

**Unconfirmed Minutes of SEM's Growth Hub Board Meeting
25th June 2024 12:00-13.30
Via Teams**

Attendees:

Rachel Mallows, Chair
David Sheridan, Deputy Chair
Ruth Roan, SEM Growth Hub Manager
Irene Okere, SEM Project Officer (Minutes)
Emma Panter SEM Senior Administrator
Eleanor Karklas Bedford Borough Council
Sayma Khanom, Central Bedfordshire
Paul Thompson, SEM Employment and Skills
Jennifer Thomas, FSB
Sarah Ellwood North Northamptonshire Council
Pim Van Baarsen, Silverstone Technology Cluster
Vicky Hlomuka – West Northamptonshire Council
Zaman Rizwana, Luton Borough Council

Apologies:

Justine Ives, Bedford Borough Council
Justin Richardson, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
Debbie Poole-Hunt, Luton Borough Council
Ian Achurch, North Northamptonshire Council
Helen Miller, University of Northampton

	Item	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>RM welcomed everyone to the online meeting. Key discussion was around the Voice of Business and an update on the setting up of the Business Board and the Membership of the SEM Growth Hub board.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest to share.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of meeting held on 10th April 2024</p> <p>There were no amendments to the previous minutes.</p>	
4.	<p>Business Board Update – Emma Panter</p> <p>EP gave an overview of the of setting up of the Business Board and its remit which was agreed in February 2024 Central Area Growth Board meeting following government guidance (December 2023).</p>	

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	<p>The Business Board is to play an important role in shaping future economic strategy and ensuring that regional priorities align with the needs of businesses within the region.</p> <p>This board would be accountable to Central Area Growth Board with a geographical coverage of all 6 Authority areas .</p> <p>Meeting – est 4x per year and board membership could be up to 2 consecutive 3 year terms</p> <p>No legal status = Informal partnership</p> <p>Proposed membership of the board</p> <p>Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1+ Business representative organisations 3+ Key growth sectors 1+ Rural Business representation 1+ SME representation 1+ Large business representation 1+ Education representation 1+ VCSE representation 1+ Local business board representation 1+ Representative from relevant pan regional partnership body <p>Time line of activity</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="316 1263 1257 1715"> <tbody> <tr> <td>9th July 2024</td> <td>Central Area Growth Board Meeting to approve Terms of Reference and Recruitment process</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W/C 22nd July 2024</td> <td>Launch Board Recruitment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W/C 12th August 2024</td> <td>Closing Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W/C 19th August 2024</td> <td>Shortlisting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W/C 26th August 2024</td> <td>Due Diligence</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W/C 2nd September 2024</td> <td>Interviews of Prospective Members</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W/C 9th September 2024</td> <td>Appointments</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October 2024</td> <td>First Business Board Meeting</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>JT : Good board would have a wide representation on it and there is transparency in the recruitment process on to the board and asked if there will be an opportunity for businesses to put themselves forward.</p> <p>EP: Indicated on the launch of the recruitment, the adverts and the marketing will be shared with partners to share with their organisations, groups or social media so anyone interested could apply.</p>	9th July 2024	Central Area Growth Board Meeting to approve Terms of Reference and Recruitment process	W/C 22nd July 2024	Launch Board Recruitment	W/C 12th August 2024	Closing Date	W/C 19th August 2024	Shortlisting	W/C 26th August 2024	Due Diligence	W/C 2nd September 2024	Interviews of Prospective Members	W/C 9th September 2024	Appointments	October 2024	First Business Board Meeting	
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	<p>DS was concerned the recruitment period was too short and the launch being over the summer holidays, when most people will be away.</p> <p>RR asked if there was an Officer representation attached to this board and if the GH manager would be a member of this board.</p> <p>EP clarified that an officer role had been considered for the Business Board and would be an observer role and not a member of the board.</p> <p>RM inquired if the Chair of the Growth Hub board will automatically be a member of the Business Board or will the Business board be appointing the chair of the Growth Hub Board?</p> <p>EP: Currently the business Board will nominate the chairs of the various groups that will sit on the Business board but still open for discussion.</p> <p>PVB: Mentioned greater clarity was needed around which group does what and where this board can add value to ensure the right people are involved.</p> <p>A diagram that outlines the various groups and bodies the growth hub interacts with and/or reports to.</p> <div data-bbox="323 1169 975 1780" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Central Area Growth Board (CAGB)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Advisory groups</div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 50%;">CAGB local authority officers group</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 50%; background-color: #a0c0ff;">Economic Growth / Business Board</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;">Any other officer groups</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Growth Hub board Careers Hub steering group</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Other business advisory and engagement groups</td> </tr> </table> </div>	CAGB local authority officers group	Economic Growth / Business Board	Any other officer groups	Growth Hub board Careers Hub steering group	Other business advisory and engagement groups	
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5.	<p>Core Functions of the Growth Hub – Jennifer Thomas</p> <p>JT shared with the board Growth Hub priorities that had been discussed at previous board meetings and welcomed comments from members on these priorities.</p> <p>EK iterated the Growth Hub is vital in providing business support to businesses in Bedford Borough as the council do not have the resources to provide this support. Its role as being the one stop shop for start up and scale up business and signposting businesses for the appropriate support is really important for the region.</p> <p>SE agreed with EK about the North Northamptonshire council not having the capacity or resource to provide business support to businesses in their area</p> <p>PVB agreed Growth hub being a one stop shop makes it easier for businesses rather than engaging with difference agencies for support.</p> <p>RM stated the importance of the Growth Hub was meeting it's contractual targets as well as supporting businesses in the 6 LA's, as the main priority of the Growth Hub</p> <p>DS mentioned prioritising the challenges businesses face which should be a priority, such as skills shortages, finding property and the cost of it for businesses that are expanding.</p> <p>RR added the Growth Hub was a resource and an asset to the region and encouraged partners to see it as adding value rather than competing with them on their programmes.</p> <p>EK mentioned that the main role on the Growth hub was operational as compared to the Business board which is shaping future economic strategy of the area. The focus of the GH board should be working in the local areas to support businesses.</p>	
6.	<p>Economic Strategy Refresh</p> <p>Paul Thompson updated the meeting on activities and will continue to circulate the data to all partners to make informed decisions. He supports the local Skills Improvement Plan in partnership with the Chambers of Commerce which has identified the following gaps in provision and an action plan to fill these gaps. The LSIF is focusing on these 4 areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Digital • Green Skills • Employer engagement 	

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	<p>Colleges have created a website representing all the colleges, which has become a portal for employers in the area.</p> <p>A condition for funding for the Skills and Employment after the dissolution of the LEP was to provide an Economic Strategy within the next 6months. A report will be submitted to CAGB to approve the approach which includes the Local Industrial Strategy and the Economic Recovery Strategy in July 2024.</p>	
7.	<p>Growth Hub Performance Update – Ruth Roan</p> <p>Slide set circulated. Refer to the full details within.</p>	
8.	<p>Board Membership – Rachel Mallows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Hub board membership currently mainly local Authority representation with little business inclusion. • Proposed to increase business representation by inviting some members of the Business Engagement Group to join the board. <p>JT agreed to increased representation of Business on the board but suggest taking a wider view on the invitation and not limiting it to the members of the Business Engagement Group.</p>	
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>It has been proposed the new branding for the Growth Hub will be “South Midlands Growth Hub”. RM suggested maintaining the logo as major rebranding would lead to businesses getting confused and may reduce engagement. The board agreed to send an email to CAGB to express these concerns.</p> <p>In the absence of any other business, RM thanked everyone for attending.</p> <p>Next meeting to be 18th September 2024 in person.</p>	