

Growth Hub: Planned new support programmes

Report to the Business Development Board, 20 February 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1. This paper provides an overview of the Business Support Programmes that are currently being developed by Hull City Council and the Humber LEP on behalf of the Humber Local Authorities.

1.2. All programmes will be branded 'Humber Business Growth Hub' and will deliver support Humber wide.

2. ERDF Funded Business Support Programmes

2.1. Investment Readiness Programme

2.1.1. The programme will deliver intensive Investment Readiness support through a network of specialist advisors and an associated small grants scheme that will cover up to 40% of the eligible costs of SME projects which enable them to become investment ready. It will also include the delivery of a range of workshops on a variety of themes linked to investment readiness.

2.1.2. The three year scheme will provide a programme of interventions aimed at enabling SMEs to become investment ready and access the opportunities for growth afforded by the right package of finance. It will:

- Enable SMEs to take full advantage of the growth opportunities provided by the right package of finance
- Provide targeted grants (up to 40% of eligible costs) where part of a specific growth and investment strategy
- Assist SMEs to understand investor requirements and develop corresponding strategy/business plans
- Assist SMEs to understand and negotiate the financial support landscape
- Provide specialist/experienced financial advice in relation to company growth plans
- Support the assembly of tailored packages of finance to aid SME growth and expansion
- Grow awareness and understanding of the various finance options available including equity finance
- Signpost to other relevant support, expertise and development opportunities

2.1.3. Humber ESIF Investment: £1.56m. Total project: £2.6m

2.2. ICT Support Programme

2.2.1 This programme will deliver a range of interventions aimed at enabling SMEs in the Humber to create and/or adopt new products and processes, improve productivity and business resilience by utilising ICT more effectively to support business growth.

2.2.2 The programme builds on and extends the proposed digital coaching project recommended by the Digital Sector Group and endorsed by the Business Development Board.

2.2.3 It will encourage and support the uptake of digital technologies, build business confidence in the use of such technologies and extend understanding of how digital technologies can be employed to solve business problems and deliver increased business competitiveness. This will be achieved by delivering the following activities:

- One-to-one advice to determine the needs of the client and to develop an action plan of support required to achieve the objectives including use of a 'Design Sprint' methodology to support businesses to explore growth opportunities and resolve barriers to growth through use of ICT and digital technologies. This will be delivered both through the provision of additional business advisors in the Humber, as well as by providing access to technical expertise which will be commissioned by the programme
- A comprehensive programme of workshops / masterclasses, delivered by industry experts including the opportunity to showcase new and emerging technologies
- Voucher support to SMEs based on projects identified through one-to-one advice and support from specialist ICT Advisors
- Broadband vouchers to cover part of the cost of upgrading to faster broadband – focusing on micro and new start businesses

2.2.4 Humber ESIF Investment: £2.06m. Total Project: £3.43m

2.3 Business Growth Programme

2.3.1 This programme will significantly enhance and provide additional resource to support the Business Growth activities currently delivered by the Humber Business Growth Hub. It will encourage and support businesses to grow and develop by delivering the following activities:

- One-to-one advice to determine the needs of the client, including a detailed diagnostic and development of an action plan of support required to achieve growth objectives
- A comprehensive programme of workshops / masterclasses, delivered by industry experts across a range of topics (see below)
- Sector Development and Supply Chain activity
- A Leadership Development programme for leaders and managers within SMEs with a potential for growth
- Voucher support to SMEs based on projects identified through one-to-one advice and support
- Electronic delivery – suite of webinars, online content, masterclasses available through the Growth Hub Website

2.3.2 The programme will focus on delivering support in the following areas:

- Business model, culture and structure
- Business Planning
- Marketing and communications
- HR and Recruitment

- Improving market and customer awareness and understanding
- Sales process and pitch
- Pricing
- Supply Chain and Procurement
- Resource Efficiency

2.3.3 Humber ESIF Investment: £2.49m. Total Project: £4.16m

3. Issues for consideration by the Business Development Board

- 3.1. If all three of the bids above are successful, this will be £6m of new support obtained by the LEP and partners to be delivered under the Growth Hub banner over the next 3 years – representing a major expansion of what the Hub can currently offer. This in turn will raise the profile of the Growth Hub and help it to support more businesses in the future.
- 3.2. The three bids have been developed in accordance with the priorities previously identified by the Business Development Board, Digital Sector Group and wider LEP.
- 3.3. The restrictions that come with EU funding mean that the programmes must meet certain requirements, but the LEP and the Growth Hub will want to ensure as always that as much of the “wiring” is hidden as possible and they do what business requires. Therefore, it is important that we continue to have business input into the design of the services as they develop.
- 3.4. As we plan the implementation of the offers above, the board is invited to comment on:
 - Their priorities and any specifics they would like to see delivered under the headings above
 - How we can ensure the marketing of the programmes is effective so we reach the businesses they are designed to help
 - How we can deliver the maximum impact from the investment we are working to secure