



Business Growth Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 13th October 2020, 10am

Venue:

Microsoft Teams

- Introduction from Chair

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting and made the point that this meeting will be focussed on the future of the group on explore how it can best use the expertise within.

- Growth Hub update:

Grant Programmes – There have been 2 grant programmes delivered by the LEP totalling £1.1 million. £500K for small business to buy small capital items that can help them continue to trade through the current situation and also become COVID secure. A further £600k was then made available for business services to enable businesses to get the advice and support they need to survive and grow through the COVID crisis.

A further £1million has now been made available and will launch in late October. This is as a direct result of the rule of 6 and the three tier restriction system. This funding will be used to allow SMEs to react specifically to these new restrictions with are having a huge impact on trade.

Action: Update on grant programmes at next meeting

- Peer to Peer programme and wider mentoring

Contract now received from BEIS and procurement will take place in October, further updates will be provided at each meeting.

Action: Update at next meeting

- Accelerate Programme

Update was given on the difficulties the Accelerate programme has faced so far. An external review has been commissioned by the University and LEP to make recommendations on potential changes to the programme.

Action: Update at next meeting

- EU Transition

Conversation on transition readiness. The LEP are working with BEIS to ensure the most up to date messages are received by businesses, still unclear what the final deal will be. Points raised that we could be more proactive in messaging and use the existing networks and expertise including the potential relationships board members have.

Action: Debbie to investigate possibility of sharing information from CF sources

- Restart and Recovery

The draft restart and recovery plan was shared with the committee. The committee was asked for their views on how it can add value to the plan and specific activities

Action: Members to review plan and make suggestions on where committee can add value

- Future of Business Growth Committee

The majority of the meeting was aside to discuss the future of the committee and how it can add value. It was agreed that future meetings should focus less on updates and give more opportunity for members to discuss issues and offer insight and solutions.

Action: Future agendas to be less focussed on updates and more time devoted to specific actions and strategic input.

- AOB

The LEP is developing a piece of work on job creation as a result of the impact of COVID. The first step of this is to develop a working group to lead on bringing clarity to investment priorities and business expansion. It was suggested that rather than create a further group that this committee takes the lead for this work. This will form a large part of future agendas with significant input from members.

Action: Paper to be circulated before next meeting setting out the requirements for the committee

The Cheshire Business Forum is managed by the LEP and is made up of membership organisations from across the sub region. It was suggested that the forum can act as a kind of delivery arm of the committee and a member of the forum could join this committee and have some joint working arrangements.

Action: Possibility to be discussed at next business forum