

Minutes CWLEP SME Supergroup meeting 20th September 2017

09.30-11am at CW Growth Hub, Cheylesmore House, Coventry CV1 2WT

Attendees

Sean Farnell	SF	CWLEP, FSB, Chamber, Burgis & Bullock
Janette Pallas	JP	University Of Warwick Science Park
Stephanie Kerr	SK	BID Leamington
Roger Scott	RS	Lloyds Banking
Richard Marchington	RM	Apex Recruitment
Dave Hope	DH	Coventry City Council
Craig Humphrey	CH	CWLEP Growth Hub
Louise Bennett	LB	Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
Sarah Windrum	SW	CWLEP, Emerald Group

Apologies received from

Phil Peak	PP	CWLEP Growth Hub
David Ayton-Hill	DAH	Warwickshire County Council
Roger Dowthwaite	RD	CWLEP
Andy Williams	AW	Coventry City Council
Linsey Luke	LL	Federation of Small Businesses
David Kelham	DK	Excelerate Resources

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION	
Chair SF welcomed the group. Minutes of last meeting were approved.	
2. ACTION LIST	
<p><u>-Feedback on Presentation on Retail at CWLEP board</u></p> <p>Pres went well. Agenda had slipped throughout morning not enough discussion around how it could work. Case for having retail be represented and how it could be reality. Vacancy on board but no discussion around how this can be filled although generally confirmed that retail has been missed off the agenda. Applications are open, however potential is there to “attach” the retail agenda to existing board member (Cllr Mobbs, Catherine Mallyon?) in the interim with the potential of building relationships to the likes of Bravissimo and Holland & Barrett for potential future representation for retail as a full board member. People of the right calibre need to be approached early, potentially get involved with the working group. Jonathan Browning said post-Board. He said there are other gaps but he’s keen on a champion on the board. Commitment exceeds 2 days/month for a board member, depending on the level/amount of involvement.</p> <p><u>-Presentation of Procurement paper to board</u></p> <p>Procurement paper also well received. Local procurement as far as legally possible to be written into future contracts. Localism needs to be high on the agenda.</p> <p><u>-Constitution</u></p> <p>Post-board meeting took place with group of chairs. Brief was to think about future role of groups. Two things: constitution whether there is the right mix of business interest in the group? Second: Interaction within the groups. Question to the group: How can this be driven?</p> <p>Suggestions made by the group were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Better link to Planning and Infrastructure group. Need you to come and present what they are doing. Are currently too insular. Useful presentation was given before by David Penn. Needs to be more forceful. - RS was invited to meeting on 27th September to the joint Planning & Housing/Transport & Infrastructure meeting with a view of putting forward topics of commercial land and connectivity for discussion -Remain an open group, invite businesses and Linkages to LEP. Create annual plan around this to take forward to the group and get feedback from them -Join up and distribute relevant content –LB and CH to discuss 	<p>AP: Create opportunities to speak at board level with retail organisations. Check contacts</p> <p>AP: RS to report back from joint Infrastructure/Planning meeting.</p> <p>AP: SP to create annual plan of linking working groups/attendances and agendas and manage invites.</p> <p>AP: LB & CH to discuss content/joined up communication around what LEP is working on and sector specific agendas, with involvement of Advent.</p>

3. VERBAL UPDATE FROM INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP

RS gave brief on agenda of Transport & Infrastructure working group which he says has fosters a greater understanding of work streams. Make up of group is planners, transport people and private sector. Good schemes at work with pan-Midlands representatives, looking at the whole.

On the agenda were:

- Service access strategy to Birmingham airport to improve accessibility for travellers and staff. Swift card for combined travel, developing this across dividers.
- 2026 delivery plan for transports, road and rails. Integrated plan around transport impact.
- East Birmingham and Coventry operating in good travel environment also for SMEs. No long travel hours. Linked into Business Festival, Midlands Engine. Critical need for planning, land, specifically to bring case studies.
- A 46 review. Junction to Warwick Uni. Proposal for infrastructure
- Pots of money available for housing bids
- A5 North Warks and Rugby.
- Network Rail connectivity is problematic. Long-term strategy. Issues in Stratford, travel time across the town. NFU are looking to move out of Stratford. Also Leamington and impact on car parking

SK noted that the Covent Garden (Leamington) strategy is critical. Third of parking spaces are removed for 3 years. RS confirmed this is also on their agenda.

4. REVO NETWORK UPDATE

Discussion on how LEP could get more involved with REVO – “Retail Revolution”. Significant player in shopping scene. Invite came through exploring what greater involvement might have in their organisation (Precinct in Coventry involved)

Andy Street has set up High Street Taskforce → We need to join up forces so we don’t work in isolation

Across the region WMCA give us more leverage, we have more chance to get more money. Need more info on highstreet taskforce. Overlap with the issues, homelessness, anti-social behaviour. Open to exploring this collaboratively.

It was noted that C&W is in good position at WMCA through high number of representatives although greater need might be with non-constituent members.

AP: SK to explore opportunities for group in the REVO network and find out more about Highstreet Taskforce

AP: SW To find out more about highstreet taskforce and put in touch.

5. WARWICKSHIRE TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMME

Warwickshire County Council are doing training in towns across Warwickshire in support of retailers. New strategy covering 4 towns over 6 weeks, for 4 hrs/week, digital and footfall course.

AP: DAH to update on progress of Towns Centre Programme

6. DIGITAL UPDATE

<p>SW reported about group started with Digital Birmingham, CCC, Black Country, LEPs. Wrote call to action and took it to Andy Street in July → Digitals Skills and culture group for the WMCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Covers the ambition to grow Digital ecosystem, support to businesses to grow their digital agendas more. -Science & Innovation audit was conducted that shows Non-innovative SMEs are detrimental to growth. - Infrastructure is key part of the group. Andy Street gave interim authority and is setting up a digital board. -Investment is important for business whatever the needs are. DCMS full fibre fund, bid went in across CA as a bid. Wave 1 ambitions were localised, Wave 2 across West Midlands - C&W are leading the way. -Looking at 5G bids. What can be done in order to minimise disruption through HS2. Ensure that it's not a Birmingham bid. It's being written by Digital Birmingham. -Want private sector organisations to come forward for import. Need investment. But there is scope for SMEs to offer letter of support for bid for a testbed. Where it will be located is not yet sure - Looking to get Channel 4 in through attractiveness of media infrastructure. Internet exchange to make difference on speed in which businesses work. -DH reported on Digital Voucher Scheme 100 vouchers in first pilot to target data-heavy SMEs, Part-funded scheme through ERDF. Gigabit Vouchers- Connection to superfast broadband to target a wider pool of SMEs across the patch. Envisaged that they work alongside. DCMS put call out Fibre scheme for 4 LEP areas to pilot. -Schemes can be presented as a comprehensive packages. -LEP specific, secondment from WCC to kick off to look at connectivity skills, infrastructure and culture 	<p>AP: DH & SW to send information/keep group updated on new schemes.</p>
<p><u>7. MIDLANDS ENGINE</u></p>	
<p>Recap small business loans and debt fund → fund managers, Maven for Debt fund, BCRS for small business loans, Growth hub is starting to develop a pipeline.</p> <p>Proof of concept fund and equity has to be re-tendered. Expected process will be complete later in the year. Intention to do a C&W launch, proposal is to start MEIF promotion alongside CWLEP A2F offer.</p>	<p>AP: JP attending the first grant board, running A2F events. To be reported/funnelled back through this group</p>
<p><u>8. SCALEUP PROPOSAL</u></p>	
<p>What are we doing locally? JP is working with Scaleup-type clients, looking to use underspend from Business Ready and wider WCC programme to deliver more types of fund to the scale up proposals. View is to have small specialist network,</p>	

working with the Growth Hub to have procurement specialist, to find the right procurement route.
 Growing equity investor base. Working to identify potential investors.
 Local and regional network struggling to get the right investors.
 Looking to undertake academic research: What is the best type of support for scaleups?

Do we know all our ScaleUps?

Research has been done around this, through ERC and Growth Hub. Companies need to be caught at “tipping point” where there’s big increase in turnover, employees and profitability. Potentially 10 employees, 1mio+ turnover. Need to catch them early enough to support them at the critical stage.

Difficulty is in finding those companies – need to look up and look out for them. How do they want us to communicate with them? Can we go and see them?

CH mentioned that Growth Hub uses IDB to understand if they have the capacity to grow. Tapping into companies at the critical stage.

Companies going to 1 mio in first 3 years is 1.8 %, want to grow that to 10%.

DH had conversation around this with BCLEP and GBSLEP. Heading into direction of tackling agenda through existing businesses. Don’t want to risk duplication with other services out there.

RS banks offer fast growth programme, 60 businesses, with 8-9 in C&W to give them enhanced relationships. Bespoke joined up funding. Also to link with Growth Hub around specific needs.

CH mentioned need to develop feedback system and existing programmes.

DH: We have been reliant on the EU to fund business support structure. We need to work with delivery partners to understand and bridge between traditional funding and what’s coming.

ACTION POINTS

AP: Create opportunities to speak at board level with retail organisations. Check contacts

AP: RS to report back from joint Infrastructure/Planning meeting.

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AP: SK to explore opportunities for group in the REVO network and find out more about high street Taskforce

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AP: DAH to update on progress of Towns Centre Programme

AP: DH & SW to send information/keep group updated on new digital schemes.

AP: JP attending the first grant board, running A2F events. To be reported/funnelled back through this group

AP: SP to arrange meeting dates for 2018

NEXT MEETINGS

TBC