with University of Plymouth, SW AHSN and West Devon Business Information Point to support an application for funding. The ERDF awarded funding June 2017.</p> <p>The programme identified 852 businesses operating in the Health and Life Sciences sector. There is a pipeline of 100 businesses, 30 of which the project are actively working with.</p> <p>Phase One of the project consisted of engaging with SMEs to understand their capabilities and the challenges faces.</p> <p>Phase Two looked at solution development, using the intelligence gathered during phase one a challenge setting event was held on March 1 2018.</p> <p>RS – asked what are the specific activities of the group – DS responded that one SME is looking at the visually impaired, many of the SMEs are not looking at innovative solution in the usual terms, but are looking at applying existing technologies in different ways.</p> <p>RS asked how this programme could be showcased more, DS responded by asking a member of the BLG to join the Healthy Ageing group (LMJ volunteered on behalf of BLG and HH volunteered on behalf of the LEP).</p>
8	Brexit
	<p>AR - The purpose of this agenda item was to have a brief temperature check on Brexit (in light of the recent Barden closure) across the LEP and see whether the group would like it to become a standing agenda item in the run up to March.</p> <p>RS – felt that the impacts were becoming more visible whilst supply chain issues were becoming more acute.</p> <p>HH recommended the SWMAS’ Brexit Barometer which published some really interesting data and reminded everyone of the Brexit panel session at the upcoming LEP AGM.</p> <p>SW highlighted the major concerns shared by the tourism and care industry who were really struggling with staff shortages. However there was a general feeling among small businesses that there would be a dip, but they would be able to get through it.</p> <p>LMJ highlighted how a lot of companies were looking at training for documentation through the chamber, businesses felt that there would be a dip but the heritage, reputation and legacy of the country would allow us to bounce back.</p>

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	<p>RS felt that the key concern for the region is that we could become the ‘Welsh Valleys’ of the UK post-Brexit, experiencing a disproportionate exposure to the negative impacts.</p> <p>NS felt that the property sector has dropped off significantly with the construction industry significantly worried about importing their materials from the EU. The big issue for the SW is that as a region we never recovered, or even experience much growth since the recession, the region does not have the resilience for post-recession growth.</p> <p>It was felt that the greatest issue was uncertainty.</p> <p>Thank-you and finish.</p>
	<p>AOBs</p> <p>RK – set squared has excellence scale up any scale up project should collaborate with that.</p> <p>HH - Thanks for business intelligence.</p> <p><i>Next Meeting: Tuesday 8th January. 2pm – 4pm.</i></p> <p><i>Exeter TBC.</i></p>

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