

Appendix 3 – Detailed Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed following consultation within the MCA and with partners/stakeholders:

- Funding should be allocated from the Specialist Framework budget (which was unspent) to fund the RAP business advisor provision for a further 12 months, whilst other alternative external funding sources are explored. Shared Prosperity and other national funding regimes may be available from 2023 onwards.
- In terms of the type of delivery model, Option 3 – the Enhanced Delivery model provides a medium to longer term solution to delivering business support in South Yorkshire, which could be scaled up, if further/external funding were secured in the future. This option addresses the absence of any generalist business support provision managed by the South Yorkshire combined authority – with the recruitment of up to 4 inhouse business advisors/business partners with both responsibility for providing general advice and guidance to businesses across the region but also working closely with local authority partners – through a business partner model, to coordinate local business support and referrals. However, there is a caveat, which is the securing of BEIS funding for 2022 – 25 (3 year settlement) which is due to be confirmed/finalised by early January 2022. If the level of funding is similar to the current levels then an inhouse team of 4 staff could be recruited.
- Business support provision delivered by RAP Advisors should include jointly managed by the Growth Hub and local authority partners, with time allocated to each partners priorities. This approach would allow specialists to be deployed in any local authority across the city region rather than being restricted to one area.
- The current Bloom based contract for procuring business advisors should be phased out over a period of 6-9 months, due to the costs and inherent inflexibilities. This time period would allow for the implementation of a new procurement framework to be established, which current RAP Advisors could migrate onto and new specialists could join, based on the needs of South Yorkshire businesses.
- All key performance data that measures and monitors business support activity which is funded by SYMCA (from either Gainshare or BEIS funding) should be inputted into the Growth Hub's CRM by RAP Advisors, consultants or contractors delivering the service. Appropriate training and licenses would be provided to facilitate this.
- Online business diagnostics tools should be commissioned and deployed via the Growth Hub's web portal, encouraging businesses to use these tools to help determine their needs so that the Growth Hub can offer a more tailored business support and referral to the most appropriate programmes. This would greatly increase the productivity of the Growth Hub, allowing advisors to focus on providing solutions to businesses rather than initial diagnostic work.