



# Strategic Board Meeting Information Items

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019, 10:00 – 13:00  
High House Production Park, Purfleet, RM19 1RJ

1.		Material from <a href="#">15<sup>th</sup> February</a> Accountability Board	
2.		Future High Street Fund bids	Pages 2 – 3
3.		Growth Hubs update	Pages 4 – 6

Information items issued Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## INFORMATION ITEM 2. Future High Street Fund bids

### Future High Streets Fund – Letters of Support

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Government launched the Future High Street Fund in October 2018. The £675 million Fund was developed to help local areas to respond and adapt to changes that presenting challenges to high streets and town centres across the country. The ongoing disruption and evolution of the retail sector means that we all need to reconsider how town centres can continue to be a focus for our communities and the local economies. The objective of the Fund is to **renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability.**
- 1.2 Following the launch, Government opened a first round call for proposals at the end of last year. Councils with direct responsibility for high streets and town centres (in SELEP this would be District, Borough and Unitary Councils) have been asked submit Expressions of Interest by 22 March 2019.
- 1.3 The Expression of Interest (EOI) process has been designed to be light -touch to reduce the burden on bidding authorities. Following an assessment of the EOIs, Government will announce in the summer which areas will be invited to bring forward a fully developed business case. It's expected that business cases will need to be submitted by the end of 2019 or early 2020.
- 1.4 Currently it is not known when final funding decisions will be made. A second round call for proposals will open in due course.
- 1.5 Bidding authorities have been encouraged to include letters of support from key stakeholders, including LEPs. At this high-level stage it is clear that SELEP would offer support to all bids coming forward as development of town centres sits with our adopted Economic Statement Strategy. We would expect further engagement with those projects that are selected to bring forward a full business case and these will be presented to Board later in 2019.

#### 2. Next steps

- 2.1 At time of writing, the following authorities have approached us for letters of support:
  - Brentwood Borough Council
  - Chelmsford City Council
  - Colchester Borough Council
  - Harlow District Council
  - Maldon District Council
  - Rochford District Council
  - Tendring District Council
  - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
  - Leigh-on-Sea Council
  - Thurrock Council
  - Ashford Borough Council



- Eastbourne Borough Council
- Hastings Borough Council
- Lewes District Council
- Wealden District Council

2.2 This is not an exhaustive list as further EOIs are expected in the run-up to the deadline on 22 March. Letters of support will be issued for all authorities who request them and SELEP will champion these bids whenever possible.

2.3 A further report detailing the full list of submissions and which were selected to come forward for further development will be circulated to a later Board meeting.

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### INFORMATION ITEM 3. Growth Hubs update

#### Growth Hubs – for information

##### 1 Update

- 1.1 The 2019-2020 funding for the network of Growth Hubs across the country has been confirmed. The allocation for 2019-2020 remains the same as for the previous year. As in 2018/09 SELEP has applied for grant funding of £656,000 for the operation of the South East Business Hub in 2019/20. At time of writing confirmation had yet to be received on the application but indications from the BEIS are positive.
- 1.2 Following a number of changes to the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Growth Hubs last year, this year’s monitoring and evaluation metrics remains largely the same which will provide for stability and consistency in data reporting.
- 1.3 The last year’s Growth Hub Framework has been fully integrated into the Growth Hubs’ reporting and monitoring. Further updates as per the updated framework will be implemented to the CRM portal by 1 April 2019.
- 1.4 SELEP CRM portal, following a major update and testing, will be fully functioning from April 2019. The updated portal will enable us to capture all necessary information as requested by BEIS.
- 1.5 The Growth Hub Framework continues to focus on business growth. Therefore, BEST Growth Hub is in talks with Anglian Ruskin University (ARU) to establish the possibility of delivering further support to scale up businesses through an ecosystem. Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub has purchased a new data set to help targeting of potential clients that fit the scale up market; and Kent & Medway Growth Hub begun a new Scale Up Kent programme in the West Kent and Folkestone and Hythe, with 12 and 10 businesses respectively being selected to take part in the programme.
- 1.6 An agreement has been reached that the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) with the Business Support Helpline will be directly between the Lead Authority and the Business Support Helpline which will allow for referrals to flow directly between each of the Growth Hubs and the Business Support Helpline.

##### 1.7 Output Performance Year to Date (up to January 2019)

Output Measure	BEST	BES	K&M	Total
Light touch interactions	1,836	461	3,085	5,382
Medium intensity interactions	993	169	483	1,645
High intensity interactions	110	40	49	199
				<b>7,226</b>

Output Measure	BEST	BES	K&M	Total
Referrals to external business support providers	1,143	182	5,030	6,355

### 1.8 Growth Hub support breakdown by sector

Company Sector	BEST	BES	K&M	Total
Real Estate Activities	27	7	8	42
Financial and Insurance Activities	22	4	33	59
Transportation and Storage	32	5	47	84
Agriculture Forestry and Fishing	31	5	10	46
Construction	100	36	79	215
Information and Communication	103	9	46	158
Professional Scientific and Technical Activities	191	38	24	253
Education	79	7	47	133
Manufacturing	231	34	207	472
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	115	16	104	235
Administrative and Support Service Activities	143	12	178	333
Human Health and Social Work Activities	123	26	100	249
Arts Entertainment, Recreation and Other Services	263	78	126	467
Wholesale and Retail Trade, incl. Motor Trades	246	29	309	584
Other	130	155	1,767	2,052
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>3,085</b>	<b>5,382</b>

### 1.9 Most common referral organisations for all three Growth Hubs were:

- LoCASE
- South East Business Boost (SEBB)
- Manufacturing Growth Programme
- Department for International Trade
- Local Authority services

1.10 All three Growth Hubs continue working with partners on regular basis. BES Growth Hub has recently been invited, by BEIS to be part of one of 6 pilot schemes nationally to gauge and judge the appetite of smaller businesses to engage with Trading Standards, Fire Safety, Environmental Health etc., through one central point of contact, an option that has been available to larger businesses for some time.

1.11 BEST and BES Growth Hub held very successful showcasing events in the recent months. Business East Sussex Connect event took place on 7 November 2018 and attracted over 50 introducers and influencers from across the East Sussex and the third annual BEST Growth Hub Show was on 8

February 2019 at Hylands House. A record number of attendees booked a ticket for the event. The feedback received from both exhibitors and attendees was very positive.

- 1.12 Additionally, the extended South East Business Boost (SEBB) grant programme delivered through the BES Growth Hub has invested £557,000 into the local economy raising a further £1,453,000 private match. BEST Growth Hub seen £939,000 of investment with over 2.5 million of private match.
- 1.13 Since the EU Exit became an increasingly important issue, the Growth Hubs have been collecting and reporting grass roots business sentiment and information directly to BEIS on a weekly basis. In early days it was noted that businesses were failing to prepare for a 'No deal' exit simply because they had no idea what they were preparing for or where to gain information and advice on how a no deal exit would affect them.
- 1.14 The Growth Hubs have been raising awareness of, and communicating to local businesses the wealth, value and availability of the support and information that is available regarding Brexit.
- 1.15 They have created Brexit web-pages carrying links to GOV.UK and the support and information available to provide another route for businesses to access the increasing level of advice and information now available.
- 1.16 The latest feedback from the business community received by the Growth Hubs indicates that businesses are experiencing a mixture of issues such as:
- Pressures on supply chains
  - Falling commercial and consumer confidence
  - Rising costs
  - Retaining skilled employees as EU workers return home
  - Stockpiling and its negative impact on cashflow
  - The challenge of retaining overseas customers
  - The impact of currency fluctuations on margins
  - Where to find UK-based alternative suppliers and customers
  - The need to develop new markets
- 1.17 The work on a new, more integrated, Growth Hub website is underway. The new website will provide better and more cohesive access to the right support available to businesses.
- 1.18 The SELEP wide evaluation of the Growth Hubs is being currently procured and it will concentrate on economic impact of the Growth Hub support.

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