

Private and Confidential

LEP - Business Support Management Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 21st March, 2016 at 12.00 pm at the Former County Mess - The John of Gaunt Room, County Hall, Preston

Present

Michael Damms

Gary Lovatt

In Attendance

Andy Walker

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Mike Damms (deputising for Mike Blackburn) welcomed members, introductions were made and apologies noted from Michael Blackburn, Martin Kelly and Timothy Webber. In addition, Alan Welsh attended in place of Barbara Murphy, Danny Davies for Cllr Frank McKenna and Lee Petts for John Kersey.

Chair also welcomed Philip Hargreaves from Access to Finance and Steven Cochrane from Regenerate Pennine Lancashire to present information to the Board as part of item 5 of the agenda.

Mike advised the Board that the meeting as it stands does not meet the minimum quorum requirements due to only two named members in attendance although there were a number of representatives in place of those members unable to attend.

Resolved: To continue the meeting in an advisory capacity and any resulting actions to be agreed via a written resolution to the absent Board members.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest noted at this time.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2016

Minutes from the meeting dated 20th January 2016 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Matters arising covered in the agenda.

5. Publicly Funded Business Support Provision in Lancashire

Access to Finance Service 2012-15

Philip provided a presentation to the Board outlining the original aims and objectives of the Access to Finance contract which included the learnings and details of the new programme for 2015-18.

The service provided support to SME's through improving their access to finance and increasing their understanding of the finance products available. There continues to be a need to support SME's for funding access.

Details of the verified outputs collected during the programme were highlighted and in particular the GVA (Gross Value Added) which was 208 below the target. Philip reported that data (forecast not actual) from Business Link was used for the targets which may have impacted on this. In addition, a rise in jobs can cause a drop in GVA. Despite this, it was felt that the £5.3m was a good outcome based on only 38 GVA.

A question was raised as to why growth aspirations of businesses failed to materialise and indications showed that better engagement and signposting to more suitable support was required. The gateway in the new programme should assist with this.

The focus of the new programme will include higher growth businesses and more interactions through drop in sessions and a broader mechanism of support.

In summary, the programme performed well and has used the learning to make changes for the new improved programme.

Business Support Audit/Simplification

Steve Cochrane presented to the Board information on the Business Support Review Update.

In January 2016 a business survey of 8083 was issued to Lancashire businesses of which nearly 2000 were to businesses who had not previously accessed business support. The aim of the survey was to understand types of support received, views of support previously received and what would be useful in the future. 2.7% of businesses responded and Steve reported that they may need to look at further workshops to test those responses. 78% of businesses responded had less than nine members of staff.

Responses showed a good awareness from those who received support and any negative responses were followed up. There was a mix of need around future priorities.

Growth Hubs have been encouraged to work together and task and finish groups have been set up to look at quality.

The provider survey aimed to gather up to date information on current and emerging business support offers from local providers to update the Boost Business Lancashire Support Finder resource. The survey was issued to 37 organisations, and 21 of those provided responses.

Steven reported that the matrix had not yet been fully populated and would be used to identify the quality of support going forward.

From the data received so far there were no real surprises and no obvious gaps.

6. Oversight of Business Support Future Investment

Andy Walker provided a presentation update to the Board on the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund. Highlights from this presentation included:

- Objective to have greater flexibility in those areas which do not have European match funding.
- The key match funder is European Investment Bank.
- The key themes identified include micro finance (small business loans), debt, early stage technology/innovation and equity
- Timeline – officers from 11 LEPs meet on a regular basis and a strategic oversight board is in place
- Recommendation of 60% debt and 40% equity
- There is sectoral interest against local
- Pre market engagement – 50 Fund Managers attended the two events taken place with a broader area of interest.
- An options appraisal exercise taken place.

Andy then presented information to the Board on the ERDF projects at the outline application form stage.

A number of projects (in priorities 1, 3 and 4) have passed the gateway process although the Board were advised that not all projects would be successful in obtaining funding. There is a concern around priority 3 which is near to capacity. And there is an expectation that applications for more low carbon and flood relief projects (priority 5) will be received.

Organisations have 12 weeks to complete the full application but can submit sooner and the award decision will be taken around the end of June.

The Board discussed a number potential issues which included:

- Capital projects which do not produce many outputs to evidence improvements.
- Need an innovation strategy for Lancashire and how they link and deliver more
- There is a danger of having many projects which are nice to have rather than

adding value.

Resolved: The Board agreed that there is a need to see how these projects would add value.

7. Future Work Programme

Resolved:

1. The Board to continue to explore projects due to end
2. Representative from UKTI to attend a future meeting

8. Any Other Business

None

9. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting to be held on the 25th May 2016 12-2pm, The John of Gaunt Room (formerly County Mess), County Hall