



SOUTH EAST BUSINESS HUB

Minutes of the South East Business Hub Steering Group held on Thursday 10 September 2020

Attendees:	Amy Bernardo	Essex County Council/Accountable Body
	Damian Wood	Kent County Council
	Emma McCulloch	Thurrock Council
	Eloisa Whiteman	East Sussex County Council
	Ioni Sullivan	Business East Sussex Growth Hub
	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer	South East LEP
	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
	Jon Birkett	BEST Growth Hub
	Julian Gibbs	Anglian Ruskin University
	Mark Jones	South East LEP
	Susan Berdo	Kent County Council
	Tudor Price	Kent & Medway Growth Hub

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting and given an opportunity to introduce themselves.

Apologies were received from Billy Masters, Ellie Clow, Emma Lindsell, Ian Smallwood, Joanne Cable, Lorna Norris, Louise Aitken, Paul Chapman, Ryan Jagpal and Suzanne Bennet.

2. Approval of the minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the steering group members,

The action points arising from the meeting of 16 July 2020 were cleared and noted below:

- The ARU offer to businesses was shared with the steering group members
- The Growth Manager guide was shared with the Area Leads responsible for the Growth Hub project
- The Growth Manager was reviewed by Mark Jones. CRM development was covered under agenda item 5
- The research into Growth Hub CRMs had been undertaken and reported to the Area Leads
- Quarterly reporting was covered under agenda item 4
- The Universities representation had been discussed and additionally covered under agenda item 3
- The Communications Strategy workshop was covered under agenda item 7
- Discussion on case studies was held and a simple template produced and shared
- The new approach to scheduling of steering group meetings was covered under agenda item 3

3. Structure of steering group meeting

The steering group members were asked to consider three points:

- a) frequency of the meetings
- b) removal of Part 2, and
- c) agenda structure

It was noted that meeting more frequently was useful as it provided time for collaboration and decision making. However, the introduction of additional meetings following the outbreak of Coronavirus it meant that the Growth Hub representatives were meeting on even more regular basis. In order to avoid duplication it was suggested that the meetings of the steering group would take place on quarterly basis and concentrate on strategic points with operational matters being dealt with by for example working groups.

Action: *To schedule quarterly steering group meetings as agreed by the steering group.*

Regarding removal of Part 2 (financial monitoring) from the overall agenda of the steering group meeting, it was agreed that the financial monitoring with the Area Leads would take place separately in the future.

The steering group members also discussed the structure the of the steering group agenda. It was noted that the agenda for the meeting should provide an opportunity for the Growth Hub stakeholders to comment and offer input on the strategic direction for the Growth Hub project.

Additionally, it was brought to the steering group attention that Julian Gibbs would provide the necessary link between U9 working group and the SEBH steering group and vice versa.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

It was noted that a proforma for a qualitative quarterly reporting was shared with the steering group in advance of the meeting. The idea behind the proforma was to aid the bi-annual and annual reporting to BEIS.

It was agreed that in principle reporting against the project outcomes as set out in Schedule 3 of the Grant Offer Letter on quarterly basis would be beneficial and should help to avoid the usual rush to complete the bi-annual and annual reporting to BEIS.

A consensus was reached that the proforma should be trialled by the Lead Areas/Growth Hubs for reporting at the end of Q2, Q3 and Q4 with a view of reviewing the process at the end of the financial year.

Action: *To test the qualitative reporting proforma at the end of Q2, Q3 and Q4 and to review its usefulness at the end of the financial year.*

5. CRM development and intelligence gathering

The steering group was provided with a short summary on the progress of CRM development. It was noted that Mark Jones and Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer undertook a short research by contacting a number of Growth Hubs nationally to establish what CRM system they used, its pros and cons and cost.

The discussion with the various Growth Hubs had been summarised in the paper that was shared with the Growth Hubs in advance of the meeting.

Following a discussion it was agreed that the CRM Task & Finish Group should be re-established to take the project forward and report to the steering group at a future meeting.

Action: *To arrange regular meetings of the CRM Task & Finish Group in order to bottom out the CRM requirements and to move ahead with the developmental work. To report on the work of the CRM Task & Finish Group to the steering group.*

6. Funding update

The steering group members were provided with an update on the forthcoming funding streams. These were noted as follows:

Supplementary Growth Hub Funding – Schedule 1 and 3 had been cleared by BEIS, the Grant Offer Letter should be received soon

Peer Networks Programme – delay in issuing of the updated Grant Agreement following queries from LEPs nationally

Queries were raised around the timescales for delivery of the Peer Networks and whether BEIS would agree to an extension to the delivery deadline beyond 31 March 2021. The Growth Hubs were also keen to know whether they were able to start delivering against the project outcomes as set out in Schedule 3 of the Supplementary Growth Hub Funding.

Tudor Price raised a question around EU Transition and whether the Growth Hubs should start scoping out what sort of support they ought to offer to businesses in the run up to December 31st.

In response to the queries, it was confirmed that the funding would have to be spent by the end of March 2021. The Accountable Body clarified that no further assurance could be provided until such time the Peer Network Grant Agreement and Supplementary Grant Offer Letter were issued by BEIS.

Regarding EU Transition, it was confirmed that it was prudent to commence some preparatory work in order to react to BEIS future requests.

SELEP Business Support Fund – recommendations for the £2.4 million spend were being worked into a board paper ready for the Strategic Board decision on 2 October 2020. It was noted that the fund would deliver three individual business support programmes:

supporting pre-starts and start-ups, digitising business, supporting retail and e-commerce and supporting the visitor economy.

7. Communications and marketing

An update was provided regarding a communications workshop. Jo Simmons advised that the purpose of the workshop was to come together as a group to establish what we needed and wanted to do with regards to the Growth Hub communications and how this could be linked to the SELEP Communications Strategy and Protocols.

The steering group members were advised that there might be some preparation required prior to the workshop in terms of identifying what communication channels were being used by the Growth Hubs currently.

It was confirmed that suggested dates for the workshop were going to be shared with the steering group members within the next few days and that the invitation to the workshop was also opened to those managing the Growth Hub communications and marketing.

Jon Birkett provided an update on the Growth Hub video. It was agreed that the link to the video would be shared with the Growth Hubs for comment after the meeting.

Action: *To share the link to the Growth Hub video.*

8. Cluster update

The steering group members were advised that the South East Growth Hub Cluster was meeting on fortnightly bases. It was noted that the Cluster Action Plan was under development and once finalised would be shared more widely.

Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer explained that the Cluster Action Plan covered various activities and initiatives that could be delivered across all three LEPs/Growth Hubs areas.

Additionally, the steering group was advised on the proposed Business Support Reform. It was noted that the Business Support Reform workshop was due to take place on 16 September 2020.

Following a query around the purpose of the Business Support Reform, Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer agreed to share a copy of the presentation she received.

Action: *To share a copy of the Business Support Reform presentation with the steering group members.*

9. Skills update

A written update was provided by Louise Aitken, SELEP Skills Lead, which Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer promised to share after the steering group after the meeting.

Action: *To share the written skills update with the steering group members.*

10. Any Other Business

There was no AOB to discuss.

The steering group meeting closed at 3:15pm.

Action points arising from the steering group meeting – summary

Minute	Action	Completed by
Minute 3	To schedule quarterly steering group meetings as agreed by the steering group.	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer
Minute 4	To test the qualitative reporting proforma at the end of Q2, Q3 and Q4 and to review its usefulness at the end of the financial year.	Lead Areas/Growth Hubs
Minute 5	To arrange regular meetings of the CRM Task & Finish Group in order to bottom out the CRM requirements and to move ahead with the developmental work. To report on the work of the CRM Task & Finish Group to the steering group.	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer Mark Jones
Minute 7	To share the link to the Growth Hub video.	Jon Birkett
Minute 8	To share a copy of the Business Support Reform presentation with the steering group members.	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer
Minute 9	To share the written skills update with the steering group members.	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer