



## LEP – Sub Committee

### LEP - Business Support Management Board

**Private and Confidential: No**

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### Co-ordination of Publicly Funded Business Support in Lancashire

Appendices A - C refer

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#### Executive Summary

This report provides the Business Support Management Board with a progress report detailing the range of national programmes and local ERDF projects which are now operating across Lancashire, some headlines on the progress of key programmes including Boost – Lancashire's Growth Hub and some suggested activity to improve the clarity and navigability of the business support offer.

#### Recommendation

The Business Support Management Board is recommended to:-

- Note the update on the Lancashire business support offer
- Endorse the model for co-ordination set out around business finance services as a template for co-ordinating activity in other thematic areas
- Update the LEP and ESIF partnership around management proposals for this group of services.

## 1. Context

- 1.1 It is understood that the majority of business support delivered in Lancashire is provide by commercial concerns who establish long term relationships with their partners and are financially rewarded for the advice they deliver.
- 1.2 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.



- 1.3 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).
- 1.4 Whilst clearly impacted by Brexit, our 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).

## **2. Mapping Publicly Funded Provision.**

- 2.1 The diagrams illustrating live projects at Appendix A and Appendix B show national, regional and local programmes operational within Lancashire. There are 29 main LEP-wide programmes covering 6 main thematic areas of business support – innovation, low carbon, digital access and adoption, support for early stage business, support for mature businesses and a set of initiatives and developments aimed at specific sectors.
- 2.2 Whilst European Social Fund initiatives are by definition directed at the development of individuals, there are major programmes directed at the development of people already within the workforce, to enhance apprenticeships and improve higher level skills.

## **3. Project Highlights**

- 3.1 To help businesses navigate this complex landscape it is vital that Boost – Lancashire's Business Growth Hub is operating well. This needs to be measured both in terms of agreed local and European KPI's but also in terms of outcomes.
- 3.2 The marketing effort which underpins awareness of the Boost brand is closely monitored and top date:-
  - The website has had over 82,000 unique visitors since its creation, with 33,000 of those definitely based in Lancashire. The total business population is circa. 50,000.
  - Attracted 5,621 followers on Twitter
  - News and sponsored content with Lancashire Business View alone has been sent out to over 10,000 business contacts across the county.
- 3.3 The performance of the Gateway Service (delivered by Growth Lancashire) the Growth Support Service (delivered by Winning Pitch and Enterprise 4 All)



and the Growth Mentoring Service (delivered by Community Business Partners and Orvia are shown at Appendix C. Performance is generally exceeding the profile for delivery of GSS and Mentoring. Whilst general engagement levels for the Gateway are high, we are working with Growth Lancashire to ensure we improve performance or find new ways to delivering, initial face to face business diagnostic interviews and in delivering Growth Voucher grants.

#### **4. Improved Ways of Working**

4.1 We are constantly striving to improve the way in which this suite of provision works together to offer the best possible service to individual businesses. Whilst we can expect officers within the gateway service to provide high level advice, it is often more difficult to fully understand how programmes differ within a specific theme and what the best fit will be for businesses. Without such specialist advice business can perceive the offer to be complex or not appreciate that a service offer actually exists.

4.2 Working on the business finance theme as an exemplar, we have begun to better define the role of respective offers and the Growth Hub see Table 1 below.

The information ask of these projects is:-

- A detailed but tight paragraph on what the service is
- Information on "ideal client", capacity and performance
- Commitment to brief gateway, attend marketing group & provide case studies

The behavioural ask of these projects is:-

- To respect "Boost First" principals
- To co-ordinate marketing, PR and awareness raising activity as a business finance block
- To follow MOU, share data etc.
- To cross and onward refer clients

#### **5. Recommendations**

The Business Support Management Board is recommended to:-

- Note the update on the Lancashire business support offer
- Endorse the model for co-ordination set out around business finance services as a template for co-ordinating activity in other thematic areas
- Update the LEP and ESIF partnership around the enhanced management proposals for this group of services.

Role	Provider	Programme	Specific Service Offer	Specialisms	Capacity / Budget Limit / Target per/annum
Initial / Speculative Enquiry Handling	Growth Lancashire	Boost	Direct Referral		
			More detailed IDB		
Specialist Financial Advice	MGC	Access 2 Finance NW	Access 2 Finance Advisers		
	UCLAN	Investment Readiness	Training to get business ready for equity investment. Referrals coming in from A2F and Maven	Any business	
Funding Providers	LCC	Micro Rosebud	Loans up to £49k Sep Priority Sectors	Average loan £38k	£300k per annum combined
		Rosebud Peer top Peer	Ability to contribute to P2P funding rounds		
		Rosebud	Loan / Equity SEP Priority Sectors	Typical investment £250k -£500k	£1.6m
	BBB	Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund	NW Micro-finance (BFS)	£25-£100k	
			NW Loan Fund (FW Capital)	£100k - £750k	
			NW Equity Fund (Mavern)	£50k - £2m	



Lancashire  
Enterprise Partnership

Development funding	LEP	Growing Places	Loan funding to unblock schemes	Ave loan £2m	£20m
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