

LEP - Business Support Management Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 21st May, 2020 at 10.30 am at the via Skype

Present

Ann Dean DL

Miranda Barker
Paul Foster
Neil McMillan

Sue Smith
Stuart Thompson
Babs Murphy

In Attendance

Phil Green, Director of Growth, Environment and Planning, Lancashire County Council
Sarah Kemp, CEO Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager, Lancashire County Council
Holly Tween, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Andy Walker, Head of Economic Development, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were presented from Katherine O'Connor. Babs Murphy replaced Geoff Mason for this meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2019

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting were confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Andy Walker, Head of Service Business Growth, Lancashire County Council, advised that the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) had been about to go forward to the LIS Advisory Panel when lockdown started, and had now been paused, awaiting BEIS advice.

Lancashire Scale Up – the evaluation of the first three pilots would be ready in

August. It was noted that the outputs may be focussed more on resilience and survival of businesses, rather than the original growth trajectory. It was noted that it was important to get the right measures of success, and that part of the process was a formal evaluation to ensure this.

An update on the Shared Prosperity Fund had been due at this meeting, but due to the COVID-19 crisis there had been no developments from the government so far. The team were still working to the planned start date of 2023. A large number of structural funds had an extension to 2023 which could enable a smooth transition.

The LEP Board had requested a presentation around successes in Lancashire as a result of European funding. Conversations were ongoing with BEIS to communicate to the government the importance of starting the Shared Prosperity Fund on time. The presentation could be shared with this committee also.

It was suggested that Boost officers meet with Stuart Thompson and his contact at the British Business Bank to consider how best to showcase Lancashire businesses.

Resolved: that:

- i) a LEP Board presentation around successes in Lancashire as a result of European funding be shared with the Committee
- ii) Boost officers collaborate with Stuart Thompson and the British Business Bank to consider how best to showcase Lancashire businesses

5. Boost - use of BEIS grant in 2020/21

Andy Walker presented the report (circulated) on the use of the BEIS grant for Growth Hub activity in 2020-21.

It was proposed that the BEIS funding be allocated as follows:

- A. Growth Hub Delivery ERDF Match - £220,000
- B. Executive and Performance Management cost, performance, compliance and quality assurance activities (including ERDF compliance) - £50,000
- C. Evolutive CRM Maintenance and licences - £30,000
- D. Purchase of Business Data, including (Beauhurst) - £18,000
- E. Events, Marketing and Printing - £10,000

It was noted that there was currently no guidance on the supplementary funding of £208,500 but that this was expected in June, and proposals for its use could be developed by the end of June.

Resolved: that the Business Support Management Board

- i) Endorse the suggested use of BEIS resource as set out in the report, and

recommend that the LEP Board approves the proposals for the grant of £328,000

- ii) Requests the Head of Service Business Growth, Director of Growth, Employment and Planning at Lancashire County Council and the LEP Chief Executive to draw up proposals for the supplementary funding of £208,500, reflecting the need to respond to challenges to Lancashire Businesses as a result of COVID-19

6. Covid 19 - Business Impact and Responses in Lancashire

Andy Walker gave a presentation on the support activity for businesses during the COVID-19 crisis, covering national business support offers, a breakdown of Boost enquiries, data from the Chamber of Commerce, cash flow and reserve data and key actions.

It was commented that across all sectors there had been significant change, and Lancashire collectively may benefit from a strapline that could be used as Lancashire transitions into the recovery phase. Marketing Lancashire was currently developing a strapline around recovery, which would be fed back to the LEP and this committee. The committee requested to review and comment on this work.

Sue Smith, UCLan, outlined a proposal on a piece of research undertaken by the Centre for SME Development at UCLan on the impact of COVID-19 on SMEs in Lancashire, expected to take place over the next 18 months. The research included analysis of a survey launched to Lancashire SMEs, including those that are engaged with any business support interventions and those who are not; 35 SMEs were keeping oral diaries weekly on their reflections, which lead to deep dive qualitative interviews; and an analysis on #askforhelp. This would be an iterative process of research and analysis which would inform the business support package and could help inform policy makers in the future on what did work.

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) had a funding call-out for coronavirus research and Sue asked for the committee's support in principal for a submission to bid for this funding.

The Centre for SME Development also requested to play a role in helping analyse or coordinate responses to various surveys, or to send out a separate survey.

Committee members were thanked for contributing to the response submitted to the parliamentary select committee looking at the impact of coronavirus on business, meeting on 29 May.

Resolved: that the Business Support Management Board:

- i) Request the strapline work around recovery be circulated to the Business

Support Management Board for review and comment

- ii) Support the bid submission from the Centre for SME Development to the UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) for coronavirus research funding
- iii) Support the Centre for SME Development's request to play a role in helping analyse or coordinate responses to various surveys, or to send out a separate survey

7. Any Other Business

Members were invited to share feedback from their organisations.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 10.30am on 27 August 2020. Venue/virtual details to follow.