

BUSINESS GROWTH BOARD

25th February 2020

Growth Hub Full External Evaluation

Purpose of Report

To provide assurance to the Business Growth Thematic Board of the performance of the SCR Growth Hub following receipt of the externally commissioned Impact Evaluation, reviewing Growth Hub impact against the 2016 business plan and national comparators.

Thematic Priority

1. Ensure new businesses receive the support they need to flourish.
2. Facilitate and proactively support growth amongst existing firms.

Freedom of Information and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme

Recommendations

The Business Growth Board:

- endorse the evaluation outcome, and
- consider and agree the recommendations and any matters arising from the evaluation and the on-going work on the SEP related to the business growth programme

1. Introduction

- 1.1** When awarded, the SCR Growth Hub was designated as a national demonstrator, with the request we conducted detailed evaluations on the delivery model and the impact of the Growth Hub on businesses.

A full review of the SCR Growth Hub was undertaken by Regeneris Consulting and published in July 2018. This first review focused primarily on the efficacy of the Growth Hub delivery model and operational processes and the extent to which the organisation was meeting its stated aims and objectives.

As per our evaluation programme, we have now concluded a second Impact evaluation focusing on the quantitative and qualitative impacts of the Growth Hub. This has been undertaken by Carney Green.

- 1.2** The impact evaluation sought to review the Growth Hub's original remit and any changes made to understand:
- What impacts Growth Hub activities have contributed to, and how these can be measured, evidenced and demonstrated;

- How the Growth Hub can change and improve its measurement and evidencing of its outcomes and impacts;
- Demonstration of impacts of the SCR Growth Hub in the context of the SCR SEP, using appropriate national measures of impact;
- Exploration of what level of additionality the Growth Hub has truly achieved in the support it has provided;
- Comparison with similar Growth Hub evaluations

This work will aid discussions on any developments to be made as part of the agreement on the business programme in the new SEP.

2. Proposal and justification

2.1 The presentation attached at appendix A summarises the findings from the impact evaluation, the full report is available in the Members reading pack, and in accordance with LGF requirements will be made publicly available.

The headlines in summary are that:

- Set against the outputs set out in the Full Business case from 2016, the Growth Hub has exceeded or is set to exceed all agreed targets;
- The Growth Hub performs exceptionally well in comparison to other Growth Hubs being placed by BEIS in the upper quartile of the highest performing Growth Hubs;
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Overall the evaluation concludes that the performance represents a significant achievement both in terms of comparative performance with other Growth Hubs (considered within this study) also against the Growth Hub's own targets detailed in the full business case (2016) and the contribution towards regional targets overall.

2.2 A number of recommendations and some areas for improvement are identified in the report, these are summarised as:

- The future purpose/remit of the Growth Hub should be clarified and communicated;
- The Growth Hub must become fully embedded within the SCR confirming the Growth Hub as the LEP's primary vehicle for business growth;
- Increase the volume of internal communication, focussing on impacts and achievements;
- Maximise the Growth Hub's in-house business intelligence to inform policy and product commissioning;

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

3.1 An evaluation of Growth Hub performance is a requirement of BEIS. SCR did not have the expertise or capacity to run evaluations internally and favoured an external commissioned evaluation to ensure there was independence and transparency.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report

4.3 Risk Management

This report is a summary of an external evaluation and as such no risk analysis has taken place or deemed necessary.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

No requirements associated with the endorsement of this paper.

5. Communications

5.1 It is anticipated that the findings of the report will be communicated appropriately upon agreement by this board.

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 Appendix 1: SCR Growth Hub Evaluation Slide Pack

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: