

Report to: Business, Innovation and Growth Panel

Date: 26 February 2019

Subject: **Preparing for Brexit – Supporting Businesses**

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Panel on work to prepare and support the city region's businesses ahead of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

2 Information

- 2.1 At the last Panel meeting in November, an update was provided on developments in the global, national and local economies and on how the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was supporting businesses, people and communities as the UK transitions to a new trading model. This work has continued to progress, with a number of programmes, including on investment readiness and business resilience, shortly ready for delivery.
- 2.2 It is important that the LEP is well prepared to respond to the requirements of businesses as a result of Brexit, and therefore economic intelligence will continue to drive any decisions. The LEP will also continue to seek further clarity and details from central government, and ongoing discussions are taking place with government departments to ensure that the advice to businesses locally is up to date and that future decisions on national support programmes and funding is coordinated alongside local offers.
- 2.3 The Growth Service is providing intelligence into the BEIS Growth Hub Network to provide local insight and aid national Brexit preparation. The LEP website has also published Brexit guidance using .gov sources. The current "Europe Checklists" signposting on the "For Business" section of the website has now been enhanced by the addition of a dedicated "**Preparing for Brexit**"¹ **mini-hub** (this went live on the 14th January 2019); consolidating a wider range of information and support assets to business in a single resource.
- 2.4 In addition to this activity, due to the ongoing uncertainty on the process of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and the potential impact of a non-negotiated exit

¹ <http://www.the-lep.com/lets-talk-brexit/>

from the EU, it is right that the LEP also prepares what its response might be in the event of a non-negotiated exit and how it could assist businesses in the short term to overcome potential barriers and challenges, as well as maximise any opportunities. Further work is taking place to explore options for growth deal flexibility to provide Brexit specific business support products and services, particularly in the result of a non-negotiated exit from the EU. The intention is to engage with government on the basis of the preferred options, to seek the relevant flexibilities to growth deal monies and to flag the potential need for additional funding.

3 Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5 External Consultees

5.1 No external consultations have been undertaken in direct production of this report. However, external consultation, particularly with government departments, as well as intelligence gathering from businesses, has taken place on matters related to Brexit and will continue.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Panel are asked to note the work ongoing to prepare for Brexit.

7 Background Documents

None.

8 Appendices

8.1 None