

Boost – Lancashire Business Growth Hub – Lead Andrew Leeming

BACKGROUND

Boost (Lancashire's Business Growth Hub) is a multi-tier, multi-agency programme, established in 2013. The programme is funded by the Department for levelling up, housing and communities (DLUHC, formerly MHCLG), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Lancashire County Council. By 2018 Boost had engaged with over 5,800 businesses, created 2,200 new jobs and generated over £60m GVA for the Lancashire economy. The main focus of Boost 1 (2013-15) and Boost 2 (2016-18) was improving the competitiveness of high growth Lancashire businesses, job creation and helping to establish sustainable new enterprises within Lancashire.

Boost 3 had a total project value of **£6.083m** (£3.650m ESIF (60%) & £2.433m public match) to be defrayed from 1st January 2019 to 30th December 2021. The Boost continuation programme [Boost 3.5] now has a cumulative project value of £9,261,250 to be defrayed by 30th September 2023.

In addition, c. **£328k** of BEIS funding per annum is used to provide sector specific support and assist beneficiaries who do not fit ERDF eligibility criteria.

Boost is also delivering the **Peer Networks programme** in Lancashire. Peer Networks is a national peer-to-peer networking programme for SME leaders that want to grow and develop their organisation for future success. Delivered locally by Boost, we are creating diverse - cohort groups of individuals to collaboratively work through common business issues.

Peer Networks is funded by BEIS in response to a commitment made in the 2019 Business Productivity Review. The programme includes interactive action learning, trained facilitators, small groups, flexible topic selection and one to one coaching.

By completing Peer Networks, an enterprise will overcome business challenges and recognise and act on new opportunities, build a trusted network of connections for immediate support as well as for the future, and improve their long-term personal and business performance.

The **Boost your recovery Covid grant** funds [£1,118,232] supported 347 Lancashire businesses to innovate their products and services and build resilience within a business landscape impacted by Covid.

PERFORMANCE

The project directly supports **Priority Axis 3** – Enhancing the Competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises. Boost specifically addresses the following Investment Priorities:

3a Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms.

The Growth Support Programme strand of Boost 3 was specifically designed to identify entrepreneurs who have business ideas with growth potential and to help them bring these to fruition. It provides customised support to equip new businesses with the skills, techniques and tools to understand the barriers to growth and help them to overcome these.

3c Supporting the creation and the extension of advanced capacities for products, services and development.

The **Business Resilience Programme** together with the **Growth Mentoring Programme** encouraged businesses to bring forward growth projects, products, and services through ongoing support to develop commercial capabilities and growth strategies.

3d Supporting the capacity of small and medium sized enterprises to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes.

The Business Resilience Programme assisted businesses to examine and develop existing and potential markets at home and abroad. Working alongside the Department for International Trade and local Chambers of Commerce, the initiative helped them to evaluate the threats and opportunities posed by changes in international trade patterns and tariffs and to take action to grow their businesses.

In addition to delivering the specific ERDF related outputs identified, Boost 3 resulted in:

- Increased business formation rates
- Improved business survival rates
- An increase in the number of scale up businesses in Lancashire
- Improved productivity and GVA
- Higher levels of innovation and growth
- Business diversification, new products and services
- Higher levels of international trade

Key Performance Indicators - as of 31st December 2021

Boost 1 and 2 programmes are fully complete and closed having achieved the targets.

In terms of performance for the combined Boost 1, 2 and 3 programmes which contribute to the core LEP KPIs, these are as follows:

- Jobs Created = **Actual 3,417 / Target 3,140**
- Enterprises Assisted = **Actual 4,276 / Target 4,180**
PLEASE NOTE THAT I HAVE REDACTED JOBS CREATED BY ASSOCIATE PROJECTS LIKE ACCESS TO FINANCE, LANCASHIRE MANUFACTURING GROWTH FUND, ETC.

The table below contains core Boost 3 outputs and outcomes as specified in the contracts with service providers and GFAs signed with Managing Authorities (DLUHC & BEIS).

BOOST 3 – January 2019 – December 2021(Performance as at 31st Dec 21)

KPI	Target 2019-21	Actual 2019-21	%	RAG
New to Boost businesses.	1250	5,648	451%	
Number of enterprises receiving information, diagnostic and brokerage support.	1500	1429	289%	
Number of new enterprises supported.	230	335	145%	
Boost referrals to wider business support agencies.	750	3,625	483%	
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready.	350	434	124%	
Number of enterprises receiving support (12 Hrs +).	1250	1,346	107%	
Employment increase in supported enterprises.	1000	1132	113%	
Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products.	30	10	33%	

Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products.	40	49	123%	
Unique website visits	15,000	34,085	227%	
Grow Twitter community	2500	3440	137%	
4 Subject / Thematic campaigns per annum.	6	6	100%	

The table above identifies the programme has not only significantly exceeded output targets, but this also demonstrates the demand from the business community for these services. In terms output with an Amber RAG, there are several outputs being reviewed against this target, will be claimed in Q1 2022/23.

Note – The programme has delivered the key outputs above against pre-Covid targets.

Financial Performance

This section covers project performance in terms of actual expenditure against the profiled values contained in the Funding Agreement as of 31st December 21.

- Eligible Expenditure Defrayed within the claim period was **£439,061.05**
- Cumulative expenditure to date [31/12/2021] was **£5,578,464.42** compared to an approved Boost 3 profile of **£6,083,000**.

Programme Milestones

Milestone	Start Date	Completion Date
LCC Cabinet Approval for match funding	July 2018	September 2018
Boost 3 Procurement	July – December 2018	January 2019
Boost 3 Core Delivery Commences	January 2019	December 2021
Project Delivery (Business Support)	January 2019	December 2021
Mid Term Evaluation*	March 2020	July 2020
Final Evaluation	October 2021	February 2021

* The mid programme review has been shared with key stake holders and delivery organisations.

Risks

A Single Portfolio Risk Register for the combined programmes is attached to the main report.