


**Hull & East Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership  
Business Support Board Notes  
Meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
2.00 pm – 4.00 pm via Teams**

1.	<p>David Hall, acting chair, welcomed members to the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by Jan Brumby, FEO, Madge Moore, Rural Champion, Rachel Smurthwaite, Sewells, Daisy Scott McCahill, HCC, Darren Roberts, ERYC.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Dafydd Williams, ABP, Paul Burnley, HCC, Jason Speedy, Groupe Atlantic, Yvonne Moogan, University of Hull and David Kilburn, MKM. David Hall welcomed Daisy Scott-McCahill who was representing HCC on this occasion and Darren Roberts from ERYC.</p> <p>Secretariat: Teresa Chalmers and Karen Philipson, HEY LEP. Guests Phil Glover and Jon Brunton, HEY LEP and Andrew Finch, DBT.</p>
2.	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>, held on 14<sup>th</sup> June were accepted as a true record; matters arising had been dealt with; TC is keeping the Employment and Skills Board appraised of any arising skills discussions at the Freeport or Humber Energy Board.</p>
4.	<p><b>LEP Update – funding and integration</b></p> <p>TC updated the board regarding core LEP funding; government had confirmed that there will be no further LEP funding from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Some LEPs may choose to continue operating if they are supported by their boards and have enough reserves to do so; in the HEY LEP's case and as a new LEP this is not possible. Conversations with both local authorities are ongoing and remain positive regarding the integration of LEP services into appropriate functional areas, including the Hull and East Riding Unitary Leaders Board which could act as a midway point before the creation of the future proposed Combined Authority.</p> <p>HCC have submitted a proposal to their cabinet regarding the creation of a regional Strategic Skills Hub and ERYC are doing the same later this month. This is a concept developed jointly by both local authorities and the LEP.</p> <p>The LEP's September board meeting will debate the local authority proposals and consider the steps needed to transfer contracts and support the staff team in the transition.</p> <p>In regard of devolution, ERYC had publicly announced they would prefer a Mayoral Combined Authority and HCC had said they are exploring the potential for the same structure. It was understood that devolution conversations are ongoing but, as yet, the LEP has not been directly involved in these, unlike other areas in the country.</p> <p>Government guidance suggests that the Combined Authority would still need a business</p>

	<p>voice and the LEP Board is very keen, as is the private sector, to ensure this happens. The potential timescale for the mayoral election is May 2025, depending on government changes and local agreements.</p>
5.	<p><b>Growth Hub Report</b></p> <p>Jon Brunton updated the board on the various activity that the Growth Hub had been delivering to date. The close down of the ERDF funded schemes had taken place on 30 June 2023. The new core funded offer will see the Hub becoming a gateway for business support, offering information, guidance and advice and referral activity e.g., access to finance.</p> <p>This activity would be augmented by the work of the Workforce Development Advisor, helping businesses to access apprenticeships, levy transfer and work experience opportunities and the Made Smarter programme. It is likely that specialist and technical support would now be provided by both local authorities using UKSPF.</p> <p>The Growth Hub continues to support the HEY Manufacturers Network which has attracted to date 15 SMEs to events and meetings. A planned employment and skills event will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> September to review the recruitment challenges of the sector and identify actions for improvement.</p> <p>The #GrowMySME Programme had now had final claim approval and archiving of all required documentation is nearly complete. All three elements of this programme were successful in achieving contracted outputs with minor underspends at programme close.</p> <p>The Made Smarter Programme continues to deliver with 28 client businesses, of which 13 have completed the required digital roadmap, 10 accessing technical support and 3 applying for a capex grant, one of which has been awarded to date.</p> <p>Business intelligence gathering remains a key requirement of the Hub, feeding back issues to government.</p> <p>The Growth Hub had been invited to reapply to the national Create Growth Programme, following last year which saw the LEP being shortlisted but not achieving final competitive funding which went only to six pilot areas. The Hub had been successful in the Expression of Interest stage and has now been invited to proceed to full bidding process.</p> <p>The programme is aimed at SMEs in the Creative Industries who are looking to grow and scale up but who cannot access the funding and investment needed to do so. The programme also includes one to one and one to many support, alongside coaching and mentoring provision.</p> <p>The Growth Hub is working with both local authorities and is considering a wider partnership approach as part of the bid proposal. Timelines are very tight with the bid deadline of Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September. As part of the EOI stage the LEP was awarded a grant of £9,500 to help develop the bid; this has been used to commission additional external bid writing capacity.</p>

	<p>Business Board members thanked JB and the Growth Hub team for their support over the last year; recognising the work of all partners involved.</p> <p>Members asked for clarity regarding the two local authority approaches to business support which whilst working on some elements, can sometimes differ. Officers explained that increasingly both LAs were looking to work together to offer access to services to provide a coherent approach, for example each LA will allow access to UKSPF funded business workshops and events to both Hull and East Yorkshire firms regardless of location.</p> <p>In terms of future Growth Hub funding, no firm commitment from government had been made, however very positive feedback on the outputs achieved nationally and comments from Minister Kevin Hollinrake had been indicative of potential future funding.</p> <p>Board members agreed that in future structures there is need to simplify and provide the gateway with appropriate referrals whatever route a business may take when seeking business support.</p> <p>DH thanked JB for his support with the Manufacturers Network saying this group would focus on positive actions at pace; several areas of challenge and opportunity had been discussed to date and the planned visit to Group Atlantic premises would be really helpful. Skills issues continue which DH has experienced personally in the Trail Blazer work with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education who keep stating that current qualifications meet the manufacturing sector’s needs, however it is felt that this is not the case. DH has raised his concerns with Peter Campey, Area Lead for DBT.</p> <p>JB suggested that the Local Skills Improvement Plan may pick this up and challenge accordingly. TC said this was not possible as the LSIP Team had received specific advice that national policy decisions could not be challenged under the LSIP, this has been raised at the Employment and Skills Board and the future Strategic Skills Unit would take up such a decision and challenge it accordingly.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Export Update</b></p> <p>Andrew Finch updated the board on a range of export issues. The Export Growth Grants had awarded seven Hull businesses using the UKSPF following the first round of applications. Manufacturing and Digi-tech are represented in grant beneficiaries. Funded at a 60/40% basis, the maximum grant offer is £5,400. Funding is used to aid attendance at international trade shows that take place before February 2025. Current funding will support up to twelve companies.</p> <p>The Department for Business and Trade, (DBT), is considering proposals for a new export grant funding scheme which will build on the success of the former Internationalisation Fund. A new scheme could be piloted as early as 2024.</p> <p>DBT, working with HEY LEP is continuing to strengthen its partnership with the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, recent activity has included a visit by Marian Sudbury,</p>

	<p>OBE, and Director of English Regions, to deliver a key note speech at the Chamber's expo event around green energy and international trade opportunities.</p> <p>The Chamber will host an event aimed at manufacturers who are considering export on 7<sup>th</sup> November. DBT is facilitating the Chamber's engagement with the UK Export Academy. Export Bootcamp activities continue to be delivered by the Chamber.</p> <p>Devolution and International Trade: a standard international trade offer will be presented by government to newly formed combined authorities as part of any deal. Examples of this can be seen in other M/CAs such as Manchester and is likely to focus on strengthening partnerships, data sharing, and providing a lead DBT partner to develop an export plan.</p> <p>Board members thanked AF for his update and discussed the need for export to be considered at the beginning of any business start up so that future plans are in place to ease growth.</p>
7.	<p><b>ERDF Grow My SME Programme</b></p> <p>Jon Brunton presented the final outcomes and impact of the ERDF Grow My SME Programme which had been successfully delivered by partners.</p> <p>The presentation slides can be found here:</p> <p></p> <p>230906 BSB - #GrowMySME Outcor</p>
8.	<p><b>UKSPF Updates</b></p> <p>Daisy Scott-McCahill updated on HCC activity to date: the new UKSPF business support programme would fall under the 'Invest Hull' banner. Slight delays in launch have occurred due to the team working on the closure of ERDF programmes but delivery is now underway. An official launch date will be Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September where leader, Cllr Mike Ross and Assistant Director, Alex Codd will welcome businesses to a breakfast event. This will be promoted on Eventbrite shortly.</p> <p>Business support will be delivered across a range of HCC service areas including library services as well as economic regeneration. The library, for example will focus on pre-start and start up businesses helping to refine business ideas and access to knowledge and support. There will be some capital investments in business support centres to improve facilities. A robust workshop programme is under development and extension of existing programmes such as Hull Business Energy Efficiency Scheme (HBEES) will be continued. A grant programme will be available with outcomes depending on economic growth such as job creation etc. Test market grants will be available for people up to 29 years. Guidance is being developed currently on this aspect. The events programme has been worked up with ERYC and will offer much greater flexibility of access to businesses across the region. The whole programme will focus on flexibility and customer need and can respond to this without the previous constraints of - for example - ERDF funding.</p> <p>Darren Roberts reported that ERYC had made an immediate start as were not so closely</p>

	<p>involved in ERDF closedown processes. ERYC business support had received 186 new enquiries since April, these are all businesses who had not previously worked with the advisors and included a range of issues. New start up workshops are underway, offering half day activities and will be repeated across the region. Many will take place in the ER business centres, thus saving costs and ensuring equality of access across the wider region.</p> <p>Wherever possible both LAs are working together, for example if a business event is promoted and businesses based in Hull apply they are welcomed and costs for the event divided up on that basis. Board members welcomed this approach re efficiency and access to shared support.</p>
9.	<p><b>Investment related activity</b></p> <p>Phil Glover reported on recent activity which included the facilitation of several high value potential investments to the region. Access to utilities were a challenging issue given the demands on the National Grid. As such, PG had brought together interested partners from Saltend to discuss possible solutions, including a meeting with National Grid colleagues. Considerations include future potential access to energy that comes directly into the region.</p> <p>Following the publication of the NEY Net Zero funded Industrial Symbiosis (IS) Report PG had continued to work with colleagues to look at potential resources to continue this work. One proposal is to appoint a single IS coordinator to work across a wider geography with funding met by the NEY Net Zero Hub and local area contributions.</p> <p>PG is working with partners on developing a bid to pilot 5g in the Freeport geography. Government is looking to test 5g ahead of full UK adoption with an allocation of £40m across 10 trial regional areas. The opportunity was spotted by HEY LEP and HCC has submitted an EOI on behalf of partners. The bid will include Freeport sites on both Humber banks and will seek to provide a data communications platform to facilitate efficient and automated port and maritime operations. The deadline for submission is 10<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>PG has continued to work in partnership with Space Hub Yorkshire who look to develop new satellite and geospatial data markets, providing space expertise. Managed by Leeds University, successful funding bids have resulted in the appointment of roles to support activity. In addition to space research and observatory functions the Hub aims to stimulate interest in careers in the space supply chain, working with schools to raise aspirations. As part of this approach a 75ft rocket has been touring the UK and was located in Hull's Victoria Square during the 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August. Interest was high from the general public and included a virtual reality space experience.</p> <p>The North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub work continues and the LEP looks forward to the new Net Zero Coordinator taking up post from 2<sup>nd</sup> October; this post will work closely with the Hub and the two local authorities. Initial activity will include assisting the development of a Local Energy Action Plan for the region.</p>

	FDI support continues, seeing 61 business engagements to date since April, of which 13 were new engagements. Potential additional activity may include additional research into foreign owned businesses.
10.	<b>Humber Freeport Presentation</b> – postponed until next board.
11.	Chair's Summary and Future Agenda Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Export update</b></li> <li>• <b>Investment update</b></li> <li>• <b>Humber Freeport Presentation</b></li> <li>• <b>Rural business update</b></li> <li>• <b>Artificial Intelligence – changes to services for business owners at pace and discussion on how to manage these</b></li> </ul>
13.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>DH asked MM how rural businesses are managing with changes to export and finding the right staff to employ. MM said this year had been challenging with the weather and poor crop yields overall. Staffing issues remain and export has generally come down. DH suggested that we include rural as a regular part of the board to ensure we connect with all sector activity in the region.</p> <p>DH added that in manufacturing AI was rapidly changing the way services and production are managed leading to changes in staffing roles at a significant pace. This is common to all sectors and would be of interest in future board discussions.</p>
14.	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p><b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 2 pm</b>          In person, <b>venue tbc.</b></p>