

Business Leadership Group

Thursday 4th July. 2pm – 4pm.

NFU, Rosemoor Court, Pynes Hill, Exeter. EX2 5TU

CONFIDENTIAL

This

No.	Agenda Item
1	<p>Introductions, Apologies and Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>Apologies were made by: Martha Wilkinson Heather Hillman Steve warren brown Alistair Handyside Robin Daniels Jason Buck (Daniel Newman’s replacement) Richard Stevens</p> <p>Paul Thomas, Linda Middleton-Jones and Stewart Horne declared conflicts of interest for the Growth Hub.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>LMJ requested that private sector referrals be added onto page 2 of the minutes.</p>
3	<p>Update on Growth Hub</p> <p>CB updated the group on the 12 month contract extension in which new targets have been set for the Growth Hub. In the first quarter all targets were met. The Growth Hub has also moved locations and is now homed near Devon Chamber which has proved beneficial for collaboration. LMJ agreed that they were seeing much more collaboration with the Growth Hub since they had moved. SH also noted that he had been seeing them out on the road more.</p> <p>AR updated the group on meeting which had been taking place with Karen Leigh from BEIS who was very positive about the progression of the Growth Hub as it moves away from Serco. It was also intimated that there would likely be a continuation of funding however with the possibility that it might be delayed, suggesting that there may be a need to underwrite it. It is, however, in Treasury budgets for the next 2 years. Funding is based upon business stock which leaves HotSW with a similar sized funding package to previous years whilst other LEPs are bracing for the possibility of a reduction in their funding due to borders overlapping. She was particularly interested in the governance and was happy that it runs through the Business Leadership Group and the group’s membership.</p> <p>The meeting also provided some insight into how BEIS are going to be radically ramping up their no-deal Brexit preparations over the next few weeks.</p>

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	<p>EJ asked that if funding is based upon historic business stock, which has surely increased from the figures which BEIS used at the time, then was there an opportunity to ask for a larger share of the funding. AR felt that HotSW had already been allocated a lot more than other areas so there would be little chance that we would receive a greater share.</p> <p>The cut off for ERDF is the end of September. Every area has an allocation and it is expected that the remaining will be put into a national pot. This should be clear by the end of this year, early next year. JB mentioned however that it is less clear what the priorities will be for the national calls.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Update on the Local Industrial Strategy</p> <p>EJ briefly updated the group on the three key themes of the Local Industrial Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Energy Futures 2. Engineering Futures 3. Digital Futures <p>Clean Growth has been identified as our priority, particularly the ‘decarbonising’ of industrial areas. This presents a significant opportunity to define what it may look like for our region. Alongside this is a focus on inclusive growth. A HotSW Inclusive Growth report has mapped the inclusive growth challenges across the area, they have started to test and share this with portfolio holders which has been positively received.</p> <p>There has been a session with government to co-design where the analysts made sure that what is being said is backed up in the evidence base. Following this meeting there will need to be some hefty editing. The current timeline shows the LIS going to the LEP board on July 22nd, if the board are happy it will be sent to government by mid-August.</p> <p>AR asked whether letters of support from businesses would be beneficial – the answer was yes. It was asked that these letters be distributed amongst the group’s networks. It was also requested that there be sufficient representation from smaller businesses. This is expected to be needed after 22nd July, following the board’s decision.</p> <p>It is worth noting that no financial asks can be included in the document as government will not sign up to it. In addition to this there continues to be internal shuffling with high chances of new ministers who might have different views. In light of this the wording should be indirect and easy to sign up to. Can’t include any financial asks for government else they just won’t sign up to it. E.g support for and support to etc. AR suggested using Greater Manchester’s recently published Local Industrial Strategy for the correct wording.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>ESIF Calls</p>

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JB updated the group on the 2 ESIF calls. The first is for innovation which is worth £5.1m with £3.4m allocated for the transition area and the rest for the more developed areas (namely Somerset). The second call is looking at business support and is worth £7.7m with £4.4m going to the transition areas, the business support element will be focused primarily on that rather than workspace, although that is still expected to form a part. It is hoped that this will be an opportunity to continue business support schemes which are coming to an end.

There is an applicant information day on the 11th July with deadline for registration on the 5th of July, 5pm. This will be a similar format to previous events.

Going forward this is the last planned call for our area with any future ones to be national.

EJ mentioned that as an area we need to ensure that all money is spent, if unspent money is being sent back that might be sending the wrong signal to government before the Shared Prosperity Fund.

AR briefed the group on a piece of work which is being done alongside the Growth Hub to see who they often broker to and when does that end. We are looking to pull together a workshop to get these suppliers together – this will not be done until mid-September. As has happened in the past this event will be aimed at both private sector and public sector providers.

LMJ felt that there was a need to repackage the asks of providers so that it becomes more 'sexy'.

These calls will need to be responded to very quickly.

PT asked for some clarification over whether a bid could be formed of a number of elements.

EJ stated that this was fine.

PT asked about match funding in regards to SMEs. JB stated that there are notes on funding from SMEs in the funding guidance.

6 **Brexit**

JB reminded the group that there had been a decision to make this a standing agenda item.

AR briefed the group that government are stepping up their no-deal Brexit preparations and the intelligence seems to be that they do have a plan for emergency support, this may likely involve Growth Hubs and LEPs. At a meeting with a BEIS official AR raised the issue that agriculture and fishing is a big employer in our area and these sectors will be disproportionately affected. AR was told that there is a plan and government have accounted for each area and their business stock.

AR suspected that there is a formula related to money attached, the BEIS representative kept talking about local delivery.

LMJ reminded the group that all of these documents are on the gov.uk website and asked whether any plans had been mentioned in relation to the service industry.

AR noted that this was a brief conversation at the end of meeting unrelated to Brexit and so there was little time to discuss other aspects.

LMJ recommended *9 Lessons in Brexit* by Ivan Rogers.

JB suggested that Hattie Winter give an update at the next meeting in September.

SH mentioned that he had been working with Natural England on a land management project. They had 500 farms they were ready to trial, and now the number has gone down to just 30. SH suspects that this money has now gone into the Brexit pot.

PT mentioned that they have recently recruited a Brexit lead.

AOBs

PT updated the group on an upcoming project which will be engaging with rural micros, this project will cover Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills and they will be hoping to use people's networks to reach businesses. Once the project is underway the project manager can brief the group.

LMJ asked that with Hayley having left who is now acting as an ambassador for the area. EJ stated that this post is now about to go out to recruitment. Acting across a wider geography Sheldon Ryan represents the region across the SCMC and beyond, whilst Corinne also works beyond the LEP in her role as nuclear and aerospace lead, these roles are more sectorally based rather than an overarching ambassador. LMJ felt that this was too fragmented and there needed to be a greater focus on international trade. EJ noted that inward investment and export formed a significant element of the Local Industrial Strategy and this might come out of it at a later stage.

AR talked about future role of the group, she noted that a paper had been produced and it is hoped that this can be circulated in the next 2 weeks. The paper includes responsibility for rural, inward investment, business support and work spaces, innovation.

Next Meeting: Monday 2nd September. 1.30pm – 3.30pm.

Exeter tbc.

