**Business Growth Committee**

**Tuesday 7th April 2020**

**Discussion Points**

The LEP board has requested that all committees look at how they can add value to the response and recovery to the current economic situation. Initially it is requested that all Board and Committee members use their business networks to share information and signpost support through the Growth and Skills Hub.

LEP Committees to meet to discuss how their programmes could be adjusted to respond to the immediate impact of the crisis, including re-prioritising or re-directing funding, and to begin debating and planning for recovery. Current Growth Hub focus is around scale up and increasing exports and investment in Cheshire and Warrington businesses, the current situation has required an adjustment of focus with the Growth Hub currently focussed on response to COVID-19.

A new focus will be required when we are through the current crisis with an added impetus on recovery, without losing the priority of growing the economy. Input is needed on specific plans to support businesses. Some initial ideas have been developed and the board is looking for all committees to develop and share their initial ideas for recovery over the next two weeks in the form of a one-page note. Some initial thoughts are below:

* Allocating £1 million of Local Growth Fund to the Growth Hub to support businesses with consultancy support. This could include legal support, financial services, product development, digitisation and other relevant services
* Expansion of Growth Hub to include partner agencies such as Chambers of Commerce to assist in recovery
* Create innovation competitions to encourage innovation amongst more of the SME base
* Creation of peer to peer networks for SMEs to support each other through recovery with specialist cells focusing on specific aspects
* Enhanced mentoring building on the work of Be the Business to offer support through those who have been through recovery

Further suggestions and detail are required to present an initial document to the board who are meeting on Tuesday evening.