

## LEP - Business Support Management Board

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 10.30am in Exchange Room 9 - County Hall, Preston

#### Present

Ann Dean MBE DL

Miranda Barker OBE  
Nick Hyde  
Martyn Jones

Justin Kyriakou  
Sue Smith  
Stuart Thompson

#### In Attendance

Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager, Lancashire County Council  
Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership  
Darshana Patel, Compliance and Finance Officer, Lancashire County Council  
Holly Tween, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council  
Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth, Lancashire County Council and Interim LEP CEO  
Ramin Farhadi, Intern – Business Growth  
Ben Hughes, Intern – Business Growth

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made by all in attendance, along with a brief description of the organisation they were representing.

Special welcome was extended to Nick Hyde, who was now the representative from the North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, replacing Geoff Mason.

Apologies had been received from Beth McKenna, Claire Driver and Amin Vepari.

#### 2. Declaration of Interests

None

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting on 25 May 2023 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### 4. Matters Arising

It was agreed that Justin Kyriakou coordinate a piece on finances for SMEs, working with the president of the ICEAW, and would aim to have something for November.

#### 5. Boost 5 Update

Darshana Patel, Compliance and Finance Officer, LCC, presented an update on the Boost 5 Programme, including an outline of the new partnership arrangement and geographical footprint, the key principals of the programme and the delivery model.

The committee considered the presentation and made the following comments:

- It was suggested that "drive local supply chains" be added to the "connect" principle
- The "scale to thrive" programme was very important, and there was concern that input for this should reside in Lancashire rather than Manchester, and that information on companies scaling up should be shared with organisations represented in the Business Support Management Board, so they could be cross-referred
- It was agreed that the companies delivering the Boost programmes be invited to update the committee
- It was noted that the size or sector of a company was no longer restricted, and support was now universal across Lancashire. However, it was noted that some organisations in areas where the Local Authority had chosen not to invest in Boost may not receive the same level of support

Darshana was thanked for the update.

**Resolved:** the Business Support Management Board agreed that

- i. The update was noted, and the slides circulated to committee members
- ii. Companies delivering Boost 5 programmes be invited to present updates to future meetings of the committee

#### 6. Investment and Funding Landscape Update

Sue Roberts, Commercial and Business Support Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, presented an update on Investment and the Funding Landscape, and highlighted:

- Following the report from Ekos, work was being done to establish the baseline, and a report was due shortly from the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, who were supporting
- Phase 1 of the Funding Hub was up and running, with a brochure site now

active, and a plan to make it more interactive and add more information in phase 2

- The Growing Places Fund Investment Strategy had been developed, and would assist the LEP to assess schemes coming forward to them
- The Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund 2 was expected to operate from January-February 2024

Sue was thanked for her presentation.

**Resolved:** that the update is noted, and the presentation circulated to committee members

## 7. Internationalisation Plan Update

Sue Roberts presented an update on the Internationalisation Strategy, and the five pillars: export, foreign direct investment, capital investment, innovation and the visitor economy, each of which had its own action plan.

It was noted that the next steps included continuing quarterly stakeholder meetings, complete capacity mapping of the 5 pillars, begin leveraging relationships and developing propositions, and to expand the skills training and opportunities for exporters.

**Resolved:** that the presentation was noted and circulated to committee members.

## 8. LEP Future Update

Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth, LCC and Acting LEP Chief Executive, presented an update on the future of the LEP, following the announcement from the government that they intended to stop funding Local Enterprise Partnerships.

It was reported that at the July Board meeting the budget of activity had been agreed, covering strategic framework delivery, project support, marketing, conferences and events, and restructuring.

The new structure, including sub groups, sector groups and private sector input was still to be determined.

**Resolved:** that the update be noted

## 9. Position of Lancashire Businesses

Round the table, committee members were invited to share updates from their organisations and sectors, and reported the following:

- Third sector organisations were currently experiencing problems

accessing banking and financing

- Interest rates were still having a negative impact on business expansion
- A recent straw poll had found that businesses were less concerned with energy or wage price inflation as they had been, but were still restrained by skills constraints
- The Lancashire Local Skills and Improvement Plan was now live online

**Resolved:** that the updates are noted

**10. Any Other Business**

None

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 10.30am on 16 November 2023 in Exchange Room 8, County Hall.