

**Business Leadership Group**  
**April 21<sup>st</sup> 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)

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

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

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)

Steve Warren Brown – Business Representative (YSL Landscapes)

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

Adam Chambers (AC) – Business Representative (Smart Outcomes Limited)

**Supporting Officers**

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

Eifion Jones (EJ) – LEP Head of Strategy

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

Hadelzein Elobeid (HE) - Local Authority (Plymouth City Council)

Carla Modley (CM) – HotSW LEP Inward Investment Manager

Heather Hillman (HH) – Local Authority (Devon County Council)

David Hynd (DH) – HotSW LEP Growth Hub Manager (Devon County Council)

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Katherine Coby (KC) – Growth Support Programme Manager (Devon County Council)

### Apologies

Alistair Handyside (AH) - Tourism Alliance

<b>1</b>	<b>Introductions, Apologies and Conflicts of Interest</b>
	<p>Introductions and apologies were made (please see above).</p> <p>Conflict of interest was declared by: AR, HH, KL, SH, AC, DR and SE</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</b>
	<p>Previous minutes were circulated and agreed without any matters arising</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Update on Business Leadership Group</b>
	<p>RS announced that Adam Chambers (AC) has just joined BLG while Linda Middleton- Jones (LMJ) will leave. RS and the group expressed their thanks to LMJ and her contributions to the group. RS welcomed AC to the group.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>ERDF Inward Investment and Trade Programme</b>
	<p>CM provided an update about the Inward Investment and Trade Programme as a whole; no grants' appraisal review required this session.</p> <p><b>Previous appraisals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quite a few responses were received about the Effect Photonics Appraisal– with overall positive feedback and waiting for more to come,</li> <li>- Three businesses awarded of the £900,000 grant scheme for FDI businesses- worth £150,000 creating 72 jobs. Next step is to promote the scheme to interest businesses in Somerset,</li> </ul> <p><b>Broader HPO activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Photonics and microelectronics held a successfully informative webinar and an in-production video,</li> <li>- Two Phase Two HPOs – Marine Autonomy and Smart and Sustainable Advanced Air Mobility (SSAAM). Marine Autonomy final draft received, followed by international</li> </ul>

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promotion through marketing and LinkedIn campaigns targeting potential investors plus a dedicated webpage, SSAAM HPO first draft coming in mid-May - had a successful stakeholder workshop.

- Developing marketing context on the HotSW prospectus is in progress with funding from ERDF.

**Other activities:**

- ERDF fund for Export Trade Development Programme is now extended,
- 37 applications received for the Internationalization Fund; 33 successful applications and £270k awarded,

**Export support:**

- 7 international trade advisors were appointed, 2 market specialists and 5 sector specialists,
- **Export Augmented Reality Marine:** a pilot project only happening in the HotSW. It uses immersive technology to connect UK exporters to overseas buyers using augmented reality marine projects through an Apple app on which HotSW will be promoted,
- **Export Academy:** is a free project running in the levelling up areas to help businesses to start or grow their international sales. 57 individual businesses have signed-up so far across HotSW,

**Comments following the update:**

- SE offered to promote the programme through the Devon & Plymouth Chamber,
- CW offered help with Somerset businesses' link-up,
- AC suggested fostering peer to peer business consultants pertinent to the strategically important businesses/account management,
- EJ questioned the potential of a small informal working group for helping shaping what CM discussed to help move things forward with some business input,
- JaB offered linking up with a Somerset business in an expansion mode and offered support with the strategic companies' working group,
- RS suggested exploring and reaching out to LEP premises; reviewing tenants in these centres (for example photonics centre) and beneficiaries.

**Actions, suggestions and recommendations:**

- Remaining voting members to inform CM about the Effect Photonics Appraisal
- Suggest potential foreign-owned businesses to CM in promotion of the grant scheme,

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thoughts on engagement programmes adding value to the strategically Important Businesses project,</li> <li>- Thoughts and feedback on how to operate the Single Trade and Investment Hub,</li> <li>- Help make interested businesses apply to the Export Trade Development Programme,</li> <li>- Help with promoting the Internationalization Fund</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Peer Networks' Achievements</b>
	<p><b>In a nutshell;</b></p> <p>CB gave a recap and whistle-stop about the Peer Network Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Background:</b> in January 2020, BEIS emailed about running the programme across whole LEP networks but things halted because of COVID19 then got back to action. An offer letter was issued in July, recruitment took place in August, variation of offer letter in September, paperwork in October and November,</li> <li>• <b>How the programme works:</b> 12 cohorts/ peer networks, 8-11 participants, 18 hours of action-learning-style support and a one to one session of 3 hours and a half,</li> <li>• <b>Approach:</b></li> <li>• Look at existing networks and sectors having something already in place- work with potential networks to add value through working together,</li> <li>• Examples for engaged organizations are: South West Manufacturing Advisory Service, School for Social Entrepreneurs, Devon Chamber and BIP.</li> <li>• Aligned with sectors such as nuclear, aerospace, manufacturing, social enterprise, food and drink,</li> <li>• Second and third lockdowns created challenges, such as targeting the agri-tech sector and recruiting enough participants,</li> <li>• 10 networks were delivered in a timeline between October to March, with most delivery taking place after Christmas in a compressed window.</li> <li>• Great and positive feedback was received,</li> <li>• BEIS has confirmed continuation of the programme with more cohorts to deliver now (17) in 2021/22</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments following the update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KL asked about whether there is some summary of best practices to be shared or lessons to feed in from,</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS seconded the capture of the endeavour and best practice,</li> <li>• SE suggested picking up the potential of engaging agri-tech sector with CB</li> <li>• JuB mentioned that there will be a national evaluation of the Peer Networks Programme.</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Business Support (Growth Hub ) Updates</b>
	<p><b>In a nutshell;</b></p> <p>DH gave a presentation about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the Growth Up activities throughout last year highlights and lessons learned,</li> <li>• This year's new service for all (ERDF and core Growth Hub support)- KC joined the presentation and talked more about the aim of the new service which is while building on the original program in terms of providing in depth diagnostic support and specialist provision, is to add more and on top to provide more flexibility and growth choices,</li> <li>• Joint work with KC about the Growth Hub Mock Up- prototype dashboards of the digitalization project and what's looked at in terms of data collated for the system.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments following the update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS asked about what else is needed in terms of business support; i.e. what can BLG ask for on behalf of the Growth Hub and DH answered that for a start is to think and commit to a strategic long term way that enhances shaping, amplifying, connecting activities and filling key gaps such as start-ups provision, innovation and access to finance,</li> <li>• SE talked about business support and how businesses which excelled could help others and gave an example of the businesses which went completely digital,</li> <li>• In terms of gaps, AC talked about enhancing social enterprise support and providing environmental support for SMEs. He also mentioned access to finance and support for equity investment for SMEs,</li> <li>• DR seconded AC's suggestion of an ongoing specialist support for social enterprises and the social economy.</li> <li>• HH said that they are doing a PCR for another phase of ESE but MHCLG still can't tell them how likely it is that it might be funded,</li> <li>• AR said they have just had the BEIS contracts through and it is still 12 month and have just had the guidance to submit this on 6th May which means they will get the contract a quarter of the way through the delivery of the contract. She also mentioned that access to finance and mapping work is in progress,</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SH said it's very hard for local delivery organisations to manage the peaks and troughs of contracts and that anything that could smooth out the workload is supported,</li> <li>• JaB echoed AC's comment on equity investment, saying that their Photonics/Electronics big project work recently identified this,</li> <li>• EJ asked about involvement of the Growth Hub with the Community Renewal Fund and the opportunity to be in the funding. DH mentioned engaging in webinars and being around the edge to get the message out on how to engage,</li> <li>• Group was supportive to the governance arrangement for the ERDF programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions, suggestions and recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include Growth Hub dashboards in the monthly BLG updates.</li> </ul>
7	<b>Growth Hub's Start-Ups Overview and Update</b>
	<p><b>In a nutshell;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CB mentioned that picking up from start-ups support and feedback from BLG; they started conversations with the Growth Hub on what to put in place and how to address agenda-conscious of the stream of funding (resilience grant and community renewal fund),</li> <li>• CB also had conversations with BEIS regarding the funding they provide for Growth Hubs, which traditionally do not support working with pre-starts. BEIS provides schedules of how funding for this project is spent,</li> <li>• DH gave an overview of how front line advisors and anecdotes showed that start-ups are a challenge with a bit of a gap in the last 6 months and issues arising (COVID19 on top). Now Growth Hub is looking at how to build evidence base, what to pilot as new approaches and how to identify main needs.</li> </ul>
8	<b>Commissioned Research</b>
	<p><b>In a nutshell;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JuB mentioned that there are currently two main pieces being conducted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A result of a previous direct research of businesses' access to finance. This research is now used for a bigger one mapping the existing offer in terms of access to finance and the gaps. An update is expected soon,</li> <li>2. A combination of Growth Hub evaluation (a year since it moved to anew provider) plus an evaluation of business support programs (scale-up program and other smaller ones).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So in brief, a wider mapping of businesses and an identification of the gaps in business support which will help come up with solutions,</li> <li>• AR added that access to finance interim report and support with Community Renewal Fund evaluation as other things that they are looking after at the moment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments following the update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EJ asked about the timescale for the access to finance and AR answered that they will be looking into the interim report by mid-May.</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Levelling Up and Community Renewal Funds' Update</b>
	<p><b>In a nutshell;</b> AR gave a brief explanation about the two funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Renewal Fund:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £220m nationally - CRF is a pilot for shared prosperity fund replacing the European Funding. Government has identified 100 priority places.</li> <li>- The difference to ERDF lies in the first stage being administered by the local authority not LEP or MHCLG while the similarity is that the minimum bid size is £500k; Delivery has to take place in 20/21 with 90% revenue,</li> <li>- The process starts with the local authority running an open and transparent call then conducting technical appraisals then submitting projects to Government, which will choose which projects to fund. Submissions are by 16<sup>th</sup> June and decision by July at the earliest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Levelling Up Fund:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £4bn of funding for England up to 2024/25</li> <li>- Up to £20m per project for transport, town centres and cultural development, priorities may change in future years,</li> <li>- Areas can have one successful bid per MP (minimum one), MPs should support bids</li> <li>- Government ranked A, B, C areas as priorities for funding.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<b>AOBs</b>
	JaB requested having some sort of discussion and input on the recent Photonics Electronics report.

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