

Annual Growth Hub Evaluation 2020-21: Summary of recommendations, comments, and next steps

	Summary of recommendations	SEBH Steering Group comments	Next steps
Operational	Growth Hub CRM is not user friendly: Review best use of CRM and consider system improvements	Desk-top research of CRM improvements, including the option to replace entirely, is on-going. Substantial changes or system replacement is reliant on confirmed Growth Hub core funding for 2022/23	CRM requirements will inform delivery model recommendations as this is the primary tool for business data capture and analysis. An optimised CRM will also be informed by and need to perform against the BEIS Growth Hub Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, which is currently being revised for 2022/23
	Marketing activity is undertaken by all three Area Hubs: Consider undertaking this activity centrally	Ongoing collaboration and discussion taking place through the South East Business Hub Communications Group	Central marketing activity may inform website improvements, and will inform delivery model options, as it relates to economies of scale and resource allocation (as per the independent delivery model report)
	Need to maximise use of newsletters and social media: Further discussion to improve external communications	Being implemented through the South East Business Hub Communications Group	Progressing and ongoing
	Businesses that receive support should be asked to 'sign up' to engage in evaluation surveys, to aid the business consultation phase of future annual evaluations	This can be asked of businesses but their agreement and/or availability to participate at a later date may not be forthcoming	Further discussion required on whether and how to incorporate this ask to businesses
	Develop a case study for the Kent and Medway Growth Hub CV19 Helpline, should such a support mechanism be needed in future	This facility was additional to the core-funded Growth Hub service and a case study is a fully supported and discrete activity	To be progressed
Partners	Virtual meetings should remain the norm, with some physical meetings to maintain relationships	Likely to evolve in line with organisational way of working, virtual meetings are considered efficient and effective and physical meetings only required for creative or difficult matters	No further action

	Gathering and controlling flow of information to partners/ Government improved during the pandemic: Consider how this function can be continued	The Hubs gather intelligence and submit reports weekly to BEIS and continue to develop local eco-systems with LAs and business intermediaries to help provide enriched data. How this information is then to be shared back with partners (two-way processes) needs to be explored further.	A process for Growth Hubs to gather and share information with and from partners needs to be explored further and as part of the evolution of the delivery model, relating in part to resource allocation and strategic aims
	Area Hubs do not provide feedback on businesses to referral partners: Implement a system that enables this	There are challenges to creating an automated feedback system; feedback relies largely on 1-2-1 interactions with referral partners	Ongoing relationship building and management with partners
Businesses	Peer Networks programme is funded annually so no sustainability built in: Consider options to continue newly formed groups beyond end date	The continuation of new business groups/networks is not funded nationally and will be reliant on local initiatives and resource	Area Hubs to continue to support businesses in their customer journey and consider how best to deploy allocated funding
	Demand for digital service delivery may continue post-pandemic: Hubs should consider lessons learnt and opportunities for efficiency improvements	Further discussions required to explore lessons learnt and opportunities arising for the experience of the pandemic	Further discussion required
	There is a risk of overloading the market with online support: Potential for increasing SELEP-wide programmes of online events should be investigated	Currently calendars of events are maintained on the Growth Hub websites. The coordination and development of SELEP-wide programmes would require further discussion	Further discussion required on feasibility and benefits