

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BUSINESS INNOVATION AND GROWTH PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2019 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Andrew Wright (Chair)	Reliance Precision
Martin Booth	Witt UK Gp
Mike Danby	Advanced Supply Chain Lead
Amir Hussain	Yeme Architects
Will Roebuck	E-Radar
Phillip Wilson	Slipstream Design
Simon Wright	Yorkshire Bank
Councillor Mohammed Iqbal	Leeds City Council
Councillor Peter McBride	Kirklees Council
Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw	Bradford Council
Sandy Needham (Advisory Representative)	West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
Professor Lisa Roberts (Advisory Representative)	Leeds University
Mark Robson (Advisory Representative)	Department for International Trade
Marie Gilluley (Advisory Representative)	West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges

In attendance:

Sue Cooke	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Smyth	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Bowes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Henry Rigg	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
David Shepherd	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Kearns	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

38. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Byford, Collins, Pandor, Lee and Miller as well as Lee Savage, Nicola Greenan, and Dr Peter O' Brien.

39. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared by members at the meeting.

40. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items requiring the exemption of the press or public at the meeting.

41. Minutes of the Meeting of the Business Innovation and Growth Panel held on 27 November 2018

Resolved: That the minutes of the Business Innovation and Growth Panel meeting held on the 27 November be approved.

42. Chair's Update

The Chair began by noting that Sue Cooke, Executive Head of Economic Services, was leaving the Combined Authority after 10 years supporting the LEP. The Chair and the Panel thanked Sue for all her hard work and wished her the best in her new role.

The Chair also welcomed Alan Reiss, Director of Policy Strategy and Communications and Ian Smyth, Head of Economic Policy to the Panel.

The Chair also provided an update on the progress of the LEP merger.

43. Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy

The Panel considered a report about the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy – and the process underway to develop this.

The Panel supported the focus on developing a robust evidence base. The Panel further emphasised the importance of reaching local communities through the engagement process – towns and villages as well as the major centres.

Resolved: That the BIG Panel notes progress made and endorses the proposed way forward on development of the evidence base.

44. Trade and Investment

The Panel received a presentation on the work of the trade and investment team. The Presentation outlined key aims for the forthcoming year and a review of the previous year. The main aims for the 2019/20 year included:

- A concerted effort to attract a greater spread of inward investment across the Leeds City Region.
- An increased focus on emerging markets particularly China and India.
- Refinement of Key sector messages and more focus on core sub sector strengths
- Increased focus on academia and innovation.
- A more campaign-led international place marketing strategy.

Members supported the closer collaboration with universities and the health sector. The Panel also discussed the importance of forming closer relationships with the districts to produce a more co-ordinated messaging around place.

Resolved:

- (i) That the BIG Panel comments on the proposals for the forward plan of activity for 2019/20
- (ii) That the BIG Panel notes the progress made to date on delivery of the above.

45. Preparing for Brexit - Supporting Businesses

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the ongoing work to support business in City Region as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

Research carried out in December 2018 showed:

- 61% of respondents have devoted management time to considering the implications of Brexit on their business.
- 10% of businesses have made changes in response to Brexit.
- 60% of businesses were not planning any changes.

This ongoing work includes the provision of information via dedicated pages of the LEP Growth Service website, which provide guidance to businesses around preparing for Brexit.

The Panel was informed about the preparations to provide support for businesses in the event of a non-negotiated exit from the EU, which included the possibility of Growth Deal flexibility to provide Brexit specific business support.

Resolved: That the ongoing work to prepare for Brexit be noted.

46. Business Support

(a) Growing Places Fund & Business Investment

The Panel considered a report which discussed the future use of returned funds from the Growing Places Fund and the future role of the LEP in making business investments.

In order to develop the two products further it was proposed that engagement with external stakeholders, development of internal capacity and soft product testing of the existing market be undertaken. It was also suggested that a working group be established with representation from business to report to the BIG Panel regarding the development of the two products.

Resolved: That a working group be established with representation from business from BIG Panel.

(b) Review of Inclusive Growth for Business Grants

The Panel considered a report which provided a review of the Inclusive Growth criteria for the Business Growth Programme (BGP). The Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that inclusive growth commitments be extended more widely to the grant elements of all business support programmes.

Since the introduction of the new criteria in July 2018, 172 new jobs have been created via the capital grants, of which 140 will pay the Real Living Wage or above.

The Panel discussed the scope of extending the inclusive growth criteria to other grant schemes and to grants of all values. Concerns were expressed regarding a possible disincentive effect on businesses applying for smaller grants.

The Panel discussed the need for more evidence around these concerns, and felt that the current £50k+ limit for when grant-recipients must commit to an additional inclusive growth action remained appropriate, but that strong encouragement and support should be provided for all grant-recipients to make a contribution. The Panel was clear that the principle of proportionality should be integral to the approach i.e. the lower the grant award and the smaller the business-recipient, the less the required commitment from the recipient, and vice-versa regarding large grants and larger businesses. It was suggested that feedback could be sought from business which could reassure the Panel regarding the possibility of extending the inclusive growth criteria to other grant schemes.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress to date on the implementation of the new inclusive growth criteria and commitments to the BGP and gives a steer to the LEP board as whether they should be continued
- (ii) That the Panel considered the recommendation from the Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that inclusive growth commitments be considered for the grant elements of all business support programmes, and at all grant amounts.