

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BUSINESS INNOVATION AND GROWTH PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2019 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Simon Wright (Chair)	Yorkshire Bank
Martin Booth	Witt UK Gp
Nicola Greenan	East Street Arts
Amir Hussain	Yeme Architects
Councillor Mohammed Iqbal	Leeds City Council
Councillor Peter McBride	Kirklees Council
Councillor Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Council
Sandy Needham (Advisory Representative)	West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
Professor Liz Towns-Andrews (Advisory Representative)	University of Huddersfield

In attendance:

Mark Roberts	Beer Hawk Ltd
Andrew Latchmore	Shulmans
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Henry Rigg	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Bowes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Hopton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Emma Longbottom	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Jonathan Skinner	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Vincent McCabe	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Kearns	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Wright, Councillor Tim Swift, Councillor Andrew Lee, Councillor Darren Byford, Mike Danby, Will Roebuck, Phillip Wilson, Peter O'Brien and Lisa Roberts.

48. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

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

50. Minutes of the Meeting of the Business Innovation and Growth Panel held on 26 February

Resolved: That the minutes of the Business Innovation and Growth Panel held on the 26 February be approved.

51. Chair's Update

The Panel was updated on the progress of the LEP merger between the Leeds City Region LEP and the York and North Yorkshire LEP and informed that a report would be taken to the Leeds City Region LEP board on the 6 June which would detail the latest position.

52. Economic Reporting

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the latest economic and business intelligence.

The Panel discussed the potential impact that Brexit could have on businesses in the region with 61% of respondents having devoted management time to consider the potential impact of Brexit. It was noted that while this figure was encouraging, it meant that a significant amount of business had not considered the implications of Brexit.

Resolved: That the analysis presented in the economic update and dashboard be noted.

53. Local Industrial Strategy Development

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the development of the Local Industrial Strategy. The Panel was informed that instead of a joint Local Industrial Strategy with York and North Yorkshire the development of a separate Local Industrial Strategy was now underway. This would allow a more focussed approach to local distinctiveness and more engagement with local businesses.

The Panel was presented with the emerging evidence base particularly around innovation and productivity and Panel members were asked to provide feedback on some of the strengths and opportunities across of the region.

In addition the Panel noted the intention to set up a steering group to oversee the development of the LIS as well as the aim to establish working groups to provide challenge and support regarding policy priorities. Panel Members were invited to be involved in the groups and additionally to facilitate engagement with a diverse range of business groups.

Panel Members discussed the report and the following points were made:

- The importance of capturing the distinctiveness of the Asian business community in the region.
- That the diversity of the business activity across the region was a key strength.
- The importance of infrastructure and skills to support growth.
- The challenge of reaching businesses which did not habitually engage with the LEP.
- The needs to link the Local Industrial Strategy into the Government's 'Grand Challenges' and tell a coherent story about the region's strengths.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress made developing the Local Industrial Strategy be noted and the proposed way forward be endorsed.
- (ii) That the Panel provide feedback on the strength, assets and opportunities across the geography, particularly relating to the Business Environment and Ideas elements of the LIS.

54. Innovation

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on plans to embed innovation into the Local Industrial Strategy and the wider policy framework and was provided with a presentation regarding the emerging findings of an investigation into the City Region's innovation performance.

The Panel also discussed the 'Connecting Innovation' programme which was under development and Panel Members were asked for their input.

Resolved: That the findings and the Panel's feedback on next steps be noted.

55. Business Productivity Activity

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the activity being undertaken to improve productivity and promote key characteristics of high performing firms.

The Panel was updated on the progress of the Productivity Pilot and informed that seven applications had been recommended for approval, and were now in delivery. Detailed findings and feedback on the pilot would be reported to the Panel upon the completion of the investment projects – expected by the end of Summer 2019), and thereafter for up to 24 months in relation to the impact on productivity.

The Panel welcomed the update and reiterated its support for the Pilot which Members felt filled a gap in business support by focussing on improved productivity as opposed to job creation. Members were keen to undertake another pilot later in 2019 / early 2020 when further detail on the impact of the current one is available.

The Panel was also updated on the Business Basics competition which aimed to improve productivity in mid to low productivity firms. It was agreed that the draft messages which would be sent out to business owners/managers would be circulated to Panel Members for comment and feedback.

Resolved: That the progress made on activity to improve business productivity, specifically the Business Basics Fund and the Productivity Pilot, be noted.

56. Trade and Investment

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the trade and investment activity which had been undertaken.

Resolved: That the report on the progress made to date be noted.

57. Business Support

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on business support activity being undertaken.

The Panel discussed the Business Growth Programme and in particular the proposed changes to the guidance and criteria, following recent consultation with the Business Investment Panel. It was noted that the feedback from the Business Investment Panel was included at Appendix 2.

Regarding the productivity focus of the BGP, members felt that it was right that fit-out / refurbishment costs should remain eligible but that the proportion of the project related to fit-out / refurbishment costs should be capped. Members suggested that a cap at 50% of the total project costs was a workable option, as was reducing the intervention rate fit-out / refurbishment costs by 50%. Officers were asked to undertake some scenario planning to determine the most efficient and business friendly approach for consideration by the LEP Board in July 2019.

Resolved:

- (i) That the progress made to date on the delivery of business support projects, programmes and services be noted.
- (ii) That the Panel's feedback on the proposed changes to the guidance and criteria for the Business Growth Programme be noted and used to inform proposals for consideration by the LEP Board in July 2019.

58. Preparing for Brexit

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the ongoing work to prepare business ahead of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The Panel noted the proactive proposals for two business support programmes, Investment Readiness and Business Resilience, as well as the

options endorsed by the LEP board in March 2019.

Resolved: That the report be noted.