



Attendees	Paddy Bradley (PB), SWLEP CEO Alison Edgar (AE), Sales Coaching Solutions Rachel Finlay (RF), TEN Ruth Lambert (RL), FSB Chris Stevens (CS), Growth Hub Manager Chris Parsons (CP), SBC Christopher Thompson (CT), TechB Mirabelle Mack (MM), SBC
Guests	Tim Burghes (TB), Growth Hub
Apologies	Claire Alexander (CA), SWLEP Charlotte Boole (CB), Greenway Training Alison North (AN), SWLEP Board Director (Chair) Jane Purdy (JP), BusinessWest Julia Stuckey (JS), SBC
Chair	Paddy Bradley (PB)
Minutes	Deborah House (DKH)
Venue	Via Microsoft Teams Meeting

Item	Narrative	Deadline
1.	Welcome	
	PB welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulations were offered to Alison Edgar on receipt of an MBE from the Queen's birthday honours list in recognition for services to entrepreneurship and to small business.	
2.	Minutes / Matters Arising / Conflicts of Interest	
	Minutes of the meeting held 14 July 2020 were read and approved. Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AN apologised for the delay and will ensure these 121s are all done prior to the October meeting. ONGOING Members of the group to pass any ideas on how to increase membership of the Growth Hub community to PB/CA or CS. ONGOING TB to update later in the agenda now the bots had been removed. Conflicts of Interest AE advised of her application for an ERDF grant.	Nov 2020
3.	Growth Hub Update	
	General update from Growth Hub Manager, Chris Stevens CS spoke to the paper and shared the SWLEP organisation chart which can be accessed by clicking on the following link. https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/brog/swlep-org-chart-at-august-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=64accac_4	

CS updated the meeting drawing attention to the five different funding strands of the Growth Hub service and the staff within them. The Growth Hub had been a digital business support service and had now evolved into a fully operational business support service. Prior to July the Growth Hub team consisted of two members, the Growth Hub Manager and the Digital Marketing Manager, with core funding from BEIS of £205,000. After the recruitment drive in July and August team members now numbered 13.

SME Competitiveness Programme

- This was the flagship programme with funding of £2.4m over three years.
- Aimed at Pre start-ups businesses to Scale-ups and growth:
 1. Prestart-ups and Start-ups would be referred to YTKO;
 2. Scale-ups and growing businesses would be referred to the University of Bath's SetSquared;
 3. Swindon Borough Council was supporting the Honda associates who became redundant and wanted to start businesses of their own; and
 4. Wiltshire Council acted as the Accountable body, dealing with funding and compliance work and the Growth Hub was still working with the TEN centres.
- The Programme had three Business Navigators, Rob Creer, Andrew Mercer and Melody Thompson, and a Programme Coordinator, Charlotte Skinner, who would be working mainly on the claims.
- Claims were made quarterly and followed a detailed process.
- Rob Creer had recently been appointed as a Team Leader and was providing excellent support.

Any business coming into the Growth Hub would have a consultation with the business navigators, who could then direct them to whichever programme would be best suited for their needs.

Covid-19 response – This Way Up programme

- Secured £257,000 of funding
- Blended webinar series with some 1:1 support under the headings of:
 - Leadership
 - Finance and
 - Digital
 with 12 subtopics.
- 31 delegates attended the first webinar with 41 on the second
- Staff were Jason Gray digital specialist and Paula Harlsey responsible for quality and shaping content for the webinars
- Emma Bubb had been appointed as the Research and Monitoring Officer, which was a brand-new role and was receiving interest from

BEIS. She would be looking at the impact measure of the whole Growth Hub service and any case studies, etc.

Amanda Peach was appointed as a Skills & Enterprise Advisor, formerly from the Higher Futures programme, which had been merged into the Growth Hub offer.

ERDF grants – using underspend funds from ESIF

- Funds reserved for visitor and tourism economy
- And some for wider economy
- Divided 50/50 across the two
- Dedicated Programme Coordinator, Sarah Bowen
- There had been 303 applications
- Anticipate that the fund could serve 127 grants with an average of £3,000
- If businesses were not eligible, the Growth Hub was reverting to continue engagement
- ERDF grants were not revenue grants, but were for procuring products or services to help with ongoing recovery
- The window would close on 19 October 2020.

Peer Networks

- Sector specific cohorts led by Brea Woods
- Dedicated mentor and facilitator to each
- Action-centred learning
- Discussion on the issues they face as a sector and seek resolution amongst the group
- The programme was progressing well

All programmes were mobilised and now live. By the end of this financial year the Growth Hub would have transacted circa £1m.

Comments made were:

- **If there had been 303 applications for ERDF grants and approximately 127 would be granted, what amount of budget would be left?** Response: this was still unknown as decisions on allocations would be made after the window had closed.
- It was good to see the breadth of the consolidated offer in one place. **How many businesses would be likely to be assisted through the Growth Hub and what were the targets for the SME Competitiveness Programme?** Response: 116 Expressions of Interest had been received and 68 referrals had been processed via the Growth hub. One measure was to deliver three hours of advice, guidance and brokerage to businesses and another output was to provide up to 12 hours of support in combination with delivery partners.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the timescale to get the money out to businesses after the closing date? Response: the Growth Hub was aiming for a maximum 60-day turnaround; within 30 days if all the evidence were provided. Some applications would require further checking, but the aim was to issue the money out as quickly as possible as the fund had to be spent by March 2021. The grants were paid in arrears following the production of the evidence of purchase so much of the delay was anticipated to be with the companies we were supporting. For this reason, it was important to be as quick as possible as businesses would be spending money in advance they probably could ill afford. <p>A request was made for the summary of the ERDF grants to be shared with the group on completion as this would demonstrate what businesses wanted / needed, be it equipment or services, to support them at this time.</p> <p>Action: CS to provide summary of information on programme completion.</p> <p>The meeting heard that businesses were aware that applications had gone missing in applying for the grants via the online system. CS responded that there had been some technical teething problems with the online application form. There had been an outage which had affected several businesses. For example, if any fields were incomplete, the application showed an error message, but the businesses did not see this. The Team had reviewed all the applications and rectified the problem and had even reverted to a manual system in the interim. The portal had now moved to a more stable platform. Concern was that this would leave the Growth Hub open to complaints.</p> <p>The meeting was assured that all applicants had been contacted. Some applications received were missing attachments, but we would not be sure if they had been omitted in the first place, or the system had not registered them. Applicants were not affected adversely by this and the team was holding their hand through that process.</p> <p>Action: For further assurance, the Growth Hub team to issue additional comms via social media for applicants to get in touch if they were not sure if their applications had been received.</p> <p>Financials CS spoke to the paper and highlighted key factors within the core funding stream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing – was underspent as the team had been concentrating on core development work for the website. As this was now complete, marketing spend would now increase. They would be promoting new 	<p>Dec 2020</p> <p>16/10/2020</p>
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areas of the website and increasing membership of the Growth Hub community.

- Delivery – salaries and triage service. The Triage Plus service operated by BusinessWest had now ceased. All webchat and telephony etc were now dealt with in-house. Some of Joe Palmer's salary, Digital Marketing Apprentice, had been billed against the Growth Hub to back-fill comms whilst TB was working on website development.
- Portal / IT – licenses etc. HubSpot had been delayed in issuing its invoice. Since issuing the report, the invoice had been received and this would clear the variance and underspend.

The question was raised whether there would again be a delivery overspend on salaries as Q2 was still to come. CS responded that previously Joe's salary and Business West's Triage Service had overlapped. As this was no longer the case, delivery spend would stay as per profile.

PB advised that the next financial report would go beyond the core budget and would include the other programmes. He added that BEIS had changed its financial procedures and now issued grant offers to the Accountable Body for sign-off via DocuSign. Wiltshire Council did not recognise DocuSign and did not use it. This was causing SWLEP a problem as the Peer Network grant letter had still not been signed. The Accountable Body, Wiltshire Council, had assured SWLEP that this was in hand.

Marketing update

TB presented to the meeting. The presentation can be accessed via the following link.

https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/gh-governance/online-reporting-ghg-sept.pdf?sfvrsn=912efd6a_4

Key highlights were:

- Website traffic and page views had massively increased driven by the grants.
- Top pages were dominated by recovery grants
- Community membership numbers had been impacted by removal of bots, but was slowly recovering
- Social media engagement was increasing
- More targeted emails to sector specific subjects
- Changes had now been made to the website
 - moved the high profile Covid-19 page
 - reintroduced the EU Exit pages
 - format of the landing pages had been changed



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted marketing could then be put in place and drive the traffic. Call scheduled with Julian Head to fit the other areas into this new format <p>The group thanked TB for the work on the website and agreed that its simplification and accessibility was now much easier for businesses to find specific support on offer.</p>	
4.	AOB	
	<p>CS thanked the attendees for their good contributions and challenges to the Growth Hub. He updated the meeting on the Kickstart Scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWLEP was now an official representative of the scheme. SMEs recruiting less than 30 placements can join SWLEP's cohort led by Amanda Peach and be part of a group of applications. So far, over 100 placements had been offered. <p>Action: If attendees knew of businesses which could offer placements, to put them in touch with Growth Hub.</p>	On going
	Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AN apologised for the delay in scheduling these 121s and would ensure all are done prior to the October meeting. CS to provide summary of information on completion of ERDF grant programme. For further assurance, the Growth Hub team to issue additional comms via social media for applicants to get in touch if they were not sure if their applications had been received. If attendees knew of businesses which could offer placements in the Kickstart scheme, to put them in touch with Growth Hub. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Dec 2020</p> <p>16/10/2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
	Date of next meeting	
	Dates for 2021 to be advised	
	The meeting closed at 10.28am	

Alison North

Alison North - Chair

10 March 2021