

CWLEP Digital Creative Business Group meeting

31st January 2018
2pm – 4pm
CW Growth Hub, Techno Park, Coventry

Minutes

Attendance

Chair: Sarah Windrum – Emerald Communications Group
Exec Support: Stacy O’Connor - CWLEP
Jaymie –CWLEP Growth Hub
Andrew Todd – University of Warwick
Sim Lee – Warwickshire County Council
Liz Katz - Noisegate Media
Tom Willcock – Auster Aviation
Paul Fairburn – Coventry University
Annie Gardner – Vitsoe
Paul Thompson – Vitsoe
Nick Harper – Exient
Kate Ainscough - Freestyle Innovation
David Hope – Coventry City Council
Geraldine Cross - Playground Games
Jane Bailey – Motionhouse

Apologies Received

Helen Routledge - Totem Learning
Louise Partridge - Merryhill Accountancy
Natalie Griffiths - IdentitySpark
Diego Black - Withers & Rogers

Item	
1. Welcome & Introductions	Chair welcomed members
2. Background	The CWLEP commissioned the development of a strategy investigating our strong games development cluster within Coventry & Warwickshire. The strategy outlined several key points including: Access to finance, business support, property/ infrastructure, Inward Investment and skills which if supported further could help the strengthening and growth of the digital



	<p>creative economy.</p> <p>Based on those recommendations a work plan has been formulated and person resource has been allocated to help push those actions forward. To ensure the delivery of the programme is successful the LEP wanted to create a Digital Creative Business Group to be a sounding board and a central point to take action and push this work forward.</p>
3. Digital infrastructure	<p>David Hope gave an overview of the DCMS full fibre network scheme which is going well. This is a £3k voucher scheme available to small to medium SME businesses to help get better connected http://www.cwgrowthhub.co.uk/news/coventry-and-warwickshire-gigabit-voucher-scheme</p> <p>There is a second wave application currently submitted in partnership with CSW Broadband which will include £6m to support gigabit connectivity into public sector buildings and also asked for another £3m for general gigabit vouchers. Wave 3 will be launched in the summer. Wave 3 may be a Combined Authority bid.</p> <p>Keen for the group to think how could the gigabit connection be used in public buildings which could open use of buildings for all.</p>
4. Funding	<p>Common complaints received are that funding doesn't seem to be fit for purpose for digital creative businesses particularly around capital and revenue expenditure. The hope for this group is that they can take a role to influence existing funding and whether there is flexibility to adapt and make more fit for purpose and help shape future funds or applications in the future.</p> <p>If there are project ideas that require funding this can also be used as a platform to develop a pipeline of projects for consideration as and when future funds are available. Would welcome any suggestions from members.</p> <p>Institute of Coding - Paul Fairburn would also like to use the group as a sounding board in relation to the Institute of Coding programme which has recently been launched. http://www.coventry.ac.uk/business/our-services/institute-of-coding/ Paul offered to present at another meeting when more details are in place.</p> <p>Audiences of the Future – Industrial Strategy Challenge Call by Central Government . Sarah Windrum would be keen to see if there is opportunity to leverage something through this call.</p>



	<p>https://innovateuk.blog.gov.uk/2017/11/30/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund-more-challenges-more-opportunities/</p>
<p>Inward Investment</p>	<p>Keen to ensure there is a mega narrative which local businesses are happy to champion. Would also like input into how the area and sectors are being profiled</p> <p>Sim Lee updated on the work of the Coventry & Warwickshire Investment Teams in relation to a digital creative focus;</p> <p>Propositions/ Sector profiles: Copies of the current profiles were shared and feedback on them would be welcomed as they are due to be refreshed. Copies will be sent out with the minutes.</p> <p>Hosted a DSK Visit - The Department for International Trade (DIT) on an annual basis delivers a programme of events across the UK for overseas posts to attend and find out about particular UK markets, these are known as DSKs (Developing Sector Knowledge) events. From one of the Creative Industries DSKs last year a post in Paris has invited representative from Coventry & Warwickshire to attend the embassy and showcase the locality (This has a focus around Games Development) The event is due to take place in March and the team are currently awaiting more details in relation to the event.</p> <p>Large Scale Event : Silicon Spa Games Festival, will be held at the end of May. The hope is to celebrate and support the sector by shining a spotlight on the area. The Game Development sector is struggling with recruitment, as are many other digital sectors across the region.</p> <p>Members were keen to ensure widest engagement of local creative businesses. An outline of the event will be shared as soon as available for the group to engage and offer activities to support around it.</p> <p>Midlands Engine Challenge Fund: Midlands Engine is being used as a promotional banner to bring together the proposition of the East and West Midlands in communications with overseas companies and investors. Through this a variety of challenge funds have been launched to develop/ support key sectors.</p> <p>Most recently a Tech Challenge bid is now underway which is being led by West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC). In summary 5 sector profiles are being developed under the Tech theme these are: Autotech, Railtech, Fintech, Game Development, Cyber Security (Coventry & Warwickshire have led on rail & games) Each</p>



	<p>sector has identified a sector business champion and a competition is being launched at Mobile World Congress at the end of February to encourage trade with the Midlands region along with a microsite showcasing the areas strength.</p> <p>The microsite should be live on 19th Feb. URL will be www.techmidlands.co.uk</p>
Work Plan	<p>The CWLEP Digital Creative Work Programme was shared and explained. The programme has been formed in response to the recommendations laid out in the Blueprint for Growth report commissioned by the LEP (a copy of which will be sent with the minutes). The intention of the work plan is to be a living, evolving document which focuses our collective effort in supporting the growth of the Digital Creative economy. Key themes within the programme are:</p> <p>Business support, Inward Investment, Property/ Infrastructure, Skills, Lobbying/Influencing.</p> <p>Key feedback was to ensure this was joined up in approach with other activities. The LEP are very keen for the group to input ideas and be involved in projects that are part of the programme. In particular if there are any ideas around skills support particularly around secondary support.</p>
5. Expectations and priorities	<p>It was felt there was a lot to take in and the meeting had covered a lot of different areas. It was felt that the group wanted to go away and reflect on discussions and establish what role they have to play in becoming a Business Group Member. It was also felt other organisations should be included/ invited to ensure a wide representation of the sector.</p> <p>It was agreed that bi-monthly meeting seemed appropriate.</p> <p>Attendees went round the table outlining their expectations of the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several suggestions of companies to invite of varying sizes and locations.• Universities keen to engage with the board not only as a sounding board to their activities but also to lend their support and expertise to projects and collectively can support businesses to navigate the support on offer• Keen to engage with some of the larger companies who are dominating with attracting skills to their business. Would like their input into how we collaboratively tackle the



	<p>problem or collaboratively share the skills wealth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in the skills gap at secondary school particularly in light of the digital future of most businesses. • Keen for the group to not be a talking shop and hopefully support speeding up some processes • Help ensure that funders build the right programmes and influence government • useful for a sense check on local authority activities
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ACTION POINTS-SUMMARY

- ➔ Invite Ian Harrabin to the next meeting to present on the Creative Quarter and Coventry’s development projects.
- ➔ Invite Suzee Laxton (Warwick District Council) to present the games festival plans so far
- ➔ Prepare a high level overview of the Business Support available and pilot digital creative companies to provide feedback
- ➔ Invite suggested members to join the Group including large employer, design business, digital events, and digital transformation lead. Please forward company and contact details to Stacy O’Connor to send an invite to the next meeting if there was a particular company you wanted represented.
- ➔ Look at the ‘Digital Creative’ sector profiles. Is it fit for purpose? Are we missing some key strands to our story e.g. digital design, digital content creation, etc.?
- ➔ Give some thought to the Audiences of the Future Challenge, and how you might want to be involved. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund-joint-research-and-innovation#audiences-of-the-future>

NEXT MEETING: Next meeting dates, venues to be confirmed:

- Tuesday 27th March 18
- Wednesday 30th May 18
- Wednesday 25th July 18
- Wednesday 26th September 18
- Wednesday 28th November 18