

Hull and East Yorkshire LEP Board
Chief Operating Officer's Report
Report by Teresa Chalmers, Chief Operating Officer and HEY LEP Team
Thursday 25th November 2021
Paper I

1. Summary

- 1.1. The LEP officers have continued to work at pace over the past two months to ensure delivery outputs meet contractual requirements and programmes continue to perform well. Many of these programmes are those transferred from the previous Humber LEP which need monitoring and reporting, as per other papers on this board.
- 1.2. Unfortunately over this period, several staffing absences have occurred, this aligned with a number of vacant posts, which are being managed but leave the small team under further pressure.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board to acknowledge the volume of work being undertaken and continue to provide support, advice and assistance where possible.

3. Report

- 3.1. **Programmes** - The LEP officers are continuing to work at pace to deliver ongoing programme management and reports to external funders including government colleagues. These programmes include capital investments and skills related activity, each aspect having differing output requirements which are time related.
- 3.2. **Events – The COP 26 Battle Bus Tour.** The LEP has delivered and presented at several events since the Board last met including the COP 26 Battle Bus event, held on October 18th at the Hull City Hall. This event, which was bid for by the LEP, included several SME workshops demonstrating individual organisation's 'carbon stories' which were very well received. Planet Mark, the government contracted lead organisation, provided compelling evidence of how SMEs could play their part in the Net Zero agenda.
- 3.3. As the event coincided with Marketing the Humber's Waterline event, both organisations worked together to manage alignment. This approach included the launch of the Waterline event as part of the COP 26 event, which was much welcomed and ensured the audience were not divided on the day itself. Many thanks go to Diana Taylor and team and to the sponsors of the Waterline for enabling that to happen. The Waterline launch itself brought many delegates to the City Hall event, a percentage of which had also registered for the COP 26 SME activities later in the day.

- 3.4. 96 people signed up for the LEP event and 72 attended on the day itself. Positive publicity outputs included the chair's interview on ITV's Calendar evening news programme and coverage on Radio Humberside, in Business Live and Business Works Magazine.
- 3.5. **Humber LEP Legacy Event** – In order to celebrate the work of the former Humber LEP and to thank board members for their efforts, the HEY LEP team, under the guidance of Stephen Parnaby, former Humber LEP Chair and current Deputy Chair, is developing an event to be held on 1st December at the Country Park Hotel in Hessle, beginning at 9 a.m. The event will include the outputs from the Humber LEP in the style of a brief AGM summary, a panel discussion and an introduction to the HEY LEP from James Newman. Current board members are invited to attend by registering for a place using the link below. This is to ensure Covid-safety practices such as limiting participating numbers. Board members, stakeholders and interested parties can book places online by visiting: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/humber-lep-legacy-event-and-introduction-to-hey-lep-tickets-207778881227>
- 3.6. **Visit by UAE delegation** - The LEP hosted an initial exploratory group meeting with Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) who were the Headline Partner at Tech Week Humber. Regional partners in attendance included DIT, Hull City Council, ABP Hull, Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, plus several local SMEs with UAE business interests. A range of potential collaborative areas and synergies were identified across key sectors, including Energy (Offshore, Logistics, Clean Growth), Agriculture and Tech/Digital. DMCC may be able to act as a bridge for UAE companies seeking to explore opportunities across the Humber and vice versa for UK companies looking to use Dubai as a stepping-stone and wishing to scale-up. HEY LEP will also look to facilitate further discussions with interested parties, identifying any future trade missions to Dubai/UK, such as a possible DIT-led Digital trade mission which could take place during the current Dubai Expo (ends March 2022) and facilitating any inward visits to the region by UAE companies.
- 3.7. **Tech Week Humber event** - Tech Week Humber 2021 took place during week beginning 8th November with the physical Tech Expo event taking place on Tuesday 9th at the Bonus Arena, Hull. The event was run as a hybrid model, being broadcast live as well as held in person. The event featured a range of speakers throughout the day in the main arena and also featured breakout sessions. Whilst the actual physical attendance figures are yet to be clarified the busiest proportion of the day appeared to be the morning sessions. The event was not as busy as the inaugural Tech Expo in 2019, however the original event featured a significant number of students which are out of the scope of the Growth Hub target market. As part of its sponsorship deal, the Growth Hub was provided with four exhibition stands, three of which were made available to Growth Hub clients to promote their products and services. Overall the Growth Hub stand took 42 enquiries with additional circa 10 enquiries received (yet to be confirmed - one of those enquiries may lead to an increase in up to

£10k of additional work) from the supported businesses. Follow up activity is now taking place with the enquirers.

3.8. In addition to the stand activity, Phil Glover the Business Development Manager attended a number of the events and benefited from networking with existing and new contacts including discussions with the DMCC organisation from Dubai.

3.9. They HEY LEP's Humber Local Digital Skills Partnership member, Lindsay Rodgers, who is Director of Digital Transformation at KCOM, chaired a live discussion with international female senior tech sector representatives from global tech giants such as Apple, HSBC, KCOM, Deliveroo, IBM and MoodBeam, during a "Women in Tech" event as part of Tech Expo. The event, at the Bonus Arena, aimed to increase awareness and take up of digital and tech roles by females.

3.10 Several key contacts were made with Tech Expo exhibitors including Hull-based telecommunications company, [Connexin](#), which specialises in smart technologies, the Internet of Things (IoT) as well as wireless networks across the UK. Connexin were present to highlight the launch of their [Connexin Academy](#). Their CSR aim is to create the largest IT training centre in Yorkshire, with a satellite academy in every major Yorkshire city, providing digital skills training to support the government's digital skills agenda. Also in attendance was [VISR](#), which specialises in virtual reality platforms. Based at the University of Hull's Newland Science Park, VISR is leading software developments as part of a Microsoft Mixed Reality partner program. VISR's flagship service, VERTX, is a secure cloud platform that allows users to connect in real-time via VR applications and is already being used in industry sectors including medical, energy, education, and defence.

3.11 Connexin and VISR both agreed to work closely with the HEY LEP's Humber Local Digital Skills Partnership to provide insights into the tech sector's growing demand for advanced digital and technical skills.

4. The Humber Freeport Skills Group - Following extended discussions with David Gwynne, acting CEO of the Freeport SkillsCo, the group will now recruit members in January/February with the ambition to meet in shadow in March prior to the April launch of the Freeport.

4.1. It is anticipated that membership will include representatives from the private sector and education and training providers, the voluntary and community service and Jobcentre Plus, thus providing the knowledge, expertise and experience required to drive skills activities that will support the Freeport. Greater Lincolnshire LEP colleagues will also join this group to ensure relevant interventions impact positively on a pan-Humber basis. The Skills Group will report into the SteerCo until such time as the formal board of the company is formed which will then become the governance model. Recruitment will take

place under the SteerCo banner and via the website with panel members forming the recruitment panel.

4.2. Following the release of government guidance for the full business case, the Employment & Skills team has met with the Freeport interim CEO and consultancy support team to help to progress the skills section, working with Greater Lincolnshire LEP colleagues.

5. LEP team update – Unfortunately during this period, several officers have been away from work which has put increased pressure on the remaining team. This is in addition to carrying vacancies including the Energy Hub Manager, the Growth Hub Triage Advisor, the Growth Hub Marketing Assistant and the Workforce Development Business Advisor. The team has responded positively to this challenge, focussing on essential priorities and being flexible in covering colleagues roles; however this issue needs to be brought to the Board’s attention as with such a small team this is unsustainable on a long-term basis. Local authority partners, Hull City Council and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council have both offered some support for the Growth Hub delivery which is much welcomed.

6. Export Academy Proposals - The Export Academy, from the Department for International Trade (DIT), is a free course targeted at small and micro-businesses, giving first-time exporters the know-how to sell successfully to customers around the world. Nine core modules are delivered by international trade experts via online webinars, roundtables and mentoring sessions, with companies graduating from the programme with a completed export action plan.

6.1. DIT has now proposed a HEY LEP joint-messaging and promotional approach, which will allow HEY LEP to promote the Export Academy as its own, thus embedding the exporting message further across the LEP’s regional client-base and giving HEY LEP a key tool to employ in its efforts to drive export engagement across Hull and East Yorkshire. There is no charge or resource implication for HEY LEP in signing-up to this joint initiative.

7. Investment Enquiries – Enquiries have remained strong during this reporting period particularly for manufacturing operations. We are now also starting to see a growth in Freeport related enquiries, and this may in part be a consequence of the recent announcements in the budget speech. Our approach to inward investment continues to be based on a bespoke approach which puts the client and their needs firmly at the centre of the client journey. To that end we continue to work closely with the Local Authorities and other local LEP areas, either to strengthen the HEY LEP offer or alternatively to refer clients on to other locations that may better align with their development needs. This may be the case for Freeport and decarbonisation enquiries where the wider Humber offer is particularly relevant.

8. Financial and resource implications

The Humber LEP legacy event will be funded by Humber LEP reserves as agreed by the former board. These costs are for room hire and technical support only.