

LEP - Business Support Management Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 11th October, 2017 at 12.00 pm at the Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present

Michael Blackburn (Chairman)

Gillian Bardin
Anthony Camm

Paul Foster
Sue Smith

In Attendance

Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager - Business Growth, LCC
Andy Milroy, Senior Democratic Services Officer, LCC
Andy Walker, Head of Service - Business Growth, LCC

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Mike Blackburn, welcomed all to the meeting, round table introductions were made. Apologies for absence were presented from Tim Webber, Babs Murphy, Gary Lovatt, Councillor Frank McKenna and Stuart Thompson.

Anthony Camm attended as a substitute for Councillor Frank McKenna, Paul Foster attended as a substitute for Gary Lovatt.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2017 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

Andy Walker provided an update on recent developments regarding the BAE workforce and support being provided.

5. Work with Key Sectors in Lancashire

Andy Walker, Head of Service Business Growth, Lancashire County Council introduced a report (circulated) which updated the Business Support Management Board on work with Key Sectors in Lancashire.

The update included work with the North West Aerospace Alliance, the Automotive sector, Energy, Health and Creative Industries.

At this point Michael Gibson, Pete Walker and Mark Thwaite (all Digital Lancashire) joined the meeting and gave a presentation about the work of Digital Lancashire.

It was highlighted that the Digital Industry was the fastest growing industry in Lancashire with a number of businesses expanding and growing over the last few years. In particular a cluster of Digital Businesses are growing quickly in Burnley, Chorley, Preston and the Lancaster areas.

In addition, the presentation provided information about links with education providers and the Digital Sector, strengths and weaknesses and future ambitions to grow and expand the sector.

Resolved: That:

- (i) The updates provided in the reports be noted, and
- (ii) The presentation from Digital Lancashire on their initial work to underpin a sector strategy be noted.

6. Strategic Economic Plan - Evidence Base

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) which updated the Business Support Management Board (BSMB) on activity which is taking place to ensure that the LEP's new Strategic Economic Plan has a current, relevant and robust evidence base.

It was highlighted that the Plan was of particular relevance to the BSMB as the local response suggested from this analysis will need its own governance and action plans and will be primarily focused on businesses.

In preparing for the new SEP, the LEP has had time to explore some key areas of work, to refresh the understanding of Lancashire's performance and explore new ways of working. This work has included the development of a fresh set of economic forecasts, coupled with work on productivity, international trade and innovation. In addition to this programme of work, the LEP has this week received confirmation that BEIS will finance a significant piece of work on Energy within Lancashire.

The research and policy development ideas around the topics of productivity, internationalisation and innovation all primarily share the business community as the key actor and focus of intervention. Other LEP areas have developed specific governance structures such as Innovation Boards which drive these policy areas.

Resolved: The Business Support Management Board:

- (i) Endorsed the approach taken so far to develop the Strategic Economic Plan.
- (ii) Agreed to contribute to the review as appropriate through discussions and briefings with LEP officers.

7. LEP Update

Andy Walker agreed to circulate to Board Members information regarding the work of the LEP including snapshots of press releases.

8. Co-ordination of Publicly Funded Business Support in Lancashire

Andy Walker presented a report (circulated) which updated the Business Support Management Board on the Co-ordination of Public Funded Business Support in Lancashire.

It was noted that publicly funded business support should be working to complement these existing relationships and operating in areas of market failure, where businesses need encouragement or awareness to pursue a course of action which would otherwise be seen as economically rational.

Within Lancashire there are a range of programmes running which enjoy public funding. Whilst declining, we can still see a number of national programmes promoting self-employment and business support which operate within the area. Businesses can also benefit from individual programmes within local areas backed by their local authorities, but the bulk of activity within the current publicly funded business support offer draws on Lancashire's allocation from European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF).

Whilst clearly impacted by Brexit, the current understanding around the future of this funding is that the UK Government will underwrite this programme up until 2021 and longer for financial instruments (loan and equity investment programmes).

The Board commented that at a future meeting the Board could consider a specific item on the impact of Brexit and what it means for European Funding with a view to mapping out the next 5 years with regard to the business and innovation sectors.

Resolved: The Business Support Management Board:

- (i) Noted the update on the Lancashire business support offer.
- (ii) Endorsed the model for co-ordination set out around business finance services as a template for co-ordinating activity in other thematic areas; and
- (iii) Agreed to update the LEP and ESIF partnership around management proposals for this group of services.

9. Reporting to Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

In terms of reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board, the Chair summarised that Growth Hubs and their impact on Lancashire will be an item to bring to the attention of the LEP Board at a future meeting.

10. Any Other Business

An update was provide on recent developments regarding BAE Systems.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting date was to be confirmed.