



SOUTH EAST BUSINESS HUB

Minutes of the South East Business Hub Steering Group held on Monday 7 June 2021

Attendees:	Amy Bernardo	Essex County Council/Accountable Body
	Ellie Clow	South East LEP
	Emma Lindsell	Southend Borough Council
	Emma McCulloch	Thurrock Council
	Ian Smallwood	Business East Sussex Growth Hub
	Ioni Sullivan	Business East Sussex Growth Hub
	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer	South East LEP
	James Wilkinson	South East LEP
	Jo Simmons	South East LEP
	Jon Birkett	BEST Growth Hub
	Kane Tudor	East Sussex County Council
	Kate Thompson	BEST Growth Hub
	Louise Aitken	South East LEP
	Mark Jones	South East LEP
	Rachel Evans	East Sussex County Council
	Susan Berdo	Kent County Council
	Tudor Price	Kent & Medway Growth Hub
	Zoe Gordon	South East LEP

1. Welcome and apologies

The attendees were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Paul Chapman, Lorna Norris, Julian Gibbs, Ryan Jagpal and Suzanne Bennet.

2. Approval of the minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2021 were approved by the steering group members as a true record.

The action points arising from the meeting of 17 March 2021 were cleared and noted below:

- The first SEBH Comms Group meeting took place on 6 April 2021 and was subsequently followed by another one on 20 April 2021. All future meetings would take place on monthly basis.
- The external annual evaluation had been procured and delivered by EBS Consulting Ltd.
- It was confirmed that Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer had joined the DSP SME Working Group.

3. Annual Evaluation of the Growth Hub

Alan Elder from EBS Consulting Ltd. gave a short presentation on the initial findings from the annual Growth Hub evaluation.

Positive feedback

- More coordinated and connected service as a result of the pandemic
- Greater traction and leverage with external providers
- Closer relationships are helping to build a stronger referral network
- Growth Hub central to information dissemination
- Links with the district and borough councils strengthen
- Move to virtual meetings supported the development of partnerships
- Cluster activity partnership working well

Initial recommendations

- Address CRM and website issues
- More use of social media – centralised marketing?
- Businesses need to commit to evaluation process
- Helpline case study
- Mix of virtual and face to face meetings for the teams
- Build on partnership development
- Coordination of online support, workshops, and events
- Efficiency improvements based on experiences of the pandemic

It was noted that the final Growth Hub Annual Evaluation Report would be shared with the steering group members as soon as became available. A copy of the presentation would also be shared.

Action: *To share a copy the presentation and the Growth Hub Annual Evaluation Report with the steering group members.*

4. Communications

Zoe Gordon provided information on the following points:

- COVID-19 Recovery Funds including updates on the website content and social media kit
- Recovery and Renewal Strategy – development of wide comms promotion
- Major projects webinar and the skills report commissioned by SELEP
- COP26 and Clean Growth South East

Discussion took place around resources required for an enhanced Growth Hub social media presence. It was explained that SELEP engages an outside agency to do the social media piece on regular basis. The contract was for approximately 5h a week and it could potentially be enhanced to include the Growth Hub messaging.

The steering group meeting discussed how the scaling of the activity could potentially work across the three Growth Hubs if it was delivered centrally; how different messages

would have to be collected and delivered and what value could central social media add to the local areas.

No decision around central social media function was reached at the meeting. As centralised marketing/social media was one of the annual evolution recommendations this would be covered at the next steering group meeting where the recommendations would be considered in a more detail.

5. Funding update

The steering group members were provided with the following update:

- a) FY2020-21 Internal Audit – completed/outcome was submitted to BEIS/no response received yet
- b) FY2021-22 Core Growth Hub Funding – Schedule 1 and 3 had been submitted/awaiting Grant Offer Letter
- c) Peer Networks Programme 2.0 – back-to-back Grant Agreements would be issued shortly

The steering group was informed that the Growth Hub Annual Report was ready for submission to BEIS. Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer thanked all involved in ensuring that the finance returns, and annual report were prepared and submitted on time.

6. SELEP COVID-19 Business Support Fund

It was noted that Zoe Gordon had already provided a thorough update on the launch of the COVID-19 Business Support fund.

Jo Simmons thanked everyone for engaging with the programmes and their providers.

7. Growth Hub Delivery Model Engagement and Appraisal Exercise

The steering group members were informed that the report on the delivery model had been concluded and it would be presented to the Strategic Board on 25 June 2021. The report would form part of a Board pack that would be circulated to the Board members on 17 June 2021.

The steering group members would be able to view the report on the SELEP website as of that date.

It was noted that the Strategic Board would have an opportunity to comment on the report however due to an ongoing LEP Review no decisions on the recommendations would be made at the June's meeting. The Federated Boards would also be given an opportunity to comment on the report.

8. Growth Hub Website Optimisation

The steering group members were informed that this project was still delayed. It was anticipated that the procurement for the delivery of the project should go ahead in the next couple of months.

9. Cluster update

Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer provided a short update on the recent work undertaken by the Cluster. The main topics were:

- COP26 and Net Zero – what's the Growth Hub involvement/role to play?
- Help to Grow (Management)
- DWP Beacon Project
- Cyber Security training for navigators
- Telemarketing campaign – in development

Regarding the discussion around Net Zero agenda it was thought that an update from LOCASE and Clean Growth South East project ought to take place at the next steering group meeting.

Action: *To add an update from LOCASE and Clean Growth South East to the steering group agenda.*

10. Skills update

The following headlines were covered by Louise Aitken in her Skills update:

- [Skills COVID-19 Recovery Fund](#) (three projects)
- Review of Social European Funding
- List of current ESF programmes being put together
- Online Careers Festival – 19th and 20th October – further information would be provided in due course
- [Skills Report](#) - now published
- Beacon Project – no major update

Jim Wilkinson provided an update on the Digital Skills Partnership:

- [Digital Skills Prospectus](#) – second iteration to be shared with the Growth Hubs soon
- Events planned by the DSP working groups – around digital inclusion, automation, diversity, etc.

11. Any Other Business

There was no AOB to discuss.

The steering group meeting closed at 12:00pm.

Action points arising from the steering group meeting – summary

Minute	Action	Completed by
Minute 3	To share a copy the presentation and the Growth Hub Annual Evaluation Report with the steering group members.	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer
Minute 9	To add an update from LOCASE and Clean Growth South East to the steering group agenda.	Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer