

Business Development Board

Report to the LEP Board, 18 September 2020

Report from Richard Kendall, Executive Director – Strategic Policy & Business Development

**1. Summary**

1.1. This report gives an overview of activities under the Business Development Board's remit.

**2. September board meeting**

2.1. The September meeting of the Business Development Board focussed on business engagement.

**3. Economic intelligence**

3.1. The Humber Economic Resilience Group continues to meet to gather business intelligence and identify issues to act on. In addition to coronavirus impact, Brexit-related issues have also returned to the agenda. Recent issues raised include:

- Imminent end to the furloughing scheme and calls for it to be extended/replaced for sectors that are still severely affected.
- Rising reports of cashflow problems.
- SME concerns with the Kickstart scheme, especially the 30-person minimum application threshold and lack of guidance for intermediaries.
- Concern about the impact of local lockdowns and individual business shutdowns, and businesses that have reported employee cases such as food manufacturing.
- Impact on the hospitality industry from the lack of business events.
- Concern that the "back to work" message has been large city-centric.
- Lack of resource to deal with Brexit as well as coronavirus; many saying stockpiling for a no deal end to the transition period is impossible.
- Lack of clarity on what businesses should be preparing for in relation to the end of the transition period.

3.2. More positively, the Eat Out to Help Out scheme is felt to have been very successful locally. Some are looking at extending promotions into the autumn.

#### 4. Growth Hub

4.1. As reported previously, Growth Hubs are being provided with some additional resources for business support delivery. Updates on the key elements are as follows:

4.1.1. **Start-up Support** – four additional advisors will be employed by partners on behalf of the Growth Hub. Two are now in post in East Riding and North East Lincolnshire. Recruiting advisors for Hull and North Lincolnshire is in process. The Growth Hub is also working on procurement of a start-up webinar programme, with the tender due to go live in the coming weeks.

4.1.2. **Workforce Development Advisor** – will lead on Apprenticeships, T-Levels and Kickstart activities. Interviews taking place next week

4.1.3. **Peer Networks** - £90k BEIS funding for six cohorts of 11 Action Learning plus 1:1 support. Procurement will begin shortly.

4.1.4. **SME Restart and Recovery and Kickstarting Tourism Grants** – as set out in the ESIF report, the Growth Hub is working with partners to deliver these across the Humber.