

MCA - BUSINESS RECOVERY AND GROWTH BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2021 AT 2.00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING



Present:

Mayor Ros Jones CBE (Co-Chair)	Doncaster MBC
Neil MacDonald (Co-Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Councillor Jim Andrews BEM	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Glyn Jones	Doncaster MBC
Sharon Kemp	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Denise Lelliott	Rotherham MBC
Richard Stubbs	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Councillor Paul Turpin	Sheffield CC
Alexa Greaves	Private Sector LEP Board Member

In Attendance:

Helen Kemp	Director of Business & Skills	MCA Executive Team
Rachel Clark	Assistant Director Trade & Investment	MCA Executive Team
Joseph Quinn	Innovation Project Director	SYMCA Executive Team
Muz Mumtaz		MCA Executive Team
Sue Sykes	Assistant Director - Programme and Performance Unit	MCA Executive Team
Charli Taylor	Head of Controls	MCA Executive Team
Bev Foster		MCA Executive Team
Stephen Burrows	Senior Business Development Manager	MCA Executive Team

Apologies:

None received

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

An extended welcome went to Alexa Greaves (Private Sector LEP Board Member and Chair of the Growth Hub Board). It was noted that Alexa had been invited to today's meeting in connection with the Business Support Funding and Evaluation agenda item.

Apologies were noted as above.

2 Declarations of Interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

Members declared interests in respect of item 9 regarding schemes in their own council areas.

3 Urgent items / Announcements

None.

4 Public Questions of Key Decisions

None.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021 be agreed as a true record.

6 Business Support Funding and Evaluation

H Kemp introduced a report informing the Board that funding for 16 RAP Advisors, through Gainshare, to deliver emergency business support across the South Yorkshire region, in 2021/22 was due to expire by the end of March 2022.

The report provided an evaluation of the current provision for business support, funded by the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), and included some comparisons to other models of delivery and how they are funded, in other city regions. The paper also provided several options on the future provision for delivering and funding business support in the future (post March 2022) with some key recommendations provided to the Board.

The report recommended that the Board support option 3, which is an enhanced business support delivery model, including an in-house team of business advisors (funded through the MCA's grant allocation from BEIS), working closely with up to 16 RAP Business Advisors (funded by Gainshare), to deliver comprehensive and coordinated business support to local businesses within each local authority area and across the region.

A Greaves reported that the Growth Hub Board fully supported option 3 and the recommendations contained in the report.

H Kemp reported that a fundamental review of the business support landscape was scheduled to be undertaken early in the New Year.

The review would be driven by the Growth Hub Board to identify if there are any gaps in the business support provision provided, and also to ascertain if there is any duplication occurring with regard to the business support provided to local businesses by the MCA and the local authorities.

The recommendations arising from the review would be presented to the Board in due course.

The Board welcomed and indicated their support for a review taking place around the business support landscape.

The Board noted that alternative sustainable funding would need to be identified and accessed to ensure intensive business support provision continued beyond March 2023. The Board queried when work would commence to identify a sustainable funding solution.

In response, M Mumtaz said that, as part of the business support review, the funding landscape could also be considered. He suggested that the business mapping and funding solution element could be commissioned to an external consultant. He welcomed feedback from the Board.

In response, the Board considered that the review should be undertaken in-house, if it was feasible, and if there were resources and expertise available.

Mayor Jones asked that any areas of duplication, especially around the use of CRM systems and system methodology be identified within the review.

Mayor Jones added that, the current arrangement of RAP Business Advisors allocated to the local authorities worked well, but for consistency of employment contracts, she believed that they should all be employed by the MCA.

The Board felt that the recruitment of up to 4 in-house advisors needed to be fully justified.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to support Option 3 as set out above.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Recommended to support the continued provision of RAP Business Advisors for a further 12 months, following the expiration of the current funding at the end of March 2022.
- ii) Recommend to the MCA Board that the redeployment of Gainshare for business support, from other budgets, be used for funding, subject to the MCA's internal assurance processes being undertaken.
- iii) Support Option 3 (subject to future funding provision being agreed) as the preferred method for delivery. Option 3 is an Enhanced business support delivery model, including an in-house team of business advisors (funded through the MCA's grant allocation from BEIS), working closely with up to 16 RAP Business Advisors (funded by Gainshare), to deliver comprehensive and coordinated business support to local businesses within each local authority area and across the region.

Support a fundamental review of the business support landscape being undertaken early in the New Year.

7 Business Growth Projects

This item was exempt by virtue of Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

A report was submitted which provided an update as to the current approved projects pipeline and wider investment team activity to stimulate interest in the South Yorkshire region. Changes in project status and additions since the October update were highlighted.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the report.

8 Business and Skills Structure Update (verbal)

H Kemp presented the Board with details of the draft structure of the MCA Business and Skills directorate.

The Board noted that four hubs had been created under the MCA Business and Skills directorate, which included: Trade and Investment; Skills and Employment; Development & Business Support Programme; and Innovation.

The final structure would be presented to the Board and local authorities in due course.

In response to a question from Councillor Turpin, H Kemp confirmed that a paper around establishing an Innovation Board was scheduled to be presented at the January meetings of the MCA Board and LEP Board.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the update.

9 Programme Approvals

A report was considered which detailed the results of the assurance processes undertaken on three proposed business investments totalling c. £4.35m and requested entry onto the pipeline for one business investment.

It was recognised that whilst one of the proposals met the threshold for consideration for investment, there was currently only Gainshare funding available to support the proposals.

The report requested that the Board approve all recommendations subject to funding availability and the applicant having their private sector match funding in place. All projects would be considered for funding or financing arrangements that allow the MCA to share in the value that its investment generates. This may be achieved through profit shares, shares from uplift in local taxation, or providing interest bearing loan finance.

The Board considered:

1. Progression of “D0012 – “UK Operations Growth Plan” to the MCA for full approval and award of £1.75m to a Barnsley based company subject to

funding being available.

2. Progression of “D0027 – Glide Acceleration” from Strategic Business Case (SBC) to Full Business Case (FBC) for a Sheffield based company.
3. Progression of “D0028 – Research Centre of Excellence” from SBC to FBC for a Sheffield based company.
4. Acceptance onto the pipeline for “D0034 – Community Project”.

Full details of all the projects were contained within the report and the Board considered each project separately.

In relation to project “D0012 – “UK Operations Growth Plan”, the Board recommended that a value share arrangement should not be entered into, until discussions had taken place with the MCA Board, in consultation with the local authorities to agree if a policy should be implemented with regard to value share arrangements.

In response to questions raised by the Board, it was confirmed that discussions were taking place with projects sponsors in the pipeline around grant vs loan funding options. It was noted that an Investment Strategy would be presented to the MCA Board in the New Year, which would address Gainshare funding and how this will be accessed for supporting local businesses in the future.

RESOLVED – That the Board:

- i) Recommended progression of “D0012 – “UK Operations Growth Plan” to the MCA for full approval and award of £1.75m to a Barnsley based company subject to funding being available.
- ii) Recommended progression of “D0027 – Glide Acceleration” from Strategic Business Case (SBC) to Full Business Case (FBC) for a Sheffield based company.
- iii) Recommended progression of “D0028 – Research Centre of Excellence” from SBC to FBC for a Sheffield based company.
- iv) Recommended acceptance onto the pipeline for “D0034 – Community Project”.

Recommended that officers should seek as strong a deal as possible with regards to loan and overage.

Workplan Review (verbal)

H Kemp provided Members with an overview of the Board’s Work Plan.

The Work Plan contained details of the agenda items which would be considered at future 2022/23 Board meetings.

An additional Board meeting had been arranged for Wednesday 12 January 2022 to consider project approvals. The next regular Board meeting would be held on Thursday 10 February 2022.

The Board requested that a schedule of future meeting dates for the remainder of 2022 be arranged as soon as possible.

H Kemp acknowledged the Board's request.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the update.

11 **Any Other Business**

The Board noted that Helen Kemp would shortly be leaving the MCA. On behalf of the Board, N MacDonald thanked Helen for all her hard work and wished her all the very best for the future.

N MacDonald closed the meeting and wished Board Members a very happy Christmas. He thanked Members for their input and support at Board meetings throughout the year, which was very much appreciated by the Co-Chairs.

In accordance with Combined Authority's Constitution/Terms of Reference for the Board, Board decisions need to be ratified by the Head of Paid Services (or their nominee) in consultation with the Chair of the Board. Accordingly, the undersigned has consulted with the Chair and hereby ratifies the decisions set out in the above minutes.

Signed

Name

Position

Date