

Board meeting

25 January 2024

Business Ideas and Places (BIP)

Subgroup update

Alison North – Chair
SWLEP deputy Chair – SME Champion



Business Ideas Places

- Western Gateway Presentation
 - The presentation covered a large range of topics including Strategic Rail Vision, Severn Edge, Hydrogen, Innovation and Investment, Severn Estuary and International strategy
 - The Western Gateway is to formalise the involvement of two other Local Authorities to the Partnership which would bring the area covered up to the corner of West Wales and increase population numbers from 4.4m to 4.6m people.
- Swindon & Wiltshire Cyber Cluster and BCC Update
- Business Support
 - Growth Hub update
 - A video was played showing the impact of the Growth Hub over the past eight years with the numbers of face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and businesses engaged.
- Business Intelligence Networking Group (BING)

Business Report

- Growth Hub reported that sole traders / micros were mostly enquiring about start-up, skills and access to finance.
- Small businesses are still finding utilities' costs a burden and that costs of running their business is higher than 2022.*
- Labour costs and tax costs followed utilities as having a major impact on SMEs.*
- Domestic economy is the largest perceived barrier to growth.*

Actions

- **Business Support**
 - In relation to start-up, skills and finance the Growth Hub reported that the Business Navigators have a Grant Finder licence, and there is a dedicated Skills Advisor. Growth Hub also has its own course for start-up provision.
- **BING**
 - Discussions commenced on the development of workshops to take place at the BING meetings.
 - The workshops would provide an opportunity to take a more in-depth review of specific topics related to local business needs and help BING members to deliver a more targeted programme of actions to support the local business community.
- **BIP and Skills & Talent overlap**
 - Recommended that where topics discussed at either sub-group overlap with the other and a benefit can be gained by bringing the information together for efficient and effective delivery this should take place.