
Report to: Business Innovation and Growth Panel

Date: 26 February 2019

Subject: **Business Support**

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the Panel with an update on business support activity being undertaken, including the LEP Growth Service, the Business Growth Programme, the Resource Efficiency Fund, Access Innovation, Strategic Business Growth, the Travel Plan Network and the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund.
- 1.2 In addition, to update the Panel on new and emerging business support products, including Investment Readiness, Business Resilience, Productivity Pilot and Channel 4 activity.

2 Information

Business Support Context and Strategy

- 2.1 The support provided to businesses via the LEP's products and services is complemented by a wide range of others available to City Region firms and delivered by local, regional and national partners. This includes export support from the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Chambers of Commerce, innovation support from universities, Innovate UK and the wider Knowledge Transfer Network, and finance from the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund and the Start-Up Loans Company. The private sector also plays a critical function within the support ecosystem, particularly banks and other funders/investors, and providers of professional advice and support. The figure below shows the eco-system of business support in the City Region and how this is integrated within the LEP Growth Service model.

Figure 1 : Business Support Eco-System



LEP
LEEDS CITY REGION
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

West Yorkshire
Combined Authority

- 2.2 Figure 2 below sets out a logic model for the City Region's business support provision as part of the policy framework for the emerging local industrial strategy. This also reflects the importance of providing our uniquely large SME base with a cohesive and progressive programme of support, underpinned by a continued emphasis on Digital, Innovation and Low Carbon as priority areas.

Figure 2: Business Support Policy Logic Model

Business support policy logic model

CONTEXT: The long term vision for the City Region economy is **'to be a globally recognised economic powerhouse that creates good growth, jobs and prosperity'**. Important in realising this ambition is private sector leadership driving a more productive region. The productivity gap is growing between Leeds City Region & the wider UK (& other advanced economies). This is a problem because real terms living standards can only be increased sustainably by increasing productivity. As described in the city region's policy framework, driving up productivity and growth requires an environment that enables businesses to start-up, innovate, trade and invest.

RATIONALE: e.g. There is a wealth of evidence that suggests business practice has a significant role to play in business productivity. The Leeds City Region has a productivity gap with the UK, driven by a longer tail of unproductive firms, below average private sector investment in innovation, lower levels of skills and weak competition. Business support plays a significant role in addressing these issues, providing advice, guidance, funding and mentoring to help businesses grow and become more productive, which ultimately supports increased living standards.

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
European Regional Development Fund European Social Fund Local Growth Fund BEIS (DT & Growth Hubs) LCR Business Rates Pool Innovate UK / KTN Universities / HEFCE British Business Bank & EIB Business-match	LEP products (capital grants, Access Innovation, SBG, REF, Investment Readiness, TPN, Productivity Pilot and IG Outcomes) NPIF Export for Growth Manufacturing Growth Programme Knowledge Transfer Partnerships AdVenture Digital Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses supported Grants provided Private investment leveraged Co-operation between businesses and research institutions Skills and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs created Increased exports New products to market Follow on investment Increased research and innovation Enterprises established Resource efficiency Increased skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic output Increased productivity More firms engaged in R&D Increased business scale ups Higher skilled jobs Improved living standards

EXTERNAL FACTORS: e.g. macro-economic, devolution, Brexit, national policy, business demand, other business support providers

LEP Growth Service

- 2.3 The Growth Service provides businesses in Leeds City Region with direct access to the full range of publicly-funded products and services available to help them grow and/or sustain. This includes those delivered directly by the LEP and those available via partner organisations.

Progress to date

- 2.4 Table 1 below highlights progress against the headline targets for the service in 2018/19. **Appendix 1** provides more detailed information on the scope, scale and impact of the service.

Table 1: Performance against headline targets 2018-19.

Target Measure	Target	Achieved Jan 2019
SMEs supported - light-touch & intensive (including enquiries/support from LEP products and services plus events)	2750	2236
Intensive support to SMEs by Growth Managers (ongoing support over the year i.e. several meetings, diagnosis of need, personal referral to relevant products/services, support with funding applications etc).	630	642
Intensive support to SMEs (including support from Growth Managers, and the LEP's core business support products)	900	1139
Delivery of Business Advice Pop Up events (with 7 in the 20% most deprived parts of the country)	12	10 (7 in 20% most deprived)
Proportion of businesses supported likely to recommend it	85%	86% (April 18 – Jan 19)
Service Expenditure	£600,500	£387,837

- 2.5 The service is on track to meet its annual target of supporting 2750 businesses. 2236 individual SMEs have received support since 1 April 2018, of which 642 have been intensively supported by the team of SME Growth Managers. 1139 businesses have received support from the range of LEP business support products, namely Resource Efficiency Fund, Access Innovation, Strategic Business Growth, Business Growth Programme and the Growth Managers.

Service developments

- 2.6 Feedback from businesses across the City Region about Brexit is being collated by the team and provided to BEIS on a weekly basis. This activity supports the Government's aim to capture more 'real time' intelligence from businesses about the perceived and reported impacts of Brexit. The business support pages of the LEP's website have also been updated to reflect the current Government guidance for firms on preparing for a 'no deal' Brexit – <http://www.the-lep.com/lets-talk-brexit/>. In addition, the team will shortly procure a series of Brexit 'health-check' workshops to help raise awareness about the support available to businesses, as well as facilitating peer-to-peer discussions regarding key issues, mitigation measures and potential collaborative business opportunities.
- 2.7 SME Growth Manager meetings over the last quarter featured presentations from the University of Huddersfield on the new supply chain development programme and colleagues from the Combined Authority on the new Leeds City Region Employment Hub. These meetings are held every month to support the professional development of the Growth Managers and the Gateway team, whilst building strong working links with key partners.
- 2.8 The service continues to participate in the Northern Powerhouse Growth Hub Network and the support the Better Business for All (BBFA) Regional Group, which included hosting the recent regional BBFA meeting on 16 January 2019. The SME Growth Manager attended the BBFA awareness training session workshop in the 29 January 2019 to a number of regulators better understand the role of the Growth Hubs, and the specific 'hub and spoke' model deployed in this City Region. He will also attend the business insight training for regulators on 26 March 2019 as a guest speaker.

Marketing and communications

- 2.9 The marketing strategy focuses on three priority areas, as part of a wider 'let's talk real business' marketing theme:
 - Engaging and supporting new Growth Service customers
 - Providing additional support to existing Growth Service customers
 - Developing the private sector intermediary network as a route to market
- 2.10 Ten case studies, including video case studies, have been commissioned this quarter to feature a range of businesses and sectors across the City Region that have received support from the LEP and its local and national partners. A full range of case studies can be found at <http://www.the-lep.com/case-studies/>.
- 2.11 E-marketing with more targeted content is used to help build brand-awareness and stimulate the appetite for business support. Over 12,000 business contacts across the City Region are in receipt of the SME eNewsletter on a quarterly basis. Featured content over the last quarter included promotion of the Pop Up Business Advice cafés, Travel Plan Network membership,

information for businesses on preparing for Brexit information and some of the aforementioned case studies. Please see <https://mail-the-lep.com/t/3LTT-FF17-4782RMB83/cr.aspx>

- 2.12 Social media activities underpin all of the marketing campaigns and initiatives. A social media campaign was used to promote Small Business Saturday on 1 December 2018 as well as the latest Pop Up Business Advice Café's and other district-based events. A press release on the impact of the Resource Efficiency Fund (REF) was also distributed in the last quarter and gained good traction.
- 2.13 The business support pages of the LEP website have been updated to include the latest Government guidance on Brexit preparation – <http://www.the-lep.com/lets-talk-brexit/>. Featured content about the business support available from the LEP, and its partners, is also continually updated on the Made in Yorkshire microsite and newsletter, which helped to generate interest in the recent Productivity Pilot.
- 2.14 Events continue to be an effective way for the service to promote the City Region's wide range of business support products and services. Recent events include guest speaker roles at a round table event held by one of the City Region's leading accountancy practices (24 January 2019), and at Invest in Bradford breakfast seminar (30 January 2019) attracting over 70 delegates.
- 2.15 The team of SME Growth Managers have also been proactive in coordinating/facilitating district based business engagement activities. The SME Growth Manager for the Harrogate district delivered an event in partnership with FintechNorth, through the Harrogate Digital group. It showcased the presence of Fintech businesses (large and small) in the district and was the first FintechNorth event held outside a major city. The event attracted 65 attendees. Further details can be found here <https://www.fintechnorth.uk/event/fintech-north-harrogate-forum/>
- 2.16 The Leeds district SME Growth Manager team coordinated a North Invest Funding for Innovation workshop in partnership with one of the City Region's leading accountancy practices and a private consultant. The event, held on 5 December 2018, raised awareness amongst tech business about Innovate UK funding programmes, angel investor networks and the availability of R&D tax credits to support innovation. The Leeds team also supported the 'Leeds Digital Summit' on 4 December 2018, which was attended by over 60 businesses and focused on how digital technologies are driving forward business growth and productivity.
- 2.17 Following on from the series of business weeks held last quarter in the Wakefield, Bradford, York and Leeds districts, Selby will be delivering a business week commencing 4 March 2019. The SME Growth Manager has been instrumental in coordinating this event over this last quarter and further details can be found here <https://www.selby.gov.uk/business-week>

- 2.18 The team has worked with the SME Growth Managers and local businesses to deliver 11 Pop-up Business Support Café events since 1 April 2018. The latest was delivered on 7 February 2019 in Elland, which was attended by 12 small businesses and included 38 different advice sessions equating to 12 hours of support. 60% rated the support they received as excellent and 40% as very good. The final two events of the financial year are taking place in Holmfirth (27 February 2019) and Bradford (22 March 2019).
- 2.19 The ‘Pop-Up’ model involves business experts volunteering their time to advise owners of smaller or start-up firms on such important topics as marketing, business planning and access to finance. The events have proven to be an effective and cost-efficient way for the LEP to engage with the private sector in some of the City Region’s more outlying and disadvantaged areas. **Appendix 1** also provides further information about the impact of the events.

Business Growth Programme (BGP)

- 2.20 The BGP provides grants of between £10,000 and £250,000 to businesses in the City Region towards capital investment (land, building, plant, equipment, machinery) that will lead to new job creation. Grants contribute up to 20% of the total cost of an investment, with businesses needing to demonstrate that they have access to the remaining finance required.
- 2.21 An additional £7m has been secured for the programme from the Growth Deal allocation. This was approved by the Combined Authority on 13 December 2018 and takes the total allocation to £49.7m. Of this, £5.38m is being used to provide match-funding for four projects being supported by the European Regional Development Fund (Access Innovation, Strategic Business Growth, Digital Enterprise and Ad:Venture). Table 2 below presents progress on BGP since LGF funding commenced in April 2015.

Table 2: Programme performance against headline targets

Target Measure	6-Year Target (April 15 to March 21)	Achieved (as of Jan 19)
Expenditure	£44.32m	Committed - £31.26m Actual - £27.28m
New Jobs Created	4,100	Committed – 5,180 + 1,693 safeguarded Actual – 3,556 + 1,682 safeguarded
Businesses Supported	No contractual target	Committed - 569 Actual – 499
Number of Grants Awarded	765	Committed - 671 Actual – 586
Public/ Private Sector Leverage	£168.5m	Committed - £330.6m Actual - £260.1m
Total Cost Per Job	No contractual target	Committed - £6,034 Actual - £7,670

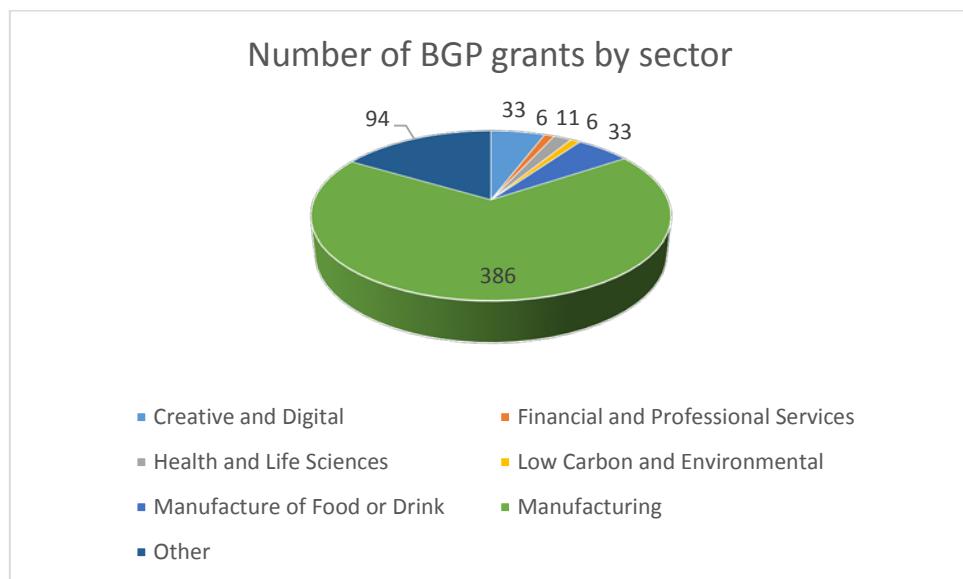
- 2.22 As the above table highlights, the programme is achieving a good return in terms of cost per new job at under £8,000. This figure would be lower if the 1,682 actual safeguarded jobs were included in the overall calculation and would equate to £5,207 per job.
- 2.23 The table below compares the proportion of SMEs per district within the City Region against the proportion of all grants awarded. It shows that West Yorkshire districts (particularly Calderdale and Kirklees) all perform well in terms of successfully accessing the programme, but that the North Yorkshire districts have a proportionately lower take-up rate. This can be partly attributed to the relatively low number of manufacturers in North Yorkshire and the existence of a similar grant scheme in that area.

Table 3: Grant awards by district since April 2015

District	Share of BGP Grants	Share of the City Region Business Stock
Leeds	30.0%	26.8%
Kirklees	18.8%	13.5%
Bradford	16.3%	14.5%
Wakefield	9.8%	9.5%
Calderdale	11.3%	7.5%
Barnsley	6.5%	5.9%
Harrogate	3.9%	8.5%
Craven	1.8%	3.2%
York	1.4%	7.2%
Selby	0.5%	3.4%

- 2.24 The below chart presents the number of grants awarded via sector, and highlights the continued importance of the programme to the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 68% of all grants awarded since April 2015. The next most popular sectors are Food and Drink and Creative and Digital, each with 6% of awards.

Figure 2: BGP Grants by Sector since April 2015



Productivity Pilot

- 2.25 The Call for projects under the Productivity Pilot opened on 17 September 2018 and closed on 14 December 2018. As endorsed by the BIG Panel at its May 2018 meeting, the pilot invited businesses to submit applications for capital grant investment that will result in measurable productivity improvements and activities, but that do not require net additional jobs to be created within the business. The pilot was allocated £500,000 ring-fenced from the overall BGP allocation.
- 2.26 11 applications were received in total with a combined investment value of over £7.5m and a combined grant request of just under £600,000. All of the applications were from manufacturers spread evenly across the City Region, with nine from SMEs and two from large businesses (over 250 employees). They were considered in early January 2019 by an appraisal panel, which included private sector representation from the BIG Panel and a senior representative from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, along with officers from the Combined Authority and Leeds City Council.
- 2.27 The panel scored all of the applications based on the submitted productivity plans, which required the applicants to clearly set out how they currently measure productivity in their business, how they intend to measure productivity following the capital investment projects, how the capital investment projects will boost productivity in the businesses, and what additional, complementary activity the applicants will undertake to maximise the positive impact of the capital investment.
- 2.28 A more detailed report on the status of the applications will be provided at the next BIG Panel meeting in May 2018.

Resource Efficiency Fund

- 2.29 The Resource Efficiency Fund (REF) is being delivered through the Growth Service until October 2019 as a key product to improve productivity and efficiency for SMEs in the City Region. It is jointly funded by the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and provides advice and funding (grants of up to £10,000) to SMEs to identify and implement improvements related to their use of resources i.e. water, waste and energy. An outline business case for a successor project was submitted in response to the last EDRF Call for Projects in late November 2018, and is currently in appraisal. A linked proposal was also submitted to a call in York & North Yorkshire LEP area to replicate the project in that region.
- 2.30 As of January 2019, 537 businesses had engaged with the project, with 522 having received visits from the two REF Managers. These have resulted in 287 assessments being commissioned and the completion of 274 assessment reports. 121 grant applications have been approved, and payments totalling £678,644 having been made to 101 businesses. Progress is in line with contractual targets.
- 2.31 Projects approved since the last meeting of the BIG Panel have mostly been in the areas of basic heating, lighting, insulation and compressor investments. However, there has been one energy management system project and a project to automate boiler dosing to increase process water heating efficiency. To date, total estimated carbon dioxide (CO2) savings across all approved projects stands at 2,047 tonnes per annum, with estimated savings to the recipient-businesses of £500,780 per annum.

Access Innovation

- 2.32 Access Innovation is being delivered across the City Region with funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Local Growth Fund. Its primary objective is to help SMEs to become more productive and competitive through the development of new products, processes and services. The programme links SMEs directly to specialist expertise and facilities within research intensive organisations, such as universities, Catapult Centres and some private sector specialists. It provides advice to businesses on which organisations can support them with their innovation activities, and also grants of between £5,000 and £30,000 towards the cost of working with the relevant expert organisations.
- 2.33 To date, the programme has engaged with 479 SMEs, 248 of which have received one-to-one support from the three Innovation Growth Managers, resulting in detailed action plans for taking their innovation projects forward. 45 applications for grants have been approved to date with a collective value of £1,739,892. A further nine applications totalling £139,144 have been received and are currently being appraised. A number of other applications of varying sizes are currently being developed with support from the Innovation Growth Managers.

- 2.34 The highest number of enquiries and approved applications to date are from the healthcare and life sciences, manufacturing and digital sectors. The programme team continue to build strong working links with organisations in these sectors, including Innovate UK, Knowledge Transfer Network, local Manufacturing Alliances, National Physical Laboratory, Digital Catapult, Centre for Process Innovation, Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, Translate/Grow Med-Tech, the Yorkshire & Humber Academic Health Science Network and universities within and outside the City Region.
- 2.35 Referrals into the programme are from a number of sources, particularly the City Region's universities, other LEP business support products and through attending a number of local and regional conferences and networking events.
- 2.36 As part of the Access Innovation programme, the Combined Authority has appointed RTC North to support SMEs to increase their innovation capacity. RTC commenced delivery of its range of specialist workshops and advice sessions in November 2018, and so far over 60 SMEs have been supported, with over 50 more signed up. The provision will run until autumn 2019 and will provide the programme with a stronger pipeline of innovation-ready SMEs for Access Innovation and other complementary products available in the City Region.
- 2.37 In response to the interim evaluation, and the team's experience to date of delivering the programme, the Combined Authority submitted an outline business case on 23 November 2018 for European Regional Development Funds. This is for a successor programme to commence on completion of Access Innovation in December 2019. The working title for the programme is 'Connecting Innovation', to signify the importance of connecting ideas and links between partners, and connecting SMEs with funding and support from across the regional and sub-regional innovation eco-system. The Panel will be kept appraised of the application's progress, and feedback from the innovation discussion item at the November 2018 meeting will be incorporated within the full business case submission.

Strategic Business Growth – support for SMEs with high growth potential

- 2.38 The £6.75m Strategic Business Growth (SBG) project is being delivered by the LEP and its appointed contractor, Winning Pitch. It is also part-funded by ERDF and LGF and provides small, ambitious businesses with a package of tailored support to help them achieve their growth potential. This includes one-to-one business coaching, one-to-many workshops on key areas of business growth and an important peer-to-peer element that allows businesses to share their experiences and expertise, and identify collaboration opportunities.
- 2.39 Ongoing analysis on the coaching support requested by SBG clients to date has identified the three most common areas where support is requested as: process improvement, growth strategy and marketing/sales respectively. 230 businesses are now fully engaged with the support available, including 186 that have developed detailed growth action plans with their allotted account managers. Of these, 137 have benefitted from a combined total of over 5,500 hours of further coaching support and 56 have attended on

average two or three of the 32 workshops available. The three most recently delivered workshops (delivered in Selby, Wakefield and Calderdale respectively) covered: - ‘honest conversations’ with staff and customers, scaling-up to the level of growth and accessing external finance. These workshops have been consistently rated as very good or excellent by the attendees. The support provided to date has already led to the creation of 242 jobs and the introduction of 22 new products.

- 2.40 As of January 2019, 31 grant applications had been approved for businesses across the City Region representing all of the priority sectors of the current Strategic Economic Plan (Low Carbon & Environmental, Finance & Professional, Digital & Creative, Food & Drink, Health & Life Sciences and Manufacturing). The grants are contributing to investments in new machinery and the fit-out of new premises, with over 150 new jobs expected to be created as a result. The combined value of the 31 investment projects is over £3.4m, with the grants contributing £805,000. Of these, 19 had completed their investments by the end of December 2018, providing over £1.35m of private sector match in the process.

Investment Readiness and Business Resilience

- 2.41 The new £1.4m Investment Readiness project is on target to commence delivery from April 2019 onwards for three years. It will provide SMEs across the City Region with advice and guidance on the full range of finance products available in the marketplace, and will assist them to access the finance they need to grow and/or sustain their operations. The support will be accessed via the Growth Service and will be a new referral product for the Growth Managers, as well as for all business support professionals working on other projects e.g. Export for Growth, Manufacturing Growth Programme and the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund. A tender opportunity for the appointment of a main contractor will close in February 2019.
- 2.42 Following direction from the Panel at its last two meetings, a new Business Resilience project is under development with delivery expected to commence in early 2019/20. The project will be an extension of the current Growth Manager function, and will aim to put some of the City Region’s larger SMEs in stronger positions to benefit from future challenges and opportunities via more intensive account-management.
- 2.43 The above will include Brexit-related matters, but will also cover other new and emerging factors that firms may need to prepare for, such as property requirements, clean air legislation, major infrastructure schemes and ongoing changes to the national living wage. The project is currently subject to a £1.6m application to the European Regional Development Fund, with match-funding required from the Combined Authority and the City Region’s Local Authorities via the current Growth Service funding arrangement.

Travel Plan Network

- 2.44 The Travel Plan Network (TPN) provides its business members with expert advice and guidance on implementing sustainable travel solutions, including discounted public transport offers, cycling initiatives and relocation support. 74 new members have been recruited since April 2018 against a target of 80 for 2019/20, and total membership now stands at 429 businesses that employ almost 300,000 staff between them.
- 2.45 Shared travel plans are being developed at ten multi-occupied sites as part of an Interreg European-funded project (Share North). This is helping employers at the sites adopt collaborative approaches to encourage modal shifts within the commuting patterns of their employees. A series of free car park management workshops have been commissioned as part of a package of support to these sites, with additional places being offered to other TPN members. Two sessions have been delivered throughout January 2019 at Leeds City College and Next (South Elmsall site) with a further four planned to take place throughout February and March 2019.
- 2.46 The TPN team continues to promote various sustainable travel campaigns, initiatives and offers to network members via monthly news updates. Campaigns over the last quarter include:- City Connect's Love to Ride Winter Wheelers challenge <https://www.lovetoride.net/cityconnect>, Pink MCard Christmas campaign www.m-card.co.uk/pink-suits-me/ and liftshare's small change campaign <http://blog.liftshare.com/liftshare/a-small-change-campaign-win-1-x-annual-cinema-pass-terms-and-conditions>. Members have also been directed to wider business support provision, including pop-up business advice café events, and have also been encouraged to participate in consultation exercises involving major travel schemes throughout West Yorkshire.
- 2.47 Peer to peer support is being encouraged to help businesses implement sustainable travel solutions within their organisations. For example, Leeds-based Opera North have been showcased within the network as an exemplar of best practise around cycling initiatives. The organisation has also agreed to support others to learn from their approach.
- 2.48 Relocation support remains a major element of the TPN's activity, with current examples including Premier Farnell and HMRC. Preparations are also underway to support the imminent relocation of Channel 4 employees to the City Region.

Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund

- 2.49 The Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF) formally launched on 22 February 2017, and has since invested £17.65m of funding in 84 businesses in Leeds City Region. £1.22m has been invested in 33 businesses via the micro fund, £10.33m has been invested in 40 businesses via the debt fund, and £6.1m in 11 businesses via the equity fund.

2.50 NPIF promotion has continued by both the appointed fund managers and the British Business Bank with extensive networking and attendance at key events. The focus continues to be private sector professional intermediaries (e.g. banks, accountants and solicitors), business membership organisations and the LEP Growth Service to continue to widen awareness of, and participation in, the fund. This activity is contributing to the high level of take-up in the City Region, which has so far received 18% of total enquiries resulting in 25% of all applications to the fund across the North.

Channel 4

- 2.51 Following the successful attraction of their National HQ to Leeds, Channel 4 held their first Board meeting in the city in January 2019. Channel 4 also hosted a briefing for commissioners which was well attended by the screen industries sector. A separate networking event was also held which attracted over 200 businesses and stakeholders from the Leeds City Region. The first Channel 4 Partnership Board meeting also took place in January 2019, which brings together partners from across the region to oversee the delivery of initiatives that will support the establishment of Channel 4's National HQ and build capacity in the TV and Screen Industries sector.
- 2.52 The LEP and its partners are now developing and re-purposing a package of business and skills support that is more tailored to the needs and growth opportunities of the screen industries.

3 Financial Implications

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

4 Legal Implications

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

5 Staffing Implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6 External Consultees

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken specifically on this report.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Panel notes the progress made to date on delivery of the above business support projects, programmes and services.

8 Background Documents

None.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – LEP Growth Service Performance Update