

## Minutes CWLEP SME Supergroup meeting 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017

### Attendees

Sean Farnell	SF	CWLEP, FSB, Chamber, Burgis & Bullock
Dave Ayton Hill	DA	Warwickshire County Council
David Penn	DP	Bromwich & Hardy
Stephanie Kerr	SK	BID Leamington
Roger Scott	RS	Lloyds Banking
Linsey Luke	LL	Federation of Small Businesses
David Kelham	DK	Excelerate Resources
Craig Humphrey	CH	CWLEP Growth Hub
Richard Marchington	RM	Apex Recruitment (corr on 12 <sup>th</sup> May 17)

### Apologies received from

Louise Bennett	LB	Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
Sarah Windrum	SW	CWLEP, Emerald Group
Phil Peak	PP	CWLEP Growth Hub

**WELCOME AND MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING**

SF welcomed the group, no requests for change to the last minutes.

**UPDATE CONSTITUTION OF SME/A2F WORKING GROUP**

SF offered Update on LEP framework as following the guidelines and standards of government. Constituted on the Board, following that SME representative on board, so two minimum SME reps on the board. Continued growth of the SME group is vital. Advertising to add visitors from industry to the group is welcome.

A change to the transparency has been announced, minutes will be published, and apologies need to be sent, otherwise members will no longer be invited to meetings.

**PLANNING & HOUSING**

Dave Penn from Bromwich & Hardy and member of the CWLEP Planning & Housing Business Group (PHBG) was invited to join the meeting to enable an exchange on lease commitments for SME community and planning issues.

SF introduced the discussion points the SME members have touched upon in previous meeting. DP was asked to give an input on strategies and schemes and discussions around the lack of employment land and where the PHBG stands in addressing the barriers that SMEs face in the region to growth and access to incubation spaces.

The Chamber are currently driving the issue to address these barriers however require **input from SMEs and advisers that face barriers to growth due to land shortage.**

The planning process is “painful” in each LA area, so no plans are in place. Land allocations can’t be put into place until LA plans are adopted.

Employment land is the bigger issue as opposed to Housing and Local authorities precede on evidence base process and commission. The plans fall short and do not inform the future as no re-evaluation is taking place such as determining the need for land across the sub-region.

Chamber of Commerce has been making representations on these short fallings.

The Single Spatial Plan presents a sub-regional strategy, supported by those under pressure for their local plans to be adopted and also shortage for small units.

LL mentioned plans for office spaces with WCC, working with finance team to allocate industrial council-run spaces to SMEs to encourage SME space and ensure ROI (comparison with storage units) as a longer term investment

AP:  
Collate anecdotal evidence to feed into Chamber consultation via David Penn → ALL

AP: Briefing document to banks on business support → SP

<p>CH added that SSS is linked to Growth Deal funding, discretion is whether plan is statutory or non-statutory. Working towards non stat. looking at compendium of Local plans rather than SSS.</p> <p>Businesses are looking elsewhere because of the Lack of land, and slow processes. (e.g. RS mentioned business moving to Worcester).</p> <p>One comment from DK was the possible use of former pubs and supermarkets with acceptable spaces that could be rented to startups, as a short term approach to deal with shop leases/shut pubs, Lots of redundant properties with useful space. Could also receive longer term permission to build new space</p> <p>Problem is employment is high, so in the eye of the politicians this is not an urgent matter, if this wasn't the case it would raise awareness for future. It is about expansion plans in 1-3 years. If businesses based here can't move/grow they go somewhere else.</p> <p>Observation is lack of capability within local planning teams. Lack of viable research shows this. Longer term view of training to build an understanding of the complex issues. Balancing between issues of employment and housing land.</p> <p>Proposal was that sites don't have to be removed from green belt but could be reviewed as safeguarded and removed for special circumstances. E.g. land that is perfect to employment uses to enable being removed from green belt. It would be helpful to identify C&amp;W a graded greenbelt. There is land that is not fit for usage. Could be alerted to politicians.</p> <p><b>What is our ask of the PHBG, what can we do?</b> Following a suggestion for a property investment fund where spec build could be supported. Comment was that there was no take up of a Coventry Investment fund designed for LA to fund situation for capital demand, unsure about the barriers of scheme but mainly not enough going on.</p> <p>RS pointed out that resources and support needs to be made more apparent, so that advisers know where to signpost clients to. Signposting services to business support available through support@cwgrowthhub.co.uk</p>	
<p><b>TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMMES</b></p>	
<p>Short Town Centre Programme pilot by WCC included digital workshops and other topics with an aim to upskill the workforce. See what works and what lessons to be learnt. Outcomes: Longer term, uplift in sales and stronger footfall.</p> <p>SK: Parallel to WCC's work, met with GFirst, who have strong High street programme, went along to pilot. #WDYT (What do you think) High street</p>	<p>AP: Business Case for retail champion on LEP board</p> <p>AP: Extend invitations to Centre Managers across</p>



<p>health through use of technology, and motivation of people to share experience for people on high street. Motivating and training employers to use social media actively (80% of retailers in pilot scheme have no active presence on Social media.)</p> <p>Pilot Scheme in Leamington also to highlight customer perspective: BID going out to community to post photos, and have competition. Sharing what people love in shops and reward them, capture data and simplify involvement of wider community.</p> <p>Aware of the rare amount of data. Looking to LEP for support on how to role this out across the LEP area. Training needs to happen. If it works throughout Warks and Cov, everyone will need to be involved</p> <p>→ LEP may not be the right vehicle for support. Most LA have the best relationship to Centre Managers. Rugby e.g. is Town centre manager. Better equipped to understand what local challenges and priorities are. SF pointed out that the CWLEP agenda is about getting Town centres heard. Currently no retail rep on the LEP board.</p> <p>SK: Retail is also fragile. Changes around Brexit will have huge impact on small businesses. 30% rise in trade shows and also rates. Impact of economies on retail. Gaming sector is supported but in terms of relation to employment and impact more is in retail. It was also pointed out that amount of employers in retail is very high. Useful to get a paper to the board. Divide it by geographic area and understand where there is a disconnect between employment and housing.</p> <p>No shops left in Nuneaton. Desperate need for footfall and employment opportunities.</p> <p>SK: Rates division need to be reviewed. Nuneaton are looking at developing a bid.</p> <p>RS: Fragmented retailers. Less than 5% of customers are retailers. Strong retail in South Warks shouldn't be taken for granted.</p> <p><b>AP: to invite BID managers to Future group meetings → SP, SK</b> <b>AP: to pull brief together for Retail Champion on LEP Board -&gt; SK</b></p> <p>LL: FSB to coordinate three part survey on Brexit. Meeting with Chris White needed → Impact on HS2 work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Better management of joint working.</li><li>→ LL mentioned a meeting between Chris White and the Growth Hub had taken place following the last SME meeting and shortly before the 1<sup>st</sup> March, without the involvement of the FSB and Chamber, as had been suggested as previous action points. Please see attachment of email to the minutes to clarify the situation, meeting had been regarding another matter, independent from</li></ul>	<p>future SME Supergroup meetings</p>
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<p>engagement regarding HS2.</p>  <p>FW HS2 impact CRM0007287.msg</p>	
<p><b><u>SUPPLY CHAIN OPPORTUNITIES</u></b></p>	
<p>LL: Procurement report ready → To be put on LEP Board agenda. RS suggested possible point of action of LEP And Growth Hub to go into monthly meetings of banks for provision of information.</p> <p>Terms of procurement portal to be managed by Growth Hub being looked at. Looking at Platform designers for this portal to extend opportunities to Business community. Currently SMEs are unsure how to access opportunities so portal can help flag that idea early enough to make this accessible. OEMs happy to support that system. LEP had infrastructure projects but need to make community aware of it. Delivery date to be by Summer 2017</p> <p>Black Country has competing initiative, trying to create their own portal. Combined authority initiative -&gt; has come directly from Black Country. Major supplier that already has a portal, narrowing it down for C&amp;W. Supplier can also be customer. Can be used and made use of. General sense of need of general information to businesses on what is being done for them by government. Transparency also in access of advice and guidance in pretty much all of the areas mentioned, also needed emphasis on importance of International links, cooperation and skills.</p>	

**ACTION POINTS**

- AP: Collate anecdotal evidence to feed into Chamber consultation via David Penn All
- AP: Briefing document to banks on business support SP/CH
- AP: Business Case for retail champion on LEP board
- AP: Extend invitations to City Centre Managers across future SME Supergroup meetings SF

APs from previous meeting

- AP: Update on Financial planning for SMEs/startups GS, SF, RS
- AP: Update Midlands Engine Fund DH

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday, 28th June 2017

Wednesday, 20th September 2017

Wednesday, 15th November 2017