



SOUTH EAST BUSINESS HUB

Minutes of the South East Business Hub Steering Group held on Thursday 15 December 2020

Attendees:	Amy Bernardo	Essex County Council/Accountable Body
	Ellie Clow	South East LEP
	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
	Julian Gibbs	Anglian Ruskin University
	Louise Aitken	South East LEP
	Mark Jones	South East LEP
	Susan Berdo	Kent County Council
	Tudor Price	Kent & Medway Growth Hub
	Zoe Gordon	South East LEP

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Billy Masters, Eloisa Whiteman, Emma McCulloch, Emma Lindsell, Joanne Cable, Lorna Norris, Paul Chapman, Rachel Evans, Ryan Jagpal and Suzanne Bennet.

2. Approval of the minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 September 2020 were approved by the steering group members.

The action points arising from the meeting of 10 September 2020 were cleared and noted below:

- Quarterly steering group meetings were not scheduled for the whole of financial year yet
- The qualitative reporting proforma was being tested by the Business East Sussex Growth Hub
- Regular meetings of the CRM Task & Finish Group were scheduled on weekly basis; update on the CRM development was on the agenda
- The link to the Growth Hub video was shared with the relevant parties
- A copy of the Business Support Reform presentation was shared with the steering group members
- The written skills update was shared with the steering group members

Additionally, the steering group was advised that the appointment of the SME Business Champion took place at the Strategic Board meeting on 2 October 2020. The Board

appointed Ana Christie and Clive Soper to act jointly as the SELEP SME Business Champions for a period of two years.

3. Communications Strategy

Zoe Gordon opened this item by referring back to the Communications Strategy Workshop that took place on 9 November 2020.

The steering group was asked to think about the rationale for coming together and working on communications, engaging with different groups of stakeholders and reaching out to new audiences.

In order to facilitate this, the steering group was invited to consider either forming a small communications group that would meet on regular basis or have a standing agenda item on communications at the steering group meeting.

In summary, the steering group was asked to reflect on the following three areas:

- Sharing of information and content and showcasing of the Growth Hub activity
- Ways of working for the website
- Working as a peer group (sharing of good practice)

Feedback from the members of the steering group

- Supporting amplifying messages upwards was met with approval
- Forming of a specific comms group was welcomed (this could encompass the website as well)
- Helping to sell the message about the importance of the Growth Hubs to the business community would be very helpful
- Being involved in the work around the website in the coming months
- Acknowledge support from the Government and strengthen the Growth Hub position more strategically
- Remember the purpose of the Growth Hub and its coordination role

Based on what was discussed, it was suggested that Zoe Gordon and Ellie Clow would join some of the local steering group meetings over the coming weeks/months in order to hear what happens locally and a regular comms item would be added to the SEBH Steering Group meeting agenda.

Action: *Zoe Gordon and Ellie Clow to attend local steering group meetings in the coming weeks/months. To add a standing agenda item on Communications to the SEBH Steering Group meeting agenda.*

A request was made to forward contact details for those involved in the Growth Hub communications so that a mailing group could be formed.

Action: *To share contact details for those involved in the Growth Hub communications at the local level with Zoe Gordon.*

4. CRM development and intelligence gathering

A short update was provided by Mark Jones.

- The current system design was not the most efficient one in entering and updating records; it also didn't support the existing reporting requirements
- The Task & Finish Group that was formed to reach a consensus/balance between reach data capture, efficient data entry and the customer
- The light touch and medium intensity forms had been redesigned and the act of entering of the data into the system was simplified
- The layout of the forms had also been redesigned, use of drop-down lists introduced instead of free text boxes in order to limit human error and speed up the entry
- Introduction of an automatic way of generating referral follow ups and satisfaction surveys had been included in the development
- Implementation of an external form that could be used by businesses via the website to create an initial enquiry with the Growth Hub was underway
- Implementation of diversity capture matched to current standards had been completed
- Couple of cycles of testing had already been done (slight delay on the vendor behalf)

In summary, both Mark Jones and Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer were hopeful that the new forms could be implemented in the new year subject to any unforeseen delays.

5. Funding update

The steering group members were provided with an update on the forthcoming funding streams.

- a) **Supplemental Growth Hub Funding** – SELEP's allocation £234,000, being spent in line with Schedule 1 including three discrete pieces of work: engagement appraisal exercise of the Growth Hub delivery model, improving the functionality, content and structure of the website and the CRM improvement work
- b) **Peer Networks programme** – SELEP's allocation £195,000, plan to deliver 13 cohorts (143 participants)

BEST Growth Hub update

- The programme had been formally launched, programme manager had been appointed, first cohorts to start in early January 2021 with completion planned for late March 2021

Business East Sussex Growth Hub update

- Cohort 1 ready to go – 11 signed up; Cohort 2 – 7 expressions of interest; kick off planned for early January 2021 with completion in March 2021

Kent & Medway Growth Hub update

- Plan to start the programme in January 2021 through 3 different providers

Overall, it was noted that despite many initial challenges around the programme delivery including the timings, the Growth Hubs were positive that the programme would be delivered within the agreed timescales.

c) **EU Transition Business Readiness Growth Hub Funding** – SELEP’s allocation £203,550, split into two tranches

- EU Transition Advisers for Outreach & Advice - £81,000 (ringfenced funding for 3 advisers)
- EU Transition Business Readiness - £108,000 (for specialist and general advisers x 4) and £14,550 (for intelligence, analysis and metrics and evaluation)
- Each of the Growth Hubs provided an update on the proposed spend of the tranche 1 (£81,000)

d) **SELEP Business Support Fund** – invitations to tender would go live on 6 January 2021 with contracts being in place from the end of February 2021 for immediate delivery

SELEP Skills Recovery Fund – similar to Business Support Fund would go live on 6 January 2021; this fund was specifically for re-training and digital kit and connectivity piece

6. Cluster update

Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer provided a short update on Growth Hub Cluster work undertaken so far.

- Regular Knowledge & Information sessions opened to all advisers and navigators
- Best Practice sessions opened to all advisers and navigators – one session to date on Blended Digital Model
- Cluster Business Support workshops – Digital Marketing with Google in November 2020 (more planned in the new year)
- Telemarketing campaign to support the EU Transition and to generate referrals to the Growth Hubs

7. Skills update

Louise Aitken and Jim Wilkinson shared an update on the skills strategy and the Digital Skills Partnership (DSP).

- SELEP Skills Strategy 2018-2023 – under review including the evidence base (taking into account Clean Growth)
- Major Projects group set up
- Vision and priorities of the Skills Strategy being delivered
- Investment so far - £40m+ capital investment in facilities, £80m+ European Social funding supporting people into and in work, LEP evidence and research available to educators for bids and to ensure industry relevant delivery, Tutor Bursary and awareness campaign and the Digital Skills Partnership bid to be a pilot

- SELEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) – employer led, reflective of growth sectors and geography, fed into the SELEP COVID-19 Skills Recovery Fund
- New requirement to produce a Skills Report for DfE by the end of March 2021 (annual requirement going forward)
- Engaging with Catalyst South – new grouping of Southern LEPs
- New South East Skills website in the last stages of development to house labour market information, partner resources and updates
- Opportunity to work together with the Cornwall LEP on Beacon project (possibility for the Growth Hubs to get involved)
- Several working groups within the DSP – one with focus on support for SMEs and charities
- Partnership with Future Fit – AI driven career platform for individuals within SELEP (pilot scheme)
- Digital Garage events with Google – new planned for 2021
- Digital Skills Prospectus – still in development (early version on the South East Skills website)

8. Any Other Business

There was no AOB to discuss.

The steering group meeting closed at 1:00pm.

Action points arising from the steering group meeting – summary

Minute	Action	Completed by
Minute 3	Zoe Gordon and Ellie Clow to attend local steering group meetings in the coming weeks/months. To add a standing agenda item on Communications to the SEBH Steering Group meeting agenda.	Zoe Gordon/Ellie Clow
Minute 3	To share contact details for those involved in the Growth Hub communications at the local level with Zoe Gordon.	Lead Areas/Growth Hubs