

Hull and East Yorkshire LEP Board

Paper C – Growth Hub Review

Report to the Board – 26th May 2022

Report from Jon Brunton – Growth Hub Manager

1. Summary

- 1.1. This paper provides a summary of the Growth Hub Review which is now complete. A copy of the summary of review findings is enclosed
- 1.2. The board are invited to comment and make feedback on the summary of review findings.

2. Recommendation

2.1. That the Board:

- notes the completion of the Growth Hub Review and its findings.
- Provides comment and feedback on the Growth Hub Review: Summary of Findings document

3. Growth Hub Review and Recommendations

With the launch of the Hull & East Yorkshire LEP and Growth Hub on 1st April 2021 and the subsequent formation of the LEP's Business Support Board in the Summer of 2021, LEP Officers recommend that a review of the HEY Growth Hub be undertaken, to ensure that the Growth Hub can meet the needs of the Hull and East Yorkshire business community, as well as play its part in the delivery of the HEY LEP Economic Growth and Workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2021-26. This recommendation was proposed and ratified at the meeting of the Business Support Board on Monday 1st November 2021.

3.1. The agreed purposes and objectives of the review were as follows:

- Given a variety of external governance, strategic and funding matters, the HEY Growth Hub is at a crossroads, and this is the opportune time to review the Growth Hub to identify growth and development opportunities and to refresh Growth Hub strategy.
- Once the multi-stakeholder review of the HEY Growth Hub has been undertaken, a detailed development strategy will be created which will govern the onward development of the Growth Hub. This strategy will include short, medium, and long term objectives as identified.
- The completion of the review and the subsequent creation of a development strategy will provide the Growth Hub management team with a foundation document that can help to steer the future development of the Hub.
- The review and development plan will ensure that the HEY Growth Hub meets and exceeds the needs of its service users; that is the business community of Hull and East Yorkshire as well as pre-start individuals/entrepreneurs.

3.2. In order to meet these objectives, the Growth Hub Review utilised primary research undertaken by KADA Research between December 2021 and March 2022 allied with desk analysis of the HEY LEP Economic Growth and Workforce Wellbeing Strategy to ascertain the existing strengths of the Growth Hub activity up to this point and highlight where Growth Hub activity would be required over the coming years. 714 businesses and 22 stakeholders were consulted as part of KADA's consultation

3.3. Review findings were collated into a summary of findings document, which can be found enclosed with this paper. This document was presented to the Business Support Board on Thursday 12 May with feedback and comment provided. Feedback and comments are also sought from the HEY LEP Board in order to inform a final version of the summary of findings document which will be approved and adopted by the LEP.

3.4. The conclusions of the review can be summarised as follows:

- The Growth Hub's core offer of free, impartial, account managed advice and guidance to any business in the region is highly valued by businesses and stakeholders alike, and whether this is delivered in the future under the Growth Hub brand or not, this is an essential facet of the business support infrastructure in Hull and East Yorkshire. Therefore, adequate resource needs to be identified to maintain this offer.
- Some current Growth Hub services needs to be further developed, expanded, and marketed including support to explore and adopt digital technology, access to investment and finance, support to access supply chains, support for firms to scale up, and workforce development support. Financial resource will need to be identified come the end of ESIF funded programmes in 2023 to continue some of these existing interventions.
- A number of specific business and enterprise support needs require new interventions, relating to such matters as business resilience, net zero, support for social enterprise, and a support offer to pre-starts and start ups to help foster an enterprise culture in the HEY region.
- The Growth Hub client journey and user experience needs to be overhauled, with less emphasis placed on the requirements and strictures of individual programmes and more focus on a single pathway of support for each unique business, driven by business need and handled by a consistent core offer via a named account manager. This will help to attract and retain more businesses to the service and remove some of the barrier to accessing support put forward by businesses.
- The Growth Hub is well networked with other providers of business support at an advisor level, and business referrals are made between providers to meet the needs of client businesses. However, greater collaboration at a strategic level is needed to ensure superior operational alignment, to avoid duplication of provision, and to help inform the business support infrastructure needed in the region. This would also help to coordinate utilisation of government and levelling up funding such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Growth Hub marketing and branding needs a further specific review to improve effectiveness, reach of brand and market engagement, as Growth Hub awareness

amongst the business community is low. Furthermore, a number of barriers and misconceptions about accessing publicly funded business support exist within the business community and these need to be overcome.

- A review of the monitoring and evaluation used by the Growth Hub needs to be undertaken, with a view to creating more sophisticated data and intelligence that is used to inform the business support provision in the HEY region on an ongoing basis. Alignment with other delivery partners to achieve this would help to measure the impact of funded business support as well as the longitudinal impacts of funded support. This in turn would help inform business cases to accessing external sources of funding such as levelling up, UKSPF and devolved funds.

3.5. A brief presentation covering the Growth Hub Review, its findings, and next steps will be given by the Growth Hub Manager at the meeting of the Board on 26th May.