

# SEBH Steering Group Minutes

Date: 21 May 2020

## Part 1

**Attendees:** Amy Bernardo, Chris Burr, Ellie Clow, Emma Culloch, Ioni Sullivan, Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer, Jo Simmons, Jon Birkett, Mark Jones, Justin Gibbs, Susan Berdo, Paul Chapman and Karl Dagleish

**Apologies:** Billy Masters, Dave Hughes, Eloisa Whiteman, Ian Smallwood, Joanne Cable, Lorna Norris, Louise Aitken, Suzanne Bennett, Ryan Jagpal, Tudor Price and Adam Bryan

### 1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Attendees were welcomed by Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer to the steering group meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Billy Masters, Dave Hughes, Eloisa Whiteman, Suzanne Bennett, Ryan Jagpal, Ian Smallwood, Joanne Cable, Lorna Norris, Louise Aitken, Tudor Price and Adam Bryan.

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer went through the summary of action points from the previous meeting. The following were noted:

#### 2.2.1 To provide an update on the SME Champion

- Due to the large order of business that had to be discussed at the first Strategic Board meeting following the incorporation of SELEP Ltd and start of social distancing the appointment of the SME Board Champion was postponed and would be considered once the social distancing period comes to an end. In the meantime, the Chair would continue to be the SME Board Champion as per current arrangements.

#### 2.2.2 To share further information on the Growth Hub Annual Report

- The Growth Annual Report was discussed under point 6.

#### 2.2.3 To redirect the old Kent & Medway Growth Hub (KMGH) website to the South East Business Hub website

- The redirect of KMGH old website was still in progress.

### **3. COVID-19 support for businesses update**

**3.1** The partners were asked to provide a short update on support offered to businesses affected by COVID-19.

**3.2** Whilst providing an update they were asked to touch on the following points:

- What are we doing to support businesses through COVID-19?
- Are there any new emerging gaps in the provision?
- What can we do to adapt the current business support delivery model?
- How do we communicate with our business base and other stakeholders?
- What do we need in order to operate in the most efficient way?

**3.3** Chris Burr, presenting Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SBC), said that from the Council prospective they were still very busy processing the business rates grants. He noted that to date the SBC paid out 220 grants in total which was approximately one third of total businesses accessing the grants. He also touched on the new discretionary grant and a wish list of areas that might require support under this particular grant.

**3.4** Jonny Birkett, representing BEST Growth Hub, said that their main focus was on supporting businesses around the lifting of social distancing restrictions, guidance surrounding it and adaptations to businesses in digital and tech area.

He also spoke about the launch of a monthly briefing session for local authorities and business support organisations across the Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

He noted that the team had been reviewing the Growth Hub business plan that included detail around next phase of Coronavirus support and the future work of the Growth Hub i.e. in providing support to new enterprises.

He also spoke about adding a tool to the website to support new businesses with business planning and development of the CRM system.

**3.5** Paul Chapman, representing Essex County Council (ECC) said that ECC was facilitating groups of EDM Officers to allow them to share information, and to enable learning and consistent approach to, for example, the grants distributed by districts and boroughs.

He also mentioned the Wider Essex Intermediary group which met on weekly basis to share information and discuss new initiatives.

- 3.6** Emma Culloch, representing Thurrock Council, said that the Council was still looking at how the discretionary grants were being distributed. She also mentioned the annual conference which was postponed this year due to the COVID-19 outbreak and would be rescheduled for the later part of this calendar year.

She noted that a lot of work had been done on the South East Creatives programme in order to ensure that businesses were aware of the programme and were accessing it.

- 3.7** Sue Berdo, presenting Kent County Council (KCC) and Kent & Medway Growth Hub (KMGH) advised that the COVID-19 Business Support Helpline had taken to date approximately 6,000 calls and completed 1850 COVID Business Survey questionnaires.

She informed the steering group that the current topics the advisers are picking up were around financial support to facilitate return to work and new work practices, advice around remodelling, leadership, recovery and financial support for those sectors that were last to leave the lockdown and digital upskilling of current workforce.

She also mentioned that the helpline was collecting expressions of interests for the discretionary grant whilst the districts were deciding how these were going to be distributed.

Sue Berdo also spoke about the loans options that were being developed by KCC in order to fill in the gap in the current Government provision.

- 3.8** Ioni Sullivan, representing East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the Business East Sussex Growth Hub (BES), said that the Council's main focus was on forming a business recovery plan. She added that one of the key strands in the business recovery plan was business support.

She advised that in the interim, the Growth Hub had been concentrating on responding to businesses enquiries around discretionary grants and re-opening.

She also mentioned forthcoming webinars organised together with the University of Brighton, communication with stakeholders and a series of videos in various languages to help business access the grant funding.

- 3.9** Julian Gibbs, representing Universities, spoke about the Anglian Rusking University (ARU) approach to post COVID-19 recovery. He advised that KEEP+ programme was open again and the ARU was seeing expressions of interest from businesses coming through already.

He also advised that the university was looking at multi stakeholder engagement and exchange knowledge with businesses. Julian Gibbs offered to provide further information at the next steering group meeting. **ACTION – Julian Gibbs**

**3.10** Additionally, Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer informed the steering group that the Strategic Board Virtual Roundtable & Information meeting was taking place on Friday 22 May 2020. The aim of the meeting was to provide an update to the Directors on pressing matters ahead of upcoming meeting of the Strategic Board and Accountability Board.

**3.11** Jo Simmons added that she would be giving a verbal update on the Growth Hub project at the virtual meeting. She said that her update would concentrate on the support the Growth Hubs were providing and availability of funding to deliver it. She explained that there would not be an opportunity for the Directors to discuss and/or debate solutions however the information provided should set the scene for future discussions.

#### **4. Intelligence gathering**

**4.1** Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer advised the steering group that the Business Impact survey closed on 27 April 2020. SELEP received 591 replies and the dashboard with the survey results was shared with the business community, partners and other stakeholders. She added that the results were still available on the SEBH website and that in the recent weeks a further sectoral breakdown of the results had been produced and shared with the Growth Hub Leads. She also advised that the raw data sets were available on request from Mark Jones.

**4.2** Furthermore, she explained that the Business Recovery survey opened on 14 May 2020. The survey replies were slow in coming through and to date only 65 were received.

Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer provided a short summary of the responses received which featured mostly replies from businesses in arts, entertainment and recreation sector, wholesale and retail and manufacturing.

64.6% - expected to be operating in 12 months' time

81.5% - had seen the Government Road Map

50.8% - thought they would be able to meet secure workplace requirements

56.9% - thought they would change the way they operate/deliver services in the future

**4.3** Additionally, she advised that local/regional business and economic intelligence gathering continued. She thanked the Growth Hubs and Local Authorities partners for their support in ensuring the returns were not only timely but also contained rich data.

**4.4** The steering group was advised that the Cluster catch up calls were still taking place on regular basis. The purpose of the calls was to share intelligence, receive information on Government initiatives and to deepen the collaborative working partnership.

**5. Skills update**

**5.1** The steering group was provided with a written update from Louise Aitken, SELEP Skills Lead. The update covered points as such apprenticeships, support for individuals, Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), analytical toolkit and skills report, Digital Skills Partnership, tutor recruitment bursary and campaign and the recent Skills Toolkit.

**6. Monitoring and evaluation**

**Annual Report 2019-20**

**6.1** Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer informed the steering group that KADA Research Ltd were supporting the collation of material and writing of the Annual Report. She said that the draft report would be ready by 11 June 2020.

**6.2** Karl Dagleish, from KADA Research Ltd., joined the steering group meeting in order to answer any questions the partners might have had around the work he was completing on behalf of SELEP.

**6.3** Karl Dagleish thanked everyone for their help with collating the information for the report. He advised that he had already spoken to BEST, BES and KMGH and was due to speak to Jo Simmons, Business Development Manager and Tom Harrington, Business Mentor Advisor for London and South East.

**6.4** Furthermore, Karl Dagleish advised that the KPI outputs were being put together by Mark Jones.

He also said that he required ideas for case studies from each of the Growth Hubs and asked for these to be provided as soon as possible.

**Progress against Schedule 3 (2020-21)**

**6.5** Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer advised that it was prudent for the steering group to look at the progress made against Schedule 3 for the current financial year. However, she was also conscious that everyone concerned was under a lot of pressure following the outbreak of Coronavirus and was concentrating on reacting to the current needs of businesses.

**6.6** She suggested she drafted a forward plan/ a monitoring template to aid the progress monitoring. The steering group agreed with the suggestion and provisional end of June deadline for the draft. **ACTION – Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer**

## **7. CRM – development progress update**

**7.1** Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer referred to the minutes of the previous steering group meeting where it was noted that the Evolutive visual dashboards were being created. She confirmed that the dashboards were now finalised and available in the system.

**7.2** Furthermore, she advised that it was time to undertake further CRM development in order to streamline Growth Hub processes i.e. stop using several spreadsheets or collect information in various other formats. The steering group noted that the CRM should be a rich source of information/intelligence collected from businesses involved with the Growth Hub.

**7.3** It was agreed to form a working group to discuss the CRM functionalities and agree improvements. **ACTION – Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer**

## **8. Website update**

**8.1** The steering group was informed that the accessibility updates had been now been completed by Pillory Barn.

**8.2** She advised that the next step was to develop a Communication Strategy and How to guide for making updates to the website.

**8.3** The steering group thought that the Communication Strategy would be extremely helpful and the How to guide would certainly help with providing clarity on how and what information Growth Hubs should be adding to the website. It was agreed that a draft document should be presented to the next steering group meeting in July 2020. **ACTION – Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer/Ellie Clow**

## **Part 2**

**Attendees:** Ioni Sullivan, Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer, Susan Berdo, Amy Bernardo, Jon Birkett, Chris Burr and Jo Simmons

**Apologies:** Suzanne Bennett and Lorna Norris

### **9. Growth Hub Audit**

**9.1** It was noted that the annual Audit was underway and the deadline for submission to BEIS was 30 June 2020.

### **10. Service Level Agreement 2020-21**

**10.1** Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer advised that the Service Level Agreement 2020-21 for the core funding were being finalised and would be shared with the Lead Authorities in the coming week.

### **11. Growth Hub expenditure Q1 and Q2**

**11.1** The Lead Authorities representatives were informed that the quarterly reporting spreadsheet with an accompanying guidance on how to submit claims for eligible expenditure would be shared with them next week.

### **12. EU Exit support funding – outstanding matters**

**12.1** The Lead Authorities were reminded that the GLA was undertaking an audit of the expenditure and required the information by 2 June 2020.

### **13. ERDF Legacy Funding -update**

**13.1** Jo Simmons provided an update on ERDF Legacy Funding.

### **14. AOB**

**14.1** There was no other business to discuss.

**Meeting closed at 4:00pm**

### **Summary of Action Points**

- 3.9 To provide information on the ARU offer to businesses at the next SEBH steering group meeting – Julian Gibbs
- 6.6 To draft a monitoring template to aid the reporting against Schedule 3 – Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer
- 7.3 To form a working group to discuss the CRM functionality and improvement work – Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer
- 8.3 To draft a Communications Strategy and How to guide – Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer/Ellie Clow