



BEST

FOR BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock

Growth Hub funding:

- Funding has been confirmed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) until 31st March 2020

Growth Hub Outputs and Principles defined by BEIS:

- Growth Hubs have received updated monitoring and evaluation metrics from BEIS for 2019/20.
- There has been no change from our funders, BEIS, in terms of centralising support for pre-starts - as required the GH signpost to the national business support helpline but we still have information for pre-starts on BEST website
- Concentration on promoting programmes that support: trading internationally, innovation and the adoption of innovative technologies and management practices, skills training including accessing apprenticeships and SME procurement capabilities.

Growth Hub operational update:

- The third annual BEST Growth Hub Show took place on 8th February 2019 at Hylands House. A record number of attendees booked a ticket for the event. Mark Dixon was the keynote speaker followed by a series of workshops and a speed networking with the FSB. Very positive feedback was received from both exhibitors and attendees – over 350 referrals were made on the day. The GH steering group are looking at possible options for alternative funding for 2020 Show.
- Many EU funded programmes of business support have fully allocated their grant funding sooner than expected – LEADER, SEBB, LoCASE, KEEP+, Manufacturing Growth Programme, Department for International Trade.
- Therefore, BEST team have moved away from delivering grant funding roadshows and have been targeting specific sectors where EU funded support is still available (creative and digital, transport and logistics, data etc). The first stage of this process has been to carry out a stakeholder mapping exercise. The team have been speaking to the various partners to organise awareness raising events.
- BEST have created and are consistently updating a “Prepare for Brexit page” that collates links to government and third party websites to provide the latest free Brexit guidance.
- BEST, along with all other Growth Hubs, have been asked to provide weekly feedback on businesses concerns with Brexit to various government departments.
- BEST submitted a bid with ARU to support scale up businesses in Essex as part of the Business Basics Fund. This was a very competitive funding pot and unfortunately the bid was not successful, however BEST and ARU are looking at other sources of funding to deliver the support.
- A SELEP-wide evaluation of Growth Hubs and their impact has taken place – the final report will be available by the end of June.