

Agenda item – 11 Papers for noting **Business Leadership Group**

January 20th 2021
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present

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

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

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

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

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

Alistair Handyside (AH) - Tourism Alliance

Dolores Riordan (DR) – Local Authority (Devon County Council)

Katriona Lovelock (KL) – Local Authority (Somerset County Council)

Paul Bird (PB) – Digital Lead (Elixel)

Stuart Elford (SE) – Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce

Jason Buck (JaB) – Local Authority (Torbay Development Agency)

Chris Wardman (CW) – Marine & Defence Lead (Thales)

Philip Mitchell (PM) – Photonics Lead (Lumentum)

Supporting Officers

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

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Eifion Jones (EJ) – LEP Head of Strategy

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

Ester Curry (EC) - Local Authority (Plymouth City Council)

Carla Modley (CM) – HotSW LEP Inward Investment Manager

Sarah Brady (SB) – Inward Investment Support

Apologies

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

Steve Warren Brown – Business Representative (YSL Landscapes)

Dirk Rohwedder (DR) – Inclusive Growth Lead (Dartington Trust)

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1	Introductions, Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
	The introductions and apologies were made (see above) Conflicts of interest were declared by JaB for Nanosens application, AR for all ERDF applications (to step out of meeting), SH, DR, KL, HH & SW for Growth Hub.
2	Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising
	No amendments were needed for the previous minutes. AH added that there was now a representative of the visitor economy on the HotSW Board with the top 3 priorities of the LEP now including tourism.
3	Update on Business Leadership Group
	EC provided an overview of the reviewed membership and terms of reference of the group, detailing the aims and responsibilities of the group
4	ERDF Inward Investment Programme
	Cm provided a brief update on the project so far. At present, up to 20 businesses had enquired into the programme with 9 full applications sent out. Of these, 5 applications had been returned, 3 are currently addressing some missing information and the remaining 2 were to be considered by the group. Discussions and decisions on these two have been recorded separately.
5	Business Theme 2021 Programme
	<p>AR led the discussion on the business theme's work programme for 2021 which would focus on Build Back Better, recovery and business support. AR noted that she would touch on Growth Hub, but that would be covered in more detail in the following agenda item.</p> <p>The LEP's Recovery Plan, Build Back Better is now out for consultation. There are 5 questions in the consultation and the document has been based on the LIS and will be used to inform the pipeline of projects going forward. There are 15 programmes listed in the document and one of those is to <i>establish a single gateway for business support and advice alongside developing financial support packages</i>.</p> <p>AR opened a discussion on the gaps in the current business provision to inform the group's response to the consultation, noting that clean growth and inclusive growth programmes are missing in the current provision. AR felt that supply chain programmes could also be leveraged to include access to public sector procurement.</p> <p>Some members of the group felt that a single access point missed the opportunity to work collaboratively with delivery partners, whilst others believed that a linked up and joined up approach on the business support journey was vital.</p> <p>SH added that whilst coordination is needed at a local level we should be lobbying for greater coordination at national government level. Government often releases competing funds between different ministries. Finally, SH felt that it was important that the end product did not become too bureaucratic.</p> <p>RS concluded that there are gaps in the current provision and funding is needed to fill these gaps, the approach laid out in the <i>Build Back Better</i> document is, in broad terms, the right approach.</p>

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	<p>AR discussed the need for further evidence and intelligence to develop investable programmes. At present, intelligence is underway on access to finance and investor readiness. AR provided a high level timetable of activity.</p> <p>March-April: evidence and intelligence commissioned: business support gap analysis, access to finance, market intelligence from Growth Hub, deep dive into start-up programme etc.</p> <p>March-June: Scale-Up service re-procurement, SLA for Growth Hub renegotiated with DCC, FDI/export grant programme HPO sign off. Sector support Claire Gibson, brokered too services – products developed and coordination of ARG funded support.</p> <p>Jun-Dec: scale-up delivery, deliver Growth Hub, bid in for brokered services in Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up fund.</p> <p>AR stressed that any proposition would need to remain flexible to account for multiple contracts from government. Please note that at present, it is not clear how this funding will flow.</p> <p>Members of the group voiced their support for this approach. PB suggested a tube-map to help signpost businesses to these services. He noted the West of England Growth Map as an example: https://engine-shed.co.uk/projects/regional-growth-map/ Action: AR to circulate presentations, consultation and work programme document.</p>
6	<p>Business Support Updates</p>
	<p>CB provided an update on the Growth Hub core funding, supplementary funding, peer networks and the EU transition, describing a year of challenge with multiple contracts, short-term funding and little details when announced.</p> <p>See attached presentation for the GH funding splits and the multiple contracts attached to the GH delivery.</p> <p>Headline activity: financial support, UK transition being picked up in November and December and a digital promotional campaign.</p> <p>GH have a number of targets they need to deliver as part of their contract:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of businesses engaged 2. Number of businesses referred to local or national schemes 3. Number of businesses receiving more intensive support <p>They have outperformed on the first two targets but are having difficulties reaching the third target.</p> <p>CB provided an update on the supplementary Growth Hub funding, peer networks and the EU transition, stressing the challenges of delivering multiple contracts, short-term announcements and prescriptive guidance from BEIS.</p> <p>KL asked whether the difficulty in delivery is being fed back to government. CB noted that there were some mechanisms to feed back into government, and that BEIS have commissioned an evaluation of Growth Hubs from delivery partners. RS added that a local and independent critique of the current delivery might be an appropriate activity with DR adding that the challenging circumstances and the excellent partnership working must be taken into account.</p> <p>AR stressed that the gap analysis is a key piece of work.</p>

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7	Brexit Intelligence Sharing
	<p>RS opened the discussion on issues that are emerging with the UK's Exit from the European Union. SW noted that many certificates held below degree level are not being recognised overseas, which is causing many issues for multi-national corporations and exporting companies.</p> <p>SE also noted issues with a local of understanding on the rules of origin, adding that IT issues at customs are also causing hold-ups at ports, which has forced some manufacturers to stop working for short periods. The certification issue is costing some businesses, with changes to the CE costing up to £200-300k, a cost which is being passed on to customers.</p>
8	AOBs
	<p>JaB had submitted a paper to F&R to change visit to Photonics West to Laser Munich. Photonics West has moved online and it was felt that the value added from an online event would not be worth the money allocated for the event.</p>

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