

SELEP Growth Hub Steering Group Minutes

Date: 10 October 2018

Part 1

Attendees: Iwona Bainbridge, Suzanne Bennett, Chris Burr, Emma Culloch, Jo Simmons, Lucy Spencer-Lawrence, Ioni Sullivan, Eloise Whiteman

Apologies: Stephen Taylor and Jacqui Ward

1. Introductions and Minutes of the last meeting

- 1.1 Attendees were welcomed by Lucy Spencer-Lawrence and Suzanne Bennett.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Stephen Taylor and Jacqui Ward (first part of the meeting) and Wayne Saunders and Ian Smallwood (second part of the meeting)
- 1.3 The meeting was chaired by Suzanne Bennett.
- 1.4 The minutes from the last meeting were noted by those present.

2. Review of Growth Hubs (including LEP review update)

- 2.1 Suzanne Bennett provided an update on Growth Hubs review. She explained that no further work had been completed since the meeting of the Task & Finish Group back in July.
- 2.2 She stated that since the issue of the LEP Review paper [Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships](#) in July 2018 the focus had been on the review.
- 2.3 Suzanne Bennett provided background information in relation to the LEP Review and outlined the main aspects covered by the review such as the geography and governance.
- 2.4 She confirmed that a submission around geography was made to the government on 28 September 2018. The decision was not to change the current geography and to include the overlaps in Uttlesford and Lewes.
- 2.5 She further stated that until the geography and governance question had been answered by the government the review of the Growth Hubs would have to be postponed.
- 2.6 Those present were informed that the next meeting of the Strategic Board was scheduled for 25 October 2018. The proposed submission would be shared with the

SOG (Senior Officers Group) on Tuesday 16 October 2018 before being finalised.

- 2.7** It was noted that previously agreed date for submitting information to the Strategic Board on the review of Growth Hubs was February 2019. Suzanne Bennett stated that taking into consideration, for example the changes that would have to be made to the governance structure it was unlikely that any further development on Growth Hubs review would commence in the next six months.
- 2.8** Chris Burr stated that Growth Hubs needed to know what approach was being taken especially where contracts for services were concerned.
- 2.9** Suzanne Bennett said that some collective work would have to be undertaken in order to move forward with the review however she couldn't commit to any specific time scales.
- 2.10** Furthermore a question was raised whether the dates for Strategic Board meetings for next year had been finalised. Those present were informed that provisional dates had been circulated and as soon as they were confirmed, they would be shared with GH Steering Group members. **ACTION** – Iwona Bainbridge
- 2.11** Further questions were raised around BEIS expectations and next year's grant letter to which Suzanne Bennett provided an answer. She explained that the grant offer letter was expected to be fairly similar to this year's. Ioni Sullivan mentioned that the conversation at the National Steering Group didn't provide any further answers either.
- 2.12** It was noted that Iwona Bainbridge requested information on the various national working groups however no information had been provided so far. It was thought that correspondence from the Growth Hub had come to a halt in the last couple of weeks. Iwona Bainbridge agreed to follow up on the working groups. **ACTION** – Iwona Bainbridge
- 2.13** Those present confirmed that they were collecting the correct data in order to fulfil the requirements of the bi-annual review.
- 2.14** Suzanne Bennett stated that the quarterly spend review would be shared with the three areas by Friday 12 October 2018. At the same time, Lucy Spencer-Lawrence informed those present that the bi-annual template outlining which sections need to be completed by Growth Hubs would be shared with the leads by Friday 12 October 2018 as well. **ACTION** – Suzanne Bennet and Iwona Bainbridge
- 2.15** Moreover a question around ISAs was raised by Ioni Sullivan. Suzanne Bennett agreed to investigate and come back with an answer as soon as possible. **ACTION** – Suzanne Bennett.

3. KPIs – review and agree

- 3.1 Lucy Spencer-Lawrence advised that she had previously shared suggested KPIs with the group. A copy of those had been shared in advance of the meeting as part of the papers for the meeting.
- 3.2 Those present were asked to comment on the suggested KPIs. A question was raised around further guidance from BEIS to which Suzanne Bennett replied that no additional direction had been received.
- 3.3 It was thought that tracking of ERDF projects involvement with Growth Hubs was a good idea. However, some of those present stated that there was very limited interaction between the ERDF projects and Growth Hubs. It was said that perhaps some kind of communication should be made to the Chair of the Committee in order to influence the number of projects interacting with the Growth Hubs. Jo Simmons advised that it may be difficult for the Chair to influence the relationship.
- 3.4 Furthermore, those present were in agreement that KPI was not necessary the best name for management information that was being collected.
- 3.5 Having discussed the proposed KPIs in detail those present agreed that robust evidence base was required and that the KPIs (management information) should be reviewed. **ACTION** – All

4. Growth Hub Portal Review

- 4.1 It was noted that the report prepared by Kane Tudor had been shared with the group in advance of the meeting.
- 4.2 Ioni Sullivan brought the group up to speed on the findings included in the report.
- 4.3 She advised that currently the quality of data is questionable due to the system functionality.
- 4.4 Having considered the report it was agreed that Alcium would have to be instructed to make the requisite changes to the SELEP portal forms allowing each area to collect the necessary data. They would also have to be instructed to fix different errors experienced in each area within the portal.
- 4.5 It was also mentioned that time should be allowed to cleanse the duplicate entries.
- 4.6 It was agreed that a meeting with Alcium would be arranged and once the time lines for fixing of the issues identified and cleansing of data agreed all parties would be advised of next steps. **ACTION** – Iwona Bainbridge

5. SELEP Grant Q2 Reporting

5.1 It was noted that Suzanne Bennett covered the Q2 reporting at point 2.14.

6. Future meetings dates

6.1 This item had not been covered due to lack of time. Iwona Bainbridge would distribute the proposed dates. **ACTION** – Iwona Bainbridge

Chris Burr left at 3.05pm.

Part 2

Attendees: Iwona Bainbridge, Suzanne Bennett, Emma Culloch, Jo Simmons, Lucy Spencer-Lawrence, Ioni Sullivan, Eloise Whiteman, Georgia Searle, Sean Dennis

Apologies: Wayne Saunders, Ian Smallwood, Stephen Taylor, Jacqui Ward

Suzanne Bennett made introductions and welcomed Georgia Searle and Sean Dennis to the meeting.

7. Growth Hub Portal Review – update

7.1 Suzanne Bennett provided an update on the discussion around the Growth Hub portal review. She said that Iwona Bainbridge would address the issues identified in the review paper and take them forward with Paul Martin and Alcium.

7.2 A quick update on Growth Hub review had also been provided.

7.3 Regarding bi-annual review, Suzanne Bennett confirmed that the review template would be shared with the leads by Friday 12 October 2018.

8. ERDF - update

8.1 Jo Simmons sought a clarification from those present that all initial contacts with ERDF projects were being recorded. Georgia Searle and Sean Dennis confirmed that this was the case.

8.2 It was also confirmed that BEST did regular follow-ups on those initial contacts and BES only when there was on-going involvement. Georgia Searle mentioned that communication with ERDF programmes was challenging, especially the older ones.

8.3 A question was raised whether it might be worth raising the communication issue at

the Committee level. In reply, Jo Simmons advised that this was already discussed earlier on and that it might be more appropriate to establish which ERDF projects were engaging at the moment and contact them directly.

8.4 Those present raised question about the replacement for ERDF, UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) and whether there was further information available from the government.

8.5 Furthermore, it was noted that due to a change in the Euro exchange rate there were some additional funds available which should enable some of the existing projects to ask for extension.

8.6 Following further questions around ERDF and Brexit, Suzanne Bennett confirmed that the funding was underwritten by the Treasury and she wasn't aware of any no deal guidance.

9. Digital Tax Campaign

9.1 Suzanne Bennett reminded everyone that it was a key part of the government's plans to make the [tax digital](#). She confirmed that VAT registered businesses with taxable turnover above the VAT threshold would be required to use the Making Tax Digital service to keep records digitally and use software to submit their VAT returns from 1 April 2019.

9.2 As the government's campaign seemed to be focused mostly on Twitter users, Suzanne Bennett enquired whether there was anything that could be done by local Growth Hubs to spread the word and bring people/businesses up to speed with the new requirements. **ACTION** - All

10. SELEP Sector Support Fund (SSF)

10.1 Georgia Searle raised a question around Sector Support Fund (SSF) and whether it would be appropriate to put a bid for it.

10.2 For the benefit of all present, Suzanne Bennett explained that the SSF was a £500,000 per year pot of money to support one-off, discrete piece of work of a pan-LEP nature with a sector focus that brought demonstrable benefits and had support across the LEP.

10.3 Suzanne Bennett reminded everyone that there was also some underspend which required utilisation and could possibly be used to organise events such as Meet the Buyer for Start-Ups and SMEs.

10.4 It was thought that a bid could be considered in the New Year. **ACTION** – Suzanne Bennett to talk to Iwona Bainbridge

11. Grant finder discussion paper

- 11.1** As Chris Burr left early, Georgia Searle introduced the discussion paper.
- 11.2** Georgia Searle explained that the story behind the Advice Finder. It was to improve the integration of private sector providers into the South East Business Hub (SEBH). It was stated that for economies of scale this work should be undertaken at SEBH level and not each individual sub-hub.
- 11.3** Iwona Bainbridge explained that she had an exchange of emails with Tudor at K&M Growth Hub and would be happy to share the information he provided. **ACTION** – Iwona Bainbridge
- 11.4** It was decided that all involved should consider testing at the K&M Growth Hub tool, understand how it works and look into possible cost of utilising the tool across all three sub-hubs. **ACTION** - All

12. AOB

- 12.1** Website – a short update was provided by Lucy Spencer-Lawrence. She explained that the project was at Stage 5 – Visual Design/Content design. She also thanked everyone who provided the appropriate content to enable the project to move forward.
- 12.2** It was noted that a written update would be shared with everyone as soon as possible. **ACTION** – Iwona Bainbridge