

LEP - Business Support Management Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 19th October, 2018 at 10.30 am at the Committee Room 'B' (The Diamond Jubilee Room) - County Hall, Preston

Present

Michael Blackburn (Chairman)

Gillian Bardin
Paul Foster
Vladimir Pejcinovic

Sue Smith
Stuart Thompson

In Attendance

Heather Gittins, Business Support Officer, Lancashire County Council
Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager, Lancashire County Council
Andy Milroy, Senior Democratic Service Officer, Lancashire County Council
Andy Walker, Head of Service Business Growth, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Barbara Murphy, Frank McKenna and Tim Webber. Vladimir Pejcinovic attended on behalf of Tim Webber.

2. Declaration of Interests

None

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2018

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on the 6th June 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairman highlighted points of action from the previous minutes. It was noted that the presentation on productivity would be received at today's meeting and the Bi-Annual report will be presented to the next meeting of the committee.

5. Business Support Management Board Membership

It was reported that there has been a vacancy on the Business Support Management Board since Mike Damm's resigned in 2017.

The board noted that given the increased role of East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce in both policy development and service delivery and the importance of retaining a business voice from East Lancashire Miranda would be an excellent addition to the board to fill this role.

Resolved: That the Business Support Management Board agreed to recommend to the LEP Board that Miranda Barker be appointed as a member of the Business Support Management Board Committee.

6. Growth Hub Performance Update

Andy Walker, Head of Service Business Growth, Lancashire County Council provided the Committee with an update on the performance of Growth Hub.

It was reported that Boost 2 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is drawing to an end and that it is performing well in terms of achieving key funding performance requirements and in terms of wider local impact. It was noted that they are in the fortunate position to have secured funding for 2019-21.

Andrew Leeming, Boost Programme Manager, Business Growth informed the committee that they are currently on target and that Boost 2 has been a successful.

It was highlighted that the team have worked hard with delivery partners who have responded well which is driving growth and is a testament to the delivery partners.

The Committee were provided with a breakdown of some of the initial figures relating to Boost 2 delivery, noting that there was slightly less activity on social media.

It was reported that although they have linked in with Boost it may be useful for individual Committee Members to share information on social media via their own personal accounts to help promote Boost as it will increase reach, in addition to the ongoing promotion via the official Boost social media accounts.

Committee Members stated that it would be useful when sharing these social media posts, if officers could provide some wording for all Committee Members to use to ensure consistency when sharing.

After discussing the performance of Boost it was requested that Andrew Leeming looks at examples of other schemes at a similar level and add some benchmarks in so that they have something to compare the success against. It was also noted that it would prove useful to use any good feedback from successful businesses

to show and attract other businesses with their story. It was requested that they look at what the next steps are to show what the end result of coming out of Boost is.

The committee discussed the Local Industrial Strategy and agreed to use the next meeting to look at this. It was mentioned that every part of the Industrial Strategy it is about to change therefore there is a need to draw down evidence of other growth hubs, look at what businesses want and what the ambition of Lancashire is and use the board meeting to support this.

Andy Walker confirmed that currently they do have a formal external evaluation in place.

It was noted that it would be good to learn what others are doing now and get ahead with this over the next 6 months. The Chairman informed the Committee that there are often sessions on in Manchester on the Local Industrial Strategy if anyone wishes to attend and offered to report back on these sessions.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Business Support Management Board note the report.
- (ii) Andrew to look at examples of other similar schemes to Boost at a similar level and add some benchmarks in so that they have something to compare the success against

7. Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund - Update

Sue Barnard, Senior Relationship Manager, British Business Bank gave a presentation in addition to presenting a report (circulated) on the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF).

It was noted that they cover the whole North West and that they have £400m of funding for Small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) with three fund managers covering Microfinance, Debt Finance and Equity finance. Their role is to find businesses looking to fund.

Committee members were provided with a breakdown of what had been achieved this year and it was noted that currently they are ahead of target with £67m invested at the end of August with things moving fast.

It was noted that they are encouraging more other sectors to be involved selling NPIF.

Sue reported that they use social media a lot to get messages out there regarding recent deals they have just done and businesses they are investing in and that this is proving very powerful. Sue also mentioned that it had been a harder year this year and that they have done lots of events to try to bring other funders in to get out and to invest in Lancashire businesses.

To date NPIF has made over 300 investments in small growing businesses across the 10 Local Enterprise Partnership areas it operates in.

Examples of recent deals were provided to the Board and it was stressed that they need some assistance with getting the word out and to raise awareness of what types finance is available. The British Bank want to raise profile and to let people know that they are government backed.

The committee discussed why it may have been proving hard getting the message out and requested that Andrew check with the Growth Hub to see if they could help provide any information to help educate what others are doing in order to encourage more use of funding in Lancashire.

Resolved: The Business Support Management Board

(i) Noted the report; and

(ii) Requested that Andrew Leeming liaises with the Growth Hub to gain information to help encourage more use of funding in Lancashire

8. Productivity in Lancashire - Update

Professor Susan Smith, Director of the Centre for SME Development UCLan and colleagues, presented a report (circulated) to the Committee regarding productivity issues within the Lancashire Economy. It was noted that this forms part of a wider evidence base which is being developed to inform a refreshed Strategic Economic Plan and Local industrial Strategy.

The Committee received a presentation which reported on productivity in Lancashire businesses, why it is important, the different measures of productivity, what determines productivity, and what can be done to improve it.

The information gathered from various surveys that had been carried out on SME's highlighted how Lancashire is performing in comparison with other areas which was presented on a graph.

The committee were advised of the influencing factors and talked through the potential sources of help with reducing obstacles to productivity.

It was noted that Enterprise Research Centre pinpoints Lancashire with one of the eleven LEP's with above average rates of start-ups showing signs of scaling up and the Committee recognised that you can miss the rest if you are only focusing on the growth.

It was noted that following the Lancashire productivity survey that was carried out in depth during 2017 they have been working on the gaps in human capital.

UCLan were thanked for their research and presentation and it was noted that it

links in really well with the discussion on Industrial Strategy.

Resolved: The Business Support Management Board

- (i) Noted the report and presentation.
- (ii) Requested that a further update on this work be presented as work progresses; and
- (iii) Requested that the presentation and supporting documents be circulated to the Committee members following the meeting.

9. The Clean Growth / Low Carbon Business Support offer in Lancashire

Miranda Barker, Chief Executive, East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce presented a report to the Committee on The Clean growth/Low carbon Business Support offer in Lancashire.

It was noted that supporting the development of the Low Carbon or Clean Growth economy is now central to the government's Industrial Strategy.

Miranda reported that the future provision to be funded mirrors the local energy/low carbon strategic aims.

Miranda reported that they are working with student base and R&D innovation support to link low carbon expertise with businesses to see low carbon/sustainability initiatives implemented which is helping both programmes.

They are also working on domestic housing stock to improve its energy efficiency/energy generation potential.

It was noted that 4 of 6 of energy strategy that they work with are all partners of Boost and that all projects are free of charge for Lancashire SME's.

Miranda mentioned that they are looking for potential SME customers who want to reduce their energy bills, water use, waste produced or raw material wastage. It was noted that there are many ways this can be done and that they can help by installing lower energy consumption equipment, electric charging points, create onsite energy generation, solar panels, LED's or help with advice which will help save the business money and improve profit.

Currently Lancaster University is embedding students to help support SME's with research and development which help develop low carbon innovations within their businesses. Not just SME face of experts help find new customers. All reached through boost.

MACAW (UCLAN) is working with SME's to help improve energy efficiency and installing new low carbon solutions.

Chamber Low Carbon is also working on site with them to develop energy efficiency and resource efficiency solutions and drive the installation of low carbon technology innovators.

It was noted that they would be happy to provide committee members with publicity material for your SME Contacts and that they are welcome to attend workshops or promotional sessions that are taking place across Lancashire.

The Committee requested that Miranda circulates a paragraph to Members signposting to this as a PDF.

It was confirmed that all programmes search as close to home as possible when procuring these items/work and it was advised that it would be good to publish this.

Resolved: The Business Support Management Board noted the report.

10. Update - The Use of European Structural Fund to Support Business Development in Lancashire

Andy Walker provided an update on the use of European Structural Fund to support Business Development in Lancashire. It was noted that Lancashire was making good progress and currently has 30-40m left for allocation.

It was noted that they can look at the forward plan and see how things could be done differently and have the opportunity to act now on any issues and see where there is available opportunity.

Resolved: The Business Support Management Board noted the update.

11. Reporting to Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

It was noted that the Chairman will provide the LEP Board with an update on Business Support Management Board items.

The recommendation made to the LEP Board to invite Miranda Barker to become a member of the Business Support Management Board will be presented to the Board meeting on the 6th November 2018.

12. Any Other Business

It was noted that the LEP Governance review is underway and that it provides a good opportunity to look at challenges and consult widely with businesses about Local Enterprise Partnerships. In particular Business will be consulted on the appointment of a new Chairman of the LEP and Business Support Management Board Members were asked to circulate information amongst their respective sectors once it is available.

13. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the business Support Management Board was scheduled to be held at 10.30am, on 14th March 2019 in Committee Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

The Chairman requested that as this meeting is a while off that officer's look in to arranging a meeting of the Committee to take place one day during the first three weeks in January 2018. This meeting would be mainly used to discuss the industrial strategy. It was noted that as this is a busy time of year if members are unable to attend they are welcome to brief a substitute who can attend the meeting and contribute in their absence.

Resolved: That officers consult with members regarding availability with a view to arranging a Committee meeting to take place in January 2019.