

Minutes CWLEP SME Supergroup meeting 21st February 2018

09.30-11am at CWLEP Growth Hub, Enterprise Centre, Coventry University Technology Park,
Coventry CV1 2TT

Attendees

Sean Farnell

Louise Bennett

Phil Peak

Roger Scott

Richard Marchington

Stephanie Kerr

Graham Simpson

Dave Kelham

David Ayton-Hill

David Hope

Paul Rice

Apologies received from

Craig Humphrey

Janette Pallas

Linsey Luke

Andy Williams

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Meeting was opened by Chair. Minutes of last meeting were agreed.

Group welcomed to be updated on news from the CWLEP Board at the beginning of each meeting going forward.

- Zamurad Hussain new Board member appointed. Met with SK around initiative with this group.
- Catherine Mallyon (RSC) resigned which created a new private sector vacancy on the board.
- City of Culture win was recognised
- Appointment of board members /Champions – Cllr Peter Butlin to champion HS2, Cllr Andrew Mobbs to champion Commonwealth games, City of Culture champion TBC once new Board member is appointed, all posts with shadow secretaries to allow continuity.
- LEP funding confirmed for next FY and Growth Hub for next two FY.
- Ministerial review/ Marie Ney -> Finance & Governance committee to build in the recommendations that are not yet implemented, no significant changes required
- Royal visit was welcomed
- Bosch looking to partner with Warwick Uni
- Business Festival feedback -> concern over geographical split of events, North of the County needs to be better engaged this year.
- FE presentation between 3 FE groups to board, demonstration good regional co-operation
- LEP funds for A5 withdrawn, part of it out towards the M6 smart motorway developments

2. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LIST

PORTAL DEVELOPMENT

Portal is ongoing action and was confirmed at Growth Hub Business Solutions board meeting – given the go ahead and turnaround will be quick once contract is sign.

AP: Updates on portal to be given by Growth Hub rep at next meeting.

CHAMBER PLANNING CONSULTATION

Ongoing item

UPDATE JOINT WORKING

- Bill Blincoe, Growth Hub and CWLEP Planning Advisor to give an update on that on 9th May, also on behalf of the Planning & housing Business Group
- Adrian Hart to give input around Transport & Infrastructure planning
- Growth Hub to sound out interest for participation from Holland & Barratt.

AP: SP to send dates of other working groups, once further dates have been confirmed.

CYBERSECURITY

Event around cyber threats and GDPR is set to take place on 19th April, speakers to be confirmed, Growth Hub working with partners such as Chamber and WCC to pull content together. Cov Uni and Police are engaged- waiting for confirmation of speakers, and Chamber to present. Group welcomed joined up working on this. Important is that event gets traction and there will be actions following from that.

AP: SP to send updates on Cybersecurity event and programme details to group once confirmed.

<u>3. INTRODUCTION: WRIGHT HASSALL</u>	
<p>Paul Rice from the Farming and Estates Team/MLRO at Wright Hassall and Director of Warwickshire Rural Hub was welcomed as new member to the group.</p> <p>He emphasised the need for the LEP to embrace rural land-based businesses and Farmers and commuter routes are mostly surrounded by farmlands. Sector faces challenges such as that of succession and superfast broadband as well as skills shortage, farmers relying on workers from Europe.</p> <p>Rural sector has wide definition – Rural Growth Network 50% of AME sector is based in rural areas.</p> <p>It was suggested by that a meeting at the Rural Hub would be useful. Rural Hub has been Driven by Grant funding, received confirmation from Elizabeth Creek Charitable trust for grant funding which will enable the Hub to have full-time employee. Nick Abell suggested Rural Hub to sit in the Old Clink.</p> <p>NFU Mutual could be useful contact – major employer and involvement in the sector.</p>	<p>AP: NFU Mutual to be contacted to join next meeting or following to contribute towards Rural Growth discussion.</p> <p>AP next meeting to potentially take place at Rural Hub.</p>
<u>4. WARWICKSHIRE TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMMES</u>	
<p>Expert to join next meeting. Full picture and clarity then available.</p> <p>Training courses: Digital training courses come to an end, footfall courses finish next week -> Popular in terms of split between different areas. 11 Stratford, 9 Warwick and Nuneaton, 7 in Rugby.</p> <p>Focus on Digital skills -> Seen an upturn in terms of use of Social Media. 40% of businesses are Digitally disconnected, 21% were e-commerce enabled. Huge scale for thinking about alternative scales.</p> <p>Support packages available for retailers around digitalisation, such as Gigabit vouchers, connectivity vouchers w/Chamber, support across range of sectors → Question of joining this together -> working as team. Warwickshire Town Centre Conference 21st March led by County. Book in via Eventbrite. http://bit.ly/2CCrovg</p>	<p>AP: DAH to invite along Town Centres Manager to present at next meeting.</p>
<u>5. JOINED UP COMMUNICATIONS - UPDATE</u>	
<p>Adam Dent met with Sarah to set up communications. LEP newsletter to provide right hooks to get people to open it. Featuring partner work Chamber in Warks means business etc.</p>	
<u>6. HIGH STREET TASKFORCE & REVO NETWORK – UPDATE</u>	
<p>Zamurad Hussain is keen to pick up banner of being retail champion at the LEP board. He is keen to understand issues better, runs retail store and technology company and shares longer term aspirations.</p>	<p>AP: SK/SP to invite new LEP Board member Zamurad</p>

<p>Work is being done on putting together a small taskforce with FSB to support and prioritise ideas, and make evidence more robust. Bring in intelligence from other towns and cities on identifying key barriers that LEP can focus on.</p> <p>Asks of the members were to observe a broad geographical approach and involve both the North and South of the region, also requested for Zamurad Hussain to be involved in the group.</p> <p>PP confirmed Stratford retail is struggling despite footfall. Happy to be part of the group.</p> <p>The Leamington BID is in the midst of its renewal, the ballot runs in March. Looking to reach out to BID managers with view of bringing all together April time.</p>	<p>Hussain to join SME group meeting</p> <p>AP: SK to arrange meeting in April time.</p> <p>AP: SK to update group on retail focus meeting outcomes in April</p>
<p><u>7. FINANCE UPDATE</u></p>	
<p><u>DUPLEX FUND</u></p> <p>The Duplex Investment Fund is close to being launched. Contracts to be signed. CWRT working with CCC and WCC on this business support finance scheme combining loans and grants.</p> <p>To be pulling together a worked example. £4mio worth of funding. Looking for job creation in output. Starting talks to Business support organisation around implementing this.</p> <p>CWRT to pre-filter eligible businesses, Councils to approve the grant element, then standard loan and grant contracts will go to businesses. Early on in the process, the business gets all cash needed. Grant is close to sum total of interest & fees. This removes barriers for businesses to get a grant as they can't afford prepaying without a grant.</p> <p>Should business not be awarded the grant, the business is not required to take up loan, two things are joined together. Only sector exclusions are shipbuilding and coalmining.</p> <p>Security probably will go along Enterprise guarantee fund but personal guarantee considered.</p> <p>Programme was welcomed, especially inclusion of sectors, strengthening of the region's commercial lending offer, potential work with professional sector, and cover of interest as a sustainable programme for business financing.</p> <p><u>BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMMES / GRANT BOARD</u></p> <p>Applications for new funding round have been submitted. To be updated in Summer and autumn.</p> <p><u>Business support grants</u></p> <p>Capital grants, driven by Job creation as outputs.</p> <p><u>Green business</u></p> <p>Capital grants, driven by reduction of greenhouse gas emissions</p> <p><u>Innovation</u></p> <p>Both capital and revenue. Huge demand for revenue to pay for external expertise. Support for development and testing of new products and tech</p>	

<p>to market. Businesses need applications in by end of April to get substantial amount of money.</p> <p>Collateral is limited. Councils seeking to be more active around working with intermediaries for 2019-21 funding round. Business owners need to understand support options to prep for grant readiness.</p> <p><u>WCC grants</u> WCC Small capital grants scheme renewed, further 600k over the next two years. Eligibility criteria tweaked aligning to Duplex, focus on early stage growth businesses. EAFRD, 2.7m available for grants, 40% intervention rate. Deadlines for EOI is in May.</p> <p><u>MIDLANDS ENGINE INVESTMENT FUND</u> Contract for Small Business Loans and Debt fund had been announced, programme has been soft launched. Contract for Proof of Concept has been let. Equity contractor will also be announced in the next couple of days. C&W launch on 9th March before the Chamber event at the Ricoh. Fund needs to work for C&W, to get most out of it. Invite-only official launch tomorrow (22nd February) in Birmingham. SF to chair meeting on 9th March, examples to be helpful of occasions where businesses have been turned down.</p>	<p>AP: DAH to forward finance information package to RS and SF</p> <p>AP: Any concerns/questions around MEIF to be noted and sent to DH/SF.</p>
<p><u>8. A.O.B.</u></p>	
<p><u>GDPR IN RETAIL</u> SK looking to do retail specific GDPR session, potentially make it accessible online. PR has Finance governance director that can tailor on retail. Wright Hassall will handout simple factsheets.</p> <p><u>SKILLS</u> RS voiced concerns around availability of staff and skills across the sector, labour is being lost, businesses can't quote for contracts DAH mentioned C&W Skills conference is coming up on 6th March. Appeal of further education and skills has gone through LEP but for 6 years onwards rather than short- term. Transport solutions also needed to get people to work across Warwickshire</p>	<p>AP: SK to get contact of PR for retail-tailored presentation.</p> <p>AP: RS to attend skills group, SP to send dates through once confirmed.</p> <p>AP: Marion Plant to be invited and Skills made focus of meeting on 11th July.</p>

ACTION POINTS

AP: Updates on portal to be given by Growth Hub rep at next meeting.

- AP: SP to send dates of other working groups, once further dates have been confirmed.**
- AP: SP to send updates on Cybersecurity event and programme details to group once confirmed.**
- AP: NFU Mutual to be contacted to join next meeting or following to contribute towards Rural Growth discussion.**
- AP: Next meeting to potentially take place at Rural Hub.**
- AP: DAH to invite along Town Centres Manager to present at next meeting.**
- AP: SK/SP to invite new LEP Board member Zamurad Hussain to join SME group meeting**
- AP: SK to arrange retail focus group meeting in April time.**
- AP: SK to update group on meeting outcomes of retail focus group meeting in April**
- AP: DAH to forward finance information package to RS and SF**
- AP: Any concerns/questions around MEIF to be noted and sent to DH/SF.**
- AP: SK to get contact of PR for retail-tailored presentation.**
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NEXT MEETING:

9th May, 09.30-11.30am – Venue TBC