

Joint Business People Leadership Group meeting – Minutes

Friday 08 July 2016

Present

Nick Ames (NA)	-	LEP Board (SC Group)
Ben Rhodes (BR)	-	Business Body Representative (DCBC)
Carl Wyard (CW)	-	Upper Tier Local Authority (TDA)
Simon Barker (SB)	-	Business Representative/Inward Investment (Leonardo Helicopters)
Noel Stevens (NS)	-	ESIF Committee representative (Alder King)
Amanda Ratsey (AR)	-	Theme Lead/Upper Tier Local Authority (PCC)
Chris Evans (CE)	-	R&D and Innovation (University of Exeter)
George Cowcher (GC)	-	Business Body Representative (representing all HotSW LEP Chambers)
Steve Turner (ST)	-	Upper Tier Local Authority (DCC)
Adrian Dawson (AD)	-	R&D and Innovation (Plymouth University)
Stephen Criddle (SC) (Chair)	-	LEP Board
Keri Denton (KD)	-	HotSW LEP
Edward Coley (EC)	-	Plymouth City Council (PCC)
Guy Hazlehurst (GH)	-	EDF Energy / Business Forum Representative
Karl Tucker (KT)	-	Yeo Valley / Business Representative
Ali Porter (Dept for Sally Kittle)	-	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Nora Corkery (Dept for Elaine Cook)	-	CVS Representative
Catherine Stevens (CS)	-	Big Lottery Fund
Lisa Hutchings (Dept for Rachel Robertson)	-	Northern Devon ESB
Dave Watson (Dept)	-	Dorset and Somerset Training Provider Network
Phil Harris (Dept for Mel Roberts)	-	Somerset ESB
Oenone Thomas (Dept for Mark Shepard)	-	Exeter and Heart of Devon ESB

Supporting Officers

Paul Taylor (PT)	-	Head of Strategy and Operations, HotSW LEP
Julia Blaschke (JB)	-	Plymouth City Council
Heidi Hallam (HH)	-	HotSW LEP Partnerships Manager
Helena Davison (HD)	-	HotSW LEP Communications Manager

Apologies

Brendon Noble (BN)	-	R&D and Innovation (University of St Mark and St John)
Heather Ancient (HA)	-	Business Representative (PwC)
Sue Wilkinson (SW)	-	Business Body Representative (FSB)
Martha Wilkinson (MW)	-	Social Enterprise (Devon Community Foundation)
Paul Hickson (PH)	-	Upper Tier Local Authority (SCC)
Rosie Bates (RB)	-	Devon County Council / HotSW LEP
Dale Edwards (DE)	-	Somerset Chamber

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	Agenda item	Lead
1	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <p>SC introduced the meeting and gave apologies as listed above. As the first joined meeting between the Business and People Leadership Group, both groups were keen to explore common themes and areas of future cooperation. NA highlighted the following areas of interest for the Business Leadership Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to create, foster and ensure the right linkages between businesses and skills in the region • HotSW LEP has a large amount of micro and small businesses as well as some large businesses but there seems to be a gap regarding medium sized businesses. How can this be addressed? • How the Growth Hub can be utilised to drive productivity in the region and support businesses in their growth ambitions <p>SC added the following areas of interest for the People Leadership Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to join up the skills agenda with business' demands and to align training and education to business needs, e.g. creating employment ready education leavers. • How to improve Information, advice and guidance. • Inclusion - progressing projects by joining up and working together across networks 	
2	<p>Brexit – Nick Ames / Stephen Criddle</p> <p>SC asked members to give update from their perspective on Brexit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GC stated that the economy was softening in wake of Brexit and fewer investments were made as businesses were holding back investment until after the referendum. The outcome came as a large shock and the resulting vacuum was bad for businesses. He added that while the low exchange rate was bad for imports it also opened up opportunities for businesses to export. • NS added that the house building would most likely be impacted. Locally there was a mixed picture; some investment had been cancelled while others were going ahead. The full impact was not clear yet and a watching brief would need to be kept on the housing and property market. • SB repeated that uncertainty was very bad for businesses and that industry should lobby Government to create quick solutions to tackle the uncertainty. • AD and CE laid out the situation for the HEs: Both universities count roughly 25% EU nationals among their staff, loss of EU funding was not only money but also networks and knowledge. Both reported that researchers have been asked to step back as lead partners and that the bargain token message was scaring staff. • CT reported a high percentage of his employees were from the EU and his business might suffer if they couldn't be retained. Staff was very unsettled. • CS stated that BIG Lottery funding was unaffected, generally. Building opportunities, the only Lottery funding utilising EU monies was secured until 2019. <p>Following this discussion there was a consensus that it was important to reinstate business confidence as quickly as possible and to promote and capitalise on the positive opportunities created by Brexit.</p> <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board members to report outcome of discussion at the next LEP Board meeting 	<p>LEP Board members</p>

3	<p>Apprenticeships – Richard Daulton/ Ed Coley</p> <p>RD and EC introduced the topic. Government was still very keen to proceed with its apprenticeship ambitions and to introduce the apprenticeship levy. A new funding strategy for apprenticeships for 2017 would be expected shortly.</p> <p>Overall there were lots of good news regarding apprenticeships, enthusiastic deliverers, high retention and success rates of apprenticeships and 25% increase in apprenticeships. A cornerstone for success of apprenticeships was consistency in the quality of delivery.</p> <p>The majority of apprenticeships offered level 2 and 3 qualifications; there wasn't a consistent offer regarding level 4 apprenticeships. Businesses would need to be made more aware of this opportunity.</p> <p>GC stated that 33% of their members do not provide any training according to their latest survey. He emphasised the importance of keeping smaller and medium businesses engaged in skill training. He added that for smaller businesses training costs might be bigger problem which was currently unresolved.</p> <p>Plymouth University has launched higher level apprenticeships for digital and business management. Interest from business community was very high. Cooperation between unis and colleges was a key area of development.</p> <p>Regarding devolution the groups agreed that joint working across group strands would be very beneficial and could create opportunities. A suggestion was to align any potential skill funding with (potential) capital funding.</p> <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results of discussion to be fed back into devolution working groups 	Devolution group members
4	<p>HE Graduate Retention, Innovation & Science Audits and white paper – Chris Evans</p> <p>Science and Innovation Audit:</p> <p>A large consortium bid consisting of HEs across the SW was successful as one out of five national pilots. The aim of this audit is to identify areas of world class regarding science and R&D in the area. The audit would want to find general trends as well as real niches of expertise. The audit would also take account of business expertise and opportunity.</p> <p>The audit is at the stage of initial evidence collection, setting up industrial panels for each section and organising workshops. Future work would include defining key asks. The Innovation Audit will determine future spending on scientific research and R&D. Therefore it is important to ensure key topics for our region are covered. Further work might highlight opportunities coming out of this and should be discussed with Government. It was suggested that the science audit should form part of productivity discussion and should inform LEP strategies.</p> <p>NA questioned how the audit would ensure relative objectivity. CE responded that the data analysis will deliver this.</p> <p>KD added that innovation strength of businesses would needs to be more emphasised in the final document as currently it appeared very science driven. She raised that productivity should be improved across all sectors not only the Golden Opportunities.</p>	

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	<p>White paper: CE introduced the potential changes to the HE sector as laid out in Government's white paper: There will be more opportunities to establish new HE suppliers which would lead to more opportunities and choice for students. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will produce more information for students on quality of teaching including a league for quality of teaching. Teaching excellence will be determining whether a university can raise its fees. Only very well performing universities will be able to raise fees. Last, all existing research council will be brought together into one body, potentially also including some HEFCE funds and Innovate UK.</p> <p>SC added that the Sainsbury review, which was looking at the future of the FE sector, was being delayed.</p> <p>A discussion followed highlighting that there is a problem around motivating and inspiring young people to aspire HE. Young people in HotSW LEP have a statistically lower percentage of HE attendance and the region is consequentially regarded as a HE cold spot. Shorter courses and Level 4 apprenticeships were raised as possible solutions and it was questioned whether a task force should be set up to look at how to raise aspirations and get more young people into starting a university degree.</p>	
5	<p>People and Business Group – areas of joint working – Nick Ames / Stephen Criddle</p> <p>Last, SC asked for future opportunities of joint collaboration. It was agreed that there would be further value in continuing the discussions of this meeting. It was questioned whether an aspiration piece might be needed, looking at what was holding HotSW LEP back, what the opportunities for young people in the region would be (combined with Science Audit) and how young people could benefit from HPC?</p> <p>KD suggested that some of the ESF money currently unallocated might be used to support joint work.</p> <p>NA queried whether this could feature at the business conference.</p> <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore how to keep engaging with each other. - Identify potential ESF support - Look at opportunities for discussion of topic at LEP business conference 	<p><i>Chairs</i> <i>Keri Denton/</i> <i>Amanda</i> <i>Ratsey</i></p>
	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>Business Leadership Group: 12 September, 15.00-17.00, Exeter Science Park People Leadership Group:</p>	<p><i>Julia Blaschke</i></p>