**Business Growth Committee**

**Agenda**

**Tuesday 11th August 2020, 10am**

**Attendees**

Stephen Kinsey

Debbie Baker

Andy Devaney

Iain Paton

**Apologies**

Stephen Fitzsimons

Denise Proctor

Becky Stuttard

Anne Boyd

John Downes

* Introduction from Chair

Chair gave the committee an update from the LEP board on the COVID response and wider LEP work.

* Growth Hub update:

Andy gave an update on what the Growth Hub has been doing to combat the current situation and supporting businesses as well an overview of work on the horizon.

The Growth Hub has been the first port of call for businesses since the pandemic began through providing up to date information on national support and providing focussed direct support. The LEP has also made available local support package to support businesses:

* Capital Grants programme - £500,000 made available for small capital items designed to enable businesses who have been impacted by COVID. This could be IT equipment to facilitate digital ordering, seating and furniture for outside dining or other equipment which would enable the business to recover.

**Action** – Update on programme to be circulated to group

* ERDF Recovery Grants – Government have made approximately £600,000 to Cheshire and Warrington for SMEs to access grants for revenue support designed to purchase consultancy support which could include; legal, marketing, product development and the like. We are awaiting final details, but scheme should go live in min September.

The Growth Hub also leading on intelligence gathering on the economy and creating a fortnightly dashboard illustrating key information and tracking redundancies and liquidations. This information is shared with Government and the resilience cell and goes towards recovery strategy.

**Action** - Share dashboard with committee

GH has been asked to develop new approach to high growth start up support with a focus on mentoring and peer support. Resource not available to develop a full scale programme but a small pilot using existing resource could lead a to larger scale approach if evidence base and impact can be developed.

**Action** – Committee members to recommend businesses and individuals who could act as mentors to new businesses and entrepreneurs to help drive growth

**Action** – Next meeting to feature a session discussing growth and mentoring

* Accelerate Programme

Update given on accelerate, the programme is behind on outputs and several of these issues where discussed with potential solutions outlined. The University and LEP are to commissions an external review to identify specific issues and solutions with this due to take place in September/early October.

* EU Transition

GH Network has been informed of potential campaign and addition funding to deliver it but specifics from Government are still outstanding. Guidance has gone out where possible, mainly around trade and export but still lots of unknowns.

**Action** – Standing agenda item on EU transition

* Restart and Recovery

The LEP has developed a restart and recovery plan which has informed many of the initiatives being delivered, this forms the main priorities over the next 6, 12 and 24 months.

**Action** – Share recovery plan

* AOB