

May 2020

Chief Executive's Update

Purpose of Report

To provide LEP Board Members with a general update on activity being undertaken by the LEP outside of the agenda items under discussion.

1. Establishment of a Covid-19 Economic Response Group

The Mayor has established a Covid-19 Economic Response Group comprising key stakeholders and anchor institutions. A number of LEP Board members are included on the group; including both Vice Chancellors and the LEP Chair.

A sub-group chaired by the LEP Chair has also been established to bring together all of the business representative organisations in the region. Membership of this group comprises the Chambers of Commerce, FSB, MakeUK, CBI, Manufacturers Forum, the British Business Bank and the TUC.

2. Northern Powerhouse 11

The LEP Chair and the Chief Executive continue to meet regularly with the NP11 Board and Chief Executives Group to discuss the Northern business response to the economic crisis and the wider work programme incorporating trade and investment, clean energy, supply chains and innovation. The SCR are taking a lead role in the wider economic response work at the Northern Powerhouse level.

3. Business engagement

To augment the insight from the Economic Response Group and the business sub-group some LEP board members will be conducting a series of around fifty 1:1 meetings with a range of businesses to get a deeper understanding of the challenges they're facing, recovery plans and their views of support on offer.

4. Covid-19 Skills Bank changes

The SCR has introduced two new strands of activity to the Skills Bank programme:

- A suite of on-line training programmes to support businesses as they make changes to day-to-day operational practices
- Rapid Response for specialist workforce development for those businesses who are directly contributing to the government's Covid-19 strategy, including business that are switching production to ventilators and PPE. Working with the supply chain to increase their range of remote access/online training provision.

5. Growth Hub mobilisation

As expected there has been increase in the volume of enquires – and a shift in the nature of those enquires, including for example an increase in enquiries such as asking for a facilitation role around helping provide PPE.

The Growth Hub response includes:

- Developing a new “Re-start to Growth” Initiative - repurposing business support package to focus on businesses looking to restart/repurpose / continue to trade.
- The initial creation of Coronavirus specific mini-site on the Growth Hub website.
- Drafting of content for business support information packs (e.g. CBILS / BBILS) for use by comms / marketing teams to then create the outward business comms and publication on the website
- Creation of new search facility for Covid related support on the Growth Hub Knowledge Bank portal and addition of new support schemes
- Creation of new search facility for Covid on the online and interactive Growth Hub events calendar.

The Growth Hub team are also heavily engaged in wider coordination groups, including participation in weekly calls with NP11 groups, Y&H Cluster, the National Network, as well as other groups to understand their challenges, share experiences and develop better approaches.

It is expected that BEIS will provide additional resources to all growth hubs for this financial year – with a principal focus on enabling additional ‘on the ground capacity’.