



## **GROWTH HUB FUNDING TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs)**

### **SCHEDULE 3 - PRINCIPLES OF FUNDING (2018-2019)**

#### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

To build on the success of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs) the Government recognises that local economies are reliant on strong businesses to provide sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation. Growth Hubs (led and governed by LEPs) have been a central instrument in achieving this goal.

It is for this reason that through the Industrial Strategy the Government has announced its intention to ensure that all businesses in every region have access to a local Growth Hub. We want Growth Hubs to carry on building their reach, developing peer-to-peer networks, connecting businesses to the best support available from the private and public sectors and to target support on those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow. The following 'principles of funding', therefore reflect these ambitions whilst also acknowledging the Government's commitment to greater devolution of the tools of economic growth and productivity to local areas.

Through these 'principles of funding' Government will seek to ensure that all Growth Hubs across England offer a consistent, quality and output driven service to business and ensure that core Growth Hub services are prioritised on those activities with the greatest impact on business growth, supporting delivery of local Strategic Economic Plans and the Industrial Strategy. This will also provide LEPs (including those in City and Devolution Deal areas) with the freedom and flexibility needed to 'blend' and 'evaluate the impact', of new and innovative local business support solutions around a core offer.

#### **REQUIRED ACTION**

For LEPs to consider the 'principles of funding' set out below and provide responses to a number of key questions which will enable the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop and issue formal grant offer letters.

To note that as in previous years, grant awards will provide LEPs with revenue funding, which can only be spent on core Growth Hub delivery and development activities and cannot be used to make direct grants to business.

Responses should ideally not exceed 300 words per question, but please feel free to attach any supporting documents that would be of interest to BEIS e.g. organisational charts, presentations, evaluation reports etc.

Completed templates should be returned to [Growth.Hubs@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Growth.Hubs@beis.gov.uk) and [Karen.Hopwood@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.Hopwood@beis.gov.uk) by no later than **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018**.

## SCHEDULE OF WORK

As part of the wider offer for Local Growth Deals, Government is also providing revenue funding to LEPs in 2018-19 for Growth Hubs. This schedule of work will enable LEPs to meet the Governments 'principles of funding,' which are as follows:

### **Principle 1 – Management, governance and coordination**

Growth Hub remains under direct leadership and governance of the LEP, under oversight of the LEP Accountable Body (AB) and that all appropriate LEP governance, transparency and accountability arrangements are in place and aligned and compliant with the national LEP Assurance Framework.

1. What approach will the LEP and Accountable Body take to governance in 2018-19 to ensure that the Growth Hub remains under the direct leadership and governance of the LEP and under oversight of the Accountable Body? To include confirmation that all appropriate LEP governance, transparency and accountability arrangements are in place and compliant with the national LEP Assurance Framework.

The Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP Assurance Framework was updated in February 2018 to fully comply with the revised National Assurance Framework. The statement incorporates the relationship between BTVLEP, our Accountable Body (Buckinghamshire County Council) and the Buckinghamshire Growth Hub operated by Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF), a copy of this framework can be seen via the attached link on the BTVLEP website <http://buckstvlep.co.uk/about-btv/open-and-honest-communications>

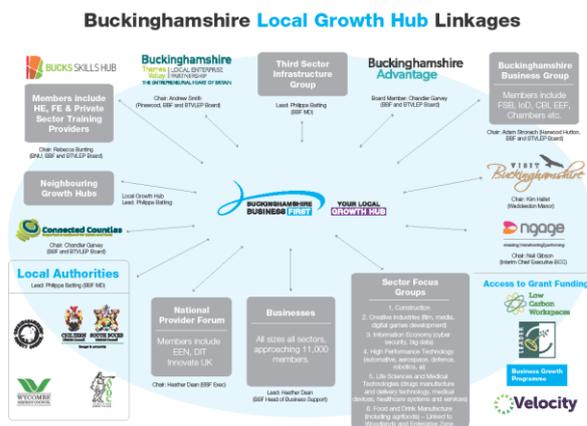
In line with the Assurance Statement, BCC monitors and controls the release of funding to BBF on the basis of evidence of expenditure incurred on a monthly basis, all payment is made in arrears.

The Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Hub provides updates on delivery and activity focus for every LEP Board meeting and Philippa Batting attends all BTVLEP Board meetings as the GH representative with ability to bring GH insight to all conversation / debate. The BTVLEP Chief Executive (or alternate) attends all BBF Board meetings which are held on a bi-monthly basis. In addition there are Growth Hub planning meetings that happen on a bi-monthly basis which include representation from BTVLEP, the University of Buckingham, Buckinghamshire New University, University Campus Aylesbury Vale and all local authorities. All meetings are minuted.

2. Which local stakeholders, partners and businesses will be involved in the governance of the Growth Hub in 2018-19 and how will any potential conflicts of interest be managed? Please attach a diagram illustrating the structure where available.

The Buckinghamshire Growth Hub is represented at all BTVLEP Board Meetings by the BBF Chief Executive Philippa Batting; the S151 Officer of the Accountable Body Richard Ambrose is always in attendance at these Board meetings as is the Leader of the Accountable Body Councillor Martin Tett (as a BTVLEP Board member). At all of these meetings an update on growth hub impact and performance is presented, these meetings also present the opportunity for quarterly submission reports to be scrutinised ahead of final submission.

All BTVLEP Board meeting , BBF Board meetings and GH planning meetings start with declarations re: conflicts of interest and a register of interests is published on the BTVLEP Website <http://buckstvlep.co.uk/about-btv/open-and-honest-communications>



3. What approach will the LEP and Accountable Body take to ensure compliance with funding requirements (e.g. high level of scrutiny of spend; quarterly claims submitted to BEIS in a timely fashion alongside associated evidence of defrayal; timely notification to BEIS of potential underspend and provision of end of year audit report)?

The Growth Hub will submit claims for actual expenditure incurred monthly in arrears to the accountable body (Bucks County Council). The accountable body approves payments on receipt of invoices and where necessary challenges variances with the BBF. The accountable body will compile quarterly claims for submission to BEIS along with evidence of defrayal.

The Accountable Body and the LEP monitor the Growth Hub financial activity using SAP accounting system. The Accountable Body produces a monthly monitoring report for the BTVLEP. This report includes an Income and expenditure statement for the Growth Hub and highlights the monthly position for the Growth Hub and any actions required to ensure expected performance is in line with targets. The BTVLEP/ Accountable Body and BBF Finance teams liaise on a regular basis to ensure activity is in line with expectation.

The accountable body will provide an end of year audit report signed in accordance with relevant instructions.

If there are any indications that actual year end expenditure incurred will be less than predicted BEIS will be notified at the earliest opportunity.

4. What approach will the LEP take to ensure management and key delivery roles are appropriately resourced to ensure that the Growth Hub has the capacity and capability to deliver its contracted objectives, business outputs and intended impacts?

A senior LEP Executive is always in an attendance at all Growth Hub planning meetings and the MD of the Growth Hub attends weekly BTVLEP Exec team meetings where she is able to present weekly updates to the other members of the BTVLEP Senior Executive team.. Any deficits in resource within the Growth Hub or significant variances from anticipated delivery will be picked up

from these meetings.

As mentioned previously the BTVLEP CEO (or alternate) attends all BBF Board meetings and at an operational level the BTVLEP Executive Team are represented through the Partnership Manager on the steering group of a number of Growth Hub programme boards including the Growth Team, Low Carbon, Broadband and Rural Programmes.

In total, a monthly time allocation of 60 hours, incorporating management, research, finance & marketing support is provided in the oversight of the Growth Hub Service in Buckinghamshire.

5. Growth Hubs are currently embedded within LEPs Strategic Economic Plans. Please confirm what plans will be put in place to embed the Growth Hub within any forthcoming Local Industrial Strategy (aligned to the National Industrial Strategy)?

The Industrial Strategy is highlighted within the Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy 2017 – 2050, where it describes in detail how the Growth Hub will work in order to ensure alignment with the national strategy – in effect this provides the basis for a more detailed Local Industrial Strategy and is currently in development.

In its recent plan for supporting businesses in 2018/19, Buckinghamshire Business First reviewed how it is working and aligned its work so that it is more closely associated with the pillars of the Industrial Strategy.

The Buckinghamshire Business First GH provides the business engagement interface in the Bucks Thames Valley LEP area and regularly hosts round table / think tank events which provide effective forums to consult with businesses for input into all aspects of a localised industrial strategy.

6. What plans will be put in place to enable the LEP and/or any external Growth Hub providers and partners to work proactively together to leverage additional sources of public and private sector funding and other resources to demonstrate coordination, alignment of business and enterprise support to add value and further enhance the Growth Hub offer e.g. EU funding, HEFCE, Local/Combined Authority, private sector contributions etc.?

The BBFGH has, over many years, worked with a range of public and private sector partners on the development and delivery of projects which leverage additional external funding as a result of core GH funding. The funding has come from a wide variety of sources including the EU and UK national programmes.

The funding model developed have allowed for the creation of a range of business support and enterprise activity that creates local synergy in delivery and adds local additionality to the Growth Hub for the benefit of the SME community.

Recently the model has allowed for the use of SME committed resources to match fund a range of

funding opportunities presented via the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP ESIF Growth Programme. (ERDF and EAFRD)

The SME match approach also allows for the BBFGH to be in the position of being able to match core activities to other funding applications being presented by local project partners including HE and the County Council.

Recent ERDF calls in the County have allowed the Growth Hub to work from an early stage on developing project ideas with local partners that will help to ensure the delivery of cost effective benefits and the appropriate use of funds.

With the BBFGH's reach into the SME community (currently actively engaged with approaching 11,000 businesses - 34,000 businesses registered in the county) we are a natural "partner" for any local authority, HE or the LEP when they are looking at putting in funding applications, and in many ways it is the Growth Hub that drives the external funding agenda and acts as the broker between potential project partners. The LEP has been pro-active in its approach and written in the requirement to engage the support of the BBFGH into all the projects it has funded from its GPF / LGF allocation that involve SME development and support.

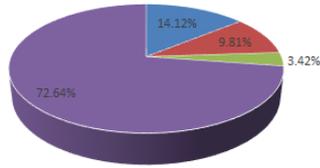
Project updates and the identification of forthcoming funding opportunities are discussed at weekly BTVLEP Exec team meetings which the GH attends

A number of new proposals have recently been submitted for funding which allows for the creation of an Innovation Service for the County, an extension to the local Growth Programme of account management and investment readiness support and a programme of ICT support for local SMEs so they can gain the skills they need to develop their digital / IT business model. Each of these projects have been driven by the Growth Hub and brought in additional delivery and funding partners from both HE and the LA. (bid values £3.4m)

To support full transparency, audit adherence and project delivery the BBFGH have fully operational project / financial support systems that have been designed to ensure that funding bodies get the information required to support claims for funding and outputs. The systems include guidance on branding, procurement as well as financial information and the use of timesheets. As such these systems allow the BBFGH to demonstrate that not only does it understand the SME market and have good access to it but it is also aware of funder requirements for robust project management, monitoring and contribution.

In 2018/19 it is proposed that the GH funding of £287,000 will be used alongside funding from Bucks County Council (BCC) of £413,000 and SME funding of £100,000 to leverage in additional funding from partners. The bulk of the leveraged funding requires match in order to be able to draw down the funds. BCC, BEIS and SME funds are used as match and in 2108/19 will bring in leverage of £2,124,147 project income to deliver support in areas of such as high growth, low carbon, investment readiness and rural diversity away from prime production.

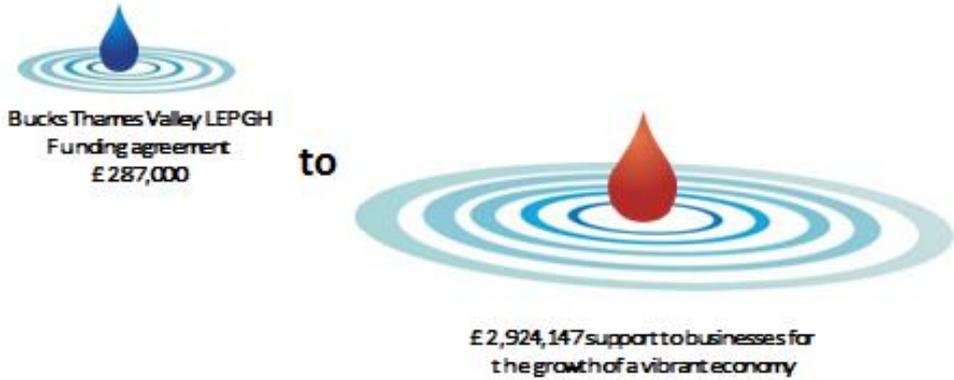
**BBF 2018/19 Business Plan Income**



- Bucks County Council
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (via BTVLEP)
- Member income / coinvestment
- Project income (leveraged from EU, UK gov't & other stakeholders)

Income	2018/19	
Bucks County Council	413,000	14.12%
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (via BTVLEP)	287,000	9.81%
Member income / coinvestment	100,000	3.42%
Project income (leveraged from EU, UK gov't & other stakeholders)	<u>2,124,147</u>	72.64%
	<u>2,924,147</u>	

This funding model sees £9.18 leveraged from other funders for every £1 invested by BEIS (via the Bucks Thames Valley LEP) to deliver on the government’s objective of a thriving economy



## **Principle 2 - Data, monitoring, reporting, valuation and value for money**

Compliance with new Growth Hub '**Metrics and Evaluation Framework**' agreed between Government, the What Works Centre and LEPs. Using robust monitoring and evaluation systems to exercise continuous service improvement; ensure excellence in quality delivery and deliver greater levels of impact on business growth.

The LEP must commit its Growth Hub (including any external providers) to use common metrics and evaluation approaches as set out in the new Framework. This will include provision by the LEP to BEIS of **aggregated** Growth Hub performance data on a bi-annual and end of year basis for all interventions regardless of level of intensity.

The LEP will also be expected to submit **non-aggregated** (firm level) data to BEIS on an annual (and ad-hoc) basis for all medium and high intensity diagnostics and interventions (including provision of primary unique business identifiers e.g. Companies House Registration Number or VAT/PAYE and postcode) to enable BEIS to undertake an overarching evaluation of the performance, outputs and impact of all Growth Hubs.

In addition, the LEP will be expected to produce an end of year evaluation of the impact of the Growth Hub and publish the results in an Annual Review of the Growth Hub's performance and impact which will be shared with BEIS by the **31<sup>st</sup> May 2019**.

7. What systems will be put in place to ensure that the Growth Hub (including any externally contracted delivery agents/brokers) fully complies with the data collection and reporting requirements set down in the new 'Metrics & Evaluation Framework' including indicators that relate to levels of business awareness, engagement, transformation, value for money, outputs and impact?

**Note:** New Growth Hub Metrics & Evaluation Framework to be developed and agreed in discussion with LEPs and Growth Hubs by the **30<sup>th</sup> March 2018**.

BTVLEP will ensure that the Buckinghamshire Growth Hub managed by BBF will comply with the refreshed metrics once they are released at the end of March.

The Metrics and Evaluation Framework will first be reviewed by the Head of Operations and Head of Business Support. We will translate the specific measures into a working document that reflects the data collection and data entry required by our CRM system. Our CRM Executive will ensure the appropriate fields and data structures are in place within the CRM. He then builds the reports used for the monthly review and analysis. The Head of Business Support cascades the specific delivery requirements to the delivery teams and highlights any additions or changes from previous years. This framework will then be used as the basis for the regular updates to the BTVLEP Executive Team and subsequently to the BTVLEP Board.

8. What systems will be put in place to ensure robust and quality driven data capture and reporting to BEIS of **non-aggregated** (firm level) data for all businesses receiving medium-intensity and high-intensity diagnostics, support and advice e.g. in each instance this must include accurate capture of Companies Registration Number or

VAT/PAYE and postcode as the primary unique business identifiers .

Data collection forms identify the key items of data that need to be collected for all medium and high intensity businesses – both online and offline versions of these forms. A monthly review of the outputs is undertaken and of the associated data to identify gaps and discrepancies. A process exists to revisit this data to collect any missing items using a range of sources such as Companies House, DueDil.com and working directly with the business. A postcode lookup tool is used to ensure the correct postcode is entered into the system.

All data previously submitted to BEIS has been reviewed by the internal data team to identify gaps and inconsistencies – including looking at Company Name, Address & Postcode and Company Registration Number. The records identified were then compared with external datasets such as Companies House or DueDil.com to complete or correct the missing/incomplete data. Additionally, the Business Support team have received additional feedback and training to ensure they understand the priority data items and the correct format for these as well as useful sources of reference to verify/collect the data.

New fields have been added to the CRM system to allow the capture and storage of a broader range of unique identifiers such as PAYE number or Unique Taxpayer Reference. Further refinements of the CRM system have been undertaken to improve the storage of data on outcomes, referrals and financial performance.

9. What Growth Hub service delivery and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed with BEIS and embedded within the LEP's performance management system?

BTVLEP will ensure that the Buckinghamshire Growth Hub managed by BBF will comply with the new KPIs once agreed with BEIS. This compliance will be managed through the BTVLEP Executive Team meetings and bi-monthly board meetings.

Note: KPIs to be defined and agreed between LEPs and BEIS by the 31st March 2018.

**Buckinghamshire Business First proposed KPIs 2018/19:**

- 28,000 'light' assists
- 2,750 'medium' business assists
- 370 'intensive' assists
- 480 jobs created
- 25 enterprises supported to introduce new products or services
- 70,000 student/employer encounters supported through working with The Bucks Skills Hub
- 6 sector groups supported through working with the Bucks Skills Hub
- 2nd Annual Brexit Summit
- An annual sector summit hosted for each of the following sectors:
  - Construction
  - Creative Industries (film, digital, media & games development)
  - Information Economy (Cyber security and big data)
  - High performance technology (micro electronics, automotive, aerospace, defence and space)

- Life Sciences & Medical Technology (drugs manufacture & delivery technology, medical devices, healthcare systems and services)
- Food and Drink Manufacture
- Tourism

The jobs created figure has reduced this year due to the emphasis now being on productivity rather than job numbers.

Buckinghamshire Business First's proposed key areas of activities for 2018/19:

- **Brexit resilience**

The significant areas of support will be:

- Business Review
- Overseas Market Review
- Financial Support availability
- Workforce Support

- **Sector support**

The significant sectors to be supported, in line with the BTVLEP's Strategic Economic Plan and Buckinghamshire's Growth Strategy will be:



- **Productivity improvement**

The significant areas of support will be focused on:

- Leadership
- Talent Management
- Planning for the future
- Innovation
- Commerce Excellence
- Operational efficiency

- **Skills / Workforce development**

The significant areas of focus will be to:

- Develop a robust supply of skilled, ambitious talent especially for priority growth sectors
- Insure employers understand apprenticeships and the associated benefits
- Signpost employers to liaise more closely with universities
- Encourage businesses' recruitment campaigns to include activities with

- schools and colleges to raise awareness of their business and careers
- Support Enterprise Adviser Network requests for business help
- Promote engagement with the Bucks Skills Show

- **Encourage Scale Up/ High Growth**

The significant areas of support will be:

- Growth Programme
- Investment Readiness Programme
- Financial Support availability
- Workforce Support

- **Improvement in the volume of businesses Exporting**

The significant areas of support will be:

- Breaking down the barriers for first time exporters
- Advice on “how” to export
- Advice on “where” to export
- Support on getting started
- Support for exporters who wish to expand

10. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub makes best use of freely available national data sets (e.g. HMRC export data) to supplement local intelligence, shape delivery of core Growth Hub services, and identify, engage and support the business target audience?

**Note:** BEIS will also explore the viability of purchasing private sector data sets centrally and issuing to LEPs and Growth Hubs under licence.

The BTVLEP Head of Research who is jointly resourced and managed by BTVLEP and BBF is responsible for the analysis of local and national economic data. The primary focus for this role is to analyse all relevant national data sets and reports and translate the information for the benefit of driving the economic growth agenda for both the BTVLEP and BBF. A comprehensive summary of the data analysis is provided for all growth hub partners and members and an in depth repository of this information is readily accessible on the BBF website <https://bbf.uk.com/news/category/reports-and-analysis>

The BBF Growth Hub will proactively work with all parties to understand the availability of appropriate data sets and to utilise these to supplement the information collected locally. BTVLEP/BBF currently subscribe to both DueDil.com and CoStar. We have actively used the Scale Up data from the Scale Up Institute to identify Scale Up businesses in the patch and to match these with local records and activity.

This evidence is being used to identify growth sectors in support of Strategic Economic Plans and Growth Hub Delivery Planning Schedules. This analysis of available evidence is currently being extended to provide a robust evidence base to the emerging Local Industrial Strategy within Buckinghamshire as part of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor.

The Growth Hub has used the HMRC export/import data to identify businesses in Buckinghamshire who trade overseas. These businesses are flagged on the CRM system and can then be targeted for appropriate support, projects and activities.

Businesses in the Buckinghamshire SEP priority sectors have been flagged based on the sector and SIC codes and this was supplemented with keywords from the business descriptions. This data is overlaid with other variables such as their growth aspirations to prioritise businesses to target for appropriate activities, information and events.

The businesses are approached through targeted email communications to make them aware of resources and support that might be beneficial.

#### 11. What approach will the LEP take to ensure that the performance and impact of the Growth Hub is robustly measured and evaluated? Including areas such as value for money and short, medium and longitudinal impact on business growth

In the last quarter of 2017/18, BBF is undertaking to have a comprehensive and independent evaluation of its Growth Hub activities. This evaluation is being undertaken by Regeneris and will be made available to BEIS in May 2018. This evaluation has been the result of an extensive and robust procurement exercise and it includes: the overall aims of the Growth Hub in relation to its broader economic impact i.e.:

- To act as a First Stop Shop for any business looking for support and / or guidance
- To increase local economic growth and employment
- To support the growth of existing businesses
- To encourage the start-up of new businesses
- To increase the Gross Value Added in the region
- To create jobs that are accessible by the local community
- To decrease the no of skills gaps in the county
- To increase the number of companies engaged with the Growth Hub and its key partners.
- To act as a catalyst for businesses to network, provide mutual support and to gain more business

The evaluation will also consider the Growth Hub's effectiveness against the following principles:

- To provide strategic co-ordination and building inclusive partnerships with local stakeholders, the private sector and government.
- To maintain robust governance arrangements to oversee Growth Hub activity and ensure ongoing alignment with the LEPs Strategic Economic Plan.
- To develop a strategic approach to local business growth to enable ambitious businesses to maximise their growth potential and scale-up.
- To offer a triage, diagnostic and signposting service that joins up national and local business support (public and private), simplifying the support on offer for businesses.
- To ensure plans for the Growth Hub are deliverable and sustainable beyond March 2018 when the current round of Government funding ends, ensuring that core services continue to remain free to business at first point of contact.
- To apply the common metrics and evaluation framework to produce high-level impact data in bi-annual and end of year reporting and provide BEIS unrestricted access to firm level data for the purpose of research and analysis.

### **Principle 3 - Strategic partnerships and business support simplification**

Build and strengthen relationships with the key local players across the public and private sectors and national providers such as Innovate UK (IUK), Department for International

Trade (DiT), the British Business Bank, investors, universities and others to exploit opportunities for collaboration and to further join up and simplify the local business support ecosystem.

12. What approach will the LEP take, via the Growth Hub, to continue to develop strong, inclusive partnerships with all of the local and national players (public and private) involved in the ongoing development and delivery of the Growth Hub? This would typically, but not exclusively include the following:

**Innovate UK (IUK):**

Qtrly meetings with Colm Watling will discuss which businesses Innovate UK are working with and how the BBFGH can help support a pipeline of interest from Buckinghamshire businesses. Opportunities will actively be sought to pilot joint activity in Buckinghamshire. Invitations will be extended to GH round table / think tank events as appropriate.

**Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN):**

Qtrly meetings with Bruce McKelland will discuss which businesses the KTN are working with and how the BBFGH can help support a pipeline of interest from Buckinghamshire businesses. Opportunities will actively be sought to pilot joint activity in Buckinghamshire. Invitations will be extended to GH round table / think tank events as appropriate.

**Department for International Trade (DIT) / Enterprise Europe Network (EEN):**

Qtrly meetings with Angus Murray and Laurie Spicer will discuss which businesses DIT are working with and how the BBFGH can help support a pipeline of interest from Buckinghamshire businesses. Opportunities will actively be sought to pilot joint activity in Buckinghamshire. Invitations will be extended to GH round table / think tank events as appropriate.

**British Business Bank (BBB):**

Qtrly meetings with Lewis Springer will discuss which businesses BBB are working with and how the BBFGH can help support a pipeline of interest from Buckinghamshire businesses. Opportunities will actively be sought to pilot joint activity in Buckinghamshire. Invitations will be extended to GH round table / think tank events as appropriate.

**Intellectual Property Office (IPO):**

Qtrly meetings with Dave Hopkins will discuss which businesses the IPO are working with and how the BBFGH can help support a pipeline of interest from Buckinghamshire businesses. Opportunities will actively be sought to pilot joint activity in Buckinghamshire. Invitations will be extended to GH round table / think tank events as appropriate.

**Be the Business (Productivity Leadership Group):**

Qtrly meetings with Markus Clavin will discuss which businesses Be the Business are working with and how the BBFGH can help support a pipeline of interest from Buckinghamshire businesses. Opportunities will actively be sought to pilot joint activity in Buckinghamshire. Invitations will be extended to GH round table / think tank events as appropriate.

**Banks:**

The BBFGH works closely with all the major banks operating in Buckinghamshire. Several regional bank manager meetings are attended by GH staff to update on all business support activity on offer

that their clients can benefit from. The BBFGH runs several events either at **Bank** premises or they are invited to speak at our own 'Focus On' events. Handelsbanken are regular attenders at BBF's facilitated Bank of England lunches and all are invited (and attend) the BBF AGM as well as many of its numerous workshops and events

#### ICAEW / Accountants:

The BBFGH works very closely with the network of accountants in the county and has developed its website to facilitate meaningful referrals. The BBFGH has recently procured the services of a local firm of accountant (Harwood Hutton) with several branches in the county who are members of ICAEW, to provide an investment readiness service as part of its Growth Programme service. See leaflet for more information.



The Investment  
Readiness Service (B

#### Angel Networks:

The business support team regularly broker to various **angel networks** depending what the investment is for. Networks include OION in Oxfordshire, London Business Angels, Finance South East etc.

#### Universities/Business Schools:

There are two **universities** in the county namely University of Buckingham and Bucks New University. Rebecca Bunting is the Vice Chancellor of the latter and she sits on the board of BBF and is the chair of the Skills Programme Board and the skills lead on the board of BTVLEP. The Business Development Direct of University of Buckingham is also a board member of BBF and a member of the Skills Programme Board.

#### Business Intermediaries (e.g. Chambers, FSB etc):

BBF seeks to work together not in competition with the **Business Representative Organisations** and holds regular meetings with each and even co-brands one of its business hubs with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce. A representative from each of FSB and IoD attends the Bucks Business Group which is a meeting with Council members which takes place 3 times per year to discuss council budgets and the views of business and its effect on them. A new representative from Thames Valley Chamber is currently being sought. In addition the business support team regularly broker businesses to these organisations where membership for them would be beneficial.

#### Enterprise Zones:

The **enterprise zone** in Buckinghamshire is split into 3 different geographic areas and an Enterprise Zone Manager is employed by the LEP. The Growth Hub is embedded into the LEP contracts with each of the 3 zones in order that maximum benefit is derived by working and mutual brokerage is assured.

#### Local/Combined Authorities:

BBF holds quarterly meetings individually with all of the Districts to discuss economic development and areas of joint activity and also provides updates on Business Support and the Growth Hub activities. **All the Authorities** are invited to the Growth Hub Planning Group meetings where discussions take place to identify the gaps in business support delivered in the county and how best

to bridge them, also on how best to align current business support activity with the authorities own economic development plans. Buckinghamshire County Council also provide BBF with funding to help support its core costs in return for working with it to ensure that all economic development at the level of the business is maximised on behalf of the county and the LEP.

#### **Catapults/Incubators and Accelerators:**

Engagement with the **Catapults/Accelerators** is currently ongoing especially with that of the Satellite Applications Catapult which has a base on one of Bucks' Enterprise Zone areas and also with the neighbouring Transport Catapult. At the time of writing an event is being worked up with the Satellite Applications Catapult and both the business support and marketing teams within the Growth Hub are working to create referrals and 'joined up' work.

#### **Better Business for All (BBfA)/Regulators:**

Work is still in progress on the **Better Business for All** scheme. In July 2016, an inaugural meeting was held with all the key stakeholders in the county and a presentation was provided by Henna Prajapati of BEIS. At the meeting, it was agreed that businesses were already provided with a simple to use directory of regulators on the BBF website and whilst there was an appetite to work even more closely together than they already are, there was a general apathy in pro-actively wanting to take matters further. In recent weeks a conversation has been had with the Resilience Manager at Bucks County Council who would be happy to chair the group and together with BBF will work to try and get this group up and running in 2018.

#### **Libraries/Business & IP Centres:**

BBF has a good working relationship with **the libraries** particularly with the 2 business libraries within the county. BBF also has a small business hub based at Chesham library where any of its 11,000 business members can hot desk for free.

#### **Enterprise Agencies:**

Buckinghamshire Business First is the only significant enterprise agency operating in the County and works with other EA's from different geographies on shared priorities to get the benefit of shared experience and good practice

#### **Others (public and private):**

For the last 4 years Buckinghamshire Business First has held quarterly meetings with the following: **HMRC (Ruth Mackman), IP Office (Dave Hopkins), KTN (Bruce McKelland), INNOVATE (Colm Watling), DIT (Angus Murray and Laurie Spicer and the British Business Bank (Lewis Springer )** joined the group a year ago. All of the BBF business advisors attend and the meetings provide an opportunity to update each other on the respective current offers, allows for marketing opportunities inter-organisation to be exploited, economies of scale to be exploited, speaking opportunities to be taken up at each other's events and for each to promote and broker to the others' services. BBF facilitate these meetings and all members of the group hold them in high regard and have said they find them invaluable for their own understanding of what each other do. They also provide the Head of Business Support at BBF with a broader understanding of the totality of business support offered and taken up in the county.

**Be the Business**, recently presented at our Productivity Roundtable - Roundtables are put on throughout the year on different topics in order to garner a closer view of how businesses are feeling/ affected by/have barriers over various topics. A range of businesses are invited including members of the LEP, BBF and other stakeholder organisations in the county.

13. What approach is/will the LEP/Growth Hub take to explore opportunities for sharing office space, hot desking and other resources with local partners such as DiT, Innovate UK, the BBB and IPO where it makes sense to do so and will deliver a greater level of value for money and/or deliver greater outputs and impact for the Growth Hub? Please confirm where this is already happening.

The Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Hub currently provides hot desking facilities for its Partners and members ( circa 11,000 ) in 3 locations in the county i.e. Aylesbury, Chesham and at BBF's main offices in Saunderton. As the Saunderton base is being sold on for development as residential property these locations will be reviewed in 2018/19 and all opportunities for the sharing of office space both as identified above and with others is currently being explored. Current conversations in this regard are with University of Buckingham, Buckinghamshire New University, University Campus Aylesbury Vale and several businesses who have expressed an interest in providing some space.

DIT, Innovate UK and EEN all regularly hot desk within the BBFGH office spaces and they all hold regular clinics within the BBFGH offices. There is currently no hotdesking relationship with the British Business Bank although there is an open offer to use space if required.

14. What steps will be taken to collaborate flexibly with other LEPs and Growth Hubs, BEIS, other government departments and agencies, national and regional services (e.g. Investment Funds) and sector lead bodies to ensure that business and enterprise support interventions activities are optimised across wider geographies and to deliver increased value for money, outputs and impacts (e.g. across Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, rural networks, natural clusters etc)?

In Aylesbury Vale where there is an overlapping Growth Hub area with SEMLEP the BBFGH will seek to continue its current delivery partnership working with Velocity and wherever possible continue to be the identified 'go to' organisation for local business support in order to reduce confusion in having 2 "first stop shops" for business support.

2017/18 has seen the ongoing development of partnership delivery with Herts, the Black Country and SEMLEP on ERDF projects that support SME efficiency and low carbon workspaces. ERDF funding has also provided for specialist advisers to support key growth sectors identified in the Buckinghamshire Revised Strategic Economic Plan and this project is known as The Growth Programme. This programme works extensively with other national business support services and sector lead bodies in order to ensure continued or improved business growth.

BBF also delivers the LEADER programme in 3 geographical areas ie Northamptonshire, the rural areas around Milton Keynes, parts of South Oxfordshire and the rural areas of South West Hertfordshire. What were 3 contracts has now been rolled into one and allows BBF to gain

economies of scale and continuity of service in the 3 areas.

Opportunities will be sought to work collaboratively with other LEP geographies on Industrial Strategy themes including:

- Working with key Growth Sectors and developing strategic partnerships with those businesses where we can have the most impact on growth
- Supporting emerging technologies
- Improving access to finance for businesses
- Working with business to help develop the skills they need
- Developing supply chains and improving access to government procurement opportunities

2018/19 will bring further exploration into projects which can be delivered across various LEP geographies and opportunities for our Growth Hub and others to work collaboratively to benefit from economies of scale where shared priorities exist.

15. How will the LEP through the Growth Hub continue to simplify the local business support landscape, building on previous work undertaken to map, streamline and join-up the ecosystem for the benefit of business? How will duplication be minimised/ avoided?

As evidence previously, BTVLEP attend all quarterly growth hub meetings. These meetings provide a useful platform for business support providers to share insight and latest activity within the area. It also provides the opportunity for gap analysis and horizon scans any potential areas of duplication. In addition to this, the BTVLEP together with the Growth Hub, attend the quarterly Bucks Business Group network where the other business support organisations provide updates on their latest activities and where possible activities are aligned and joint cooperation is fostered and encouraged.

On an ongoing basis and wherever practical to do so, BTVLEP seeks to encourage the inclusion of the Growth Hub as a partner to deliver the route to market for business engagement in applications that respond to funding calls from the LEP. This allows for specialisms with other organisations to grow whilst at the same time ensuring that BBF remains the First Stop Shop for Businesses seeking support.

The independently provided report on Business Simplification in Buckinghamshire, which was written in 2015, is regularly reviewed at BBF's Planning Meetings in order to avoid any duplication in activity. However, it should be noted that there was little duplication identified at the time the report was undertaken and currently the county's offer in business support remains largely without duplication. Having said that, complacency has not set in and as the LEP area is small, we are able to identify quickly if any new activity is set up which duplicates that of the Growth Hub. The BBFGH seeks to work with, not in competition with others and undertakes to broker to the support of others where it is deemed value can be added.

16. Provide confirmation that the Growth Hub (and any local spokes) agree to embed an agreed 'strapline' within the Growth Hub website and appropriate local collateral in order that the Growth Hub Network demonstrates that the service is supported and endorsed by Government in line with guidance to be agreed between BEIS, LEPs and Growth Hubs (**by 31 May 2018**).



The current logo   is used on all marketing collateral and on the BBF website. Any new straplines provided by BEIS will be included/ substituted as necessary.

#### **Principle 4 - Triage, diagnostic and signposting**

Encourage more businesses (particularly SMEs) to take up external advice (public and private) by providing access to a free and impartial local 'single point of contact' prioritising those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow.

17. What type of Growth Hub delivery model will be used by the LEP in 2018-19 to deliver a proactive local triage and diagnostic service to all businesses in the LEP area, prioritising those with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow? Are any changes planned to the current Growth Hub delivery model?

Our model for engaging with as many businesses as possible in Buckinghamshire is based upon driving a proactive 'tiered' business engagement programme; promoting a strong 'first stop shop' proposition, utilising business intelligence to shape the development of new services and a strong ethos of partnership working.

The marketing and communications team will drive a proactive business engagement programme, which will drive up demand for both internal and external business support. The Growth Hub's business engagement programme is built around an integrated programme of permission based marketing activities, business networking and events and the promotion of a strong 'First Stop Shop' message. Becoming the trusted source of free, impartial information about the most appropriate support that is available in the marketplace is a very important component of this Local Growth Hub offer.

The Growth Hub's approach to signposting is to first understand the specific requirements of the businesses being supported. This is achieved through the application of a diagnostic/triaging process and subsequent referral to suitable business support providers. This approach to referral can range from signposting (simply 'pointing' the customer to the appropriate resource); referral (where the service provider is made aware that we have made a business aware of the service they provide); and/or active brokerage (where the business is brought in to a meeting with the Growth Hub and the selected supplier). In this way, and through ongoing use of the CRM Scale Up businesses and those identified as being potential Scale Ups will be prioritised.



Scale up.docx

The proposed scale up plan developed in 2018/19.

(embedded) already forwarded to BEIS will be further

## Growth Hub Delivery Model

**1. We diagnose**  
Identify the growth barriers in the business?

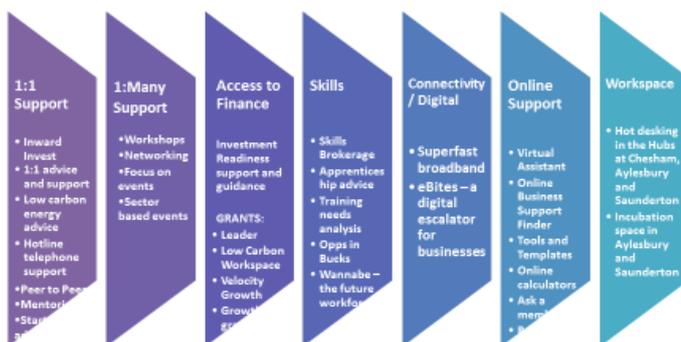
**2. We support**  
Use our knowledge to advise the business - referral to suitable business support, 12 hours of support from a GH programme or £1,000 grant

**3. We refer**  
Facilitate access to specialist advise & support – workshops, investment readiness



Current Growth Hub delivery model envisaged in 2018/19

## Support Programmes



18. What steps will the LEP take to ensure that the Growth Hub focusses on those delivery models demonstrated to be most effective for SMEs, prioritising those businesses with the ambition and greatest potential to grow e.g. through intensive and sustained face-to-face support, creation of peer to peer and mentoring networks and locally embedded and/accessible expertise and or specialist support?

BTVLEP and the BBSFGH work very closely to ensure that all business engagement and support activities provide a 'value for money' service for local businesses. For example, BBF's recently

procured Growth Programme is ERDF funded and the tender was specifically written to ensure any organisation winning the contract targeted the LEP's identified growth sectors in the county and that 1:1 support was provided as well as 1 to many. The BBFGH has worked hard to identify its Scale Up businesses with the help of the Scale Up Institute's Annual Scale Up Review (2017) and targets these businesses plus those known to have an aspiration to grow and brokers them to the peer to peer and mentoring networks that are undertaken in the county e.g. Business Leaders dinners, MDNgage (a high level peer to peer course for business leaders) etc.

## Driving businesses to scale up

By:

- Targeting the identified scale ups and identifying on CRM so they become well known
- Targeting businesses from our Growth Sectors
- Providing first access to new programmes
- Providing peer to peer mentoring and networking
- Creating a 'Growth buzz' through PR and marketing
- Showcasing our growing companies and their successes with a planned approach
- Creating an Award at The Buckinghamshire Business Awards for Scale Up of the Year
- Create an Innovation network
- Create targeted prog eg Scale Up through Innovation, Scale Up through Digital etc etc



New innovation hubs are being funded by the BTVLEP Local growth Fund to be situated within University Campus Aylesbury Vale and Bucks New University to provide specialisms in Digital Innovation and Life Science applications – the Growth Hub is written into their contracts to liaise with and for mutual brokerage to take place for generic/specialist business support as appropriate.

19. What steps will the LEP take to ensure that the Growth Hub continues to provide access to a free and impartial local 'single point of contact'?

The BBFGH currently utilises 1FTE to provide the role of Business Support Manager to provide the triaging and first point of contact for the GH service. There is also an Online Virtual Adviser that digitally provides a similar service.

The Growth Hub's business engagement programme is built around an integrated programme of permission based marketing activities, business networking and events and the promotion of a strong 'First Stop Shop' message. Becoming the trusted source of free, impartial information about the most appropriate support that is available in the marketplace is a very important component of this Local Growth Hub offer.

The LEP are currently looking into ways of helping the Growth Hub with its sustainability plans Any funding provided would come with a contract that the Growth Hub continues to act as the 'free and impartial local single point of contact.

In addition, weekly joint meetings are held with the BBFGH and BTVLEP in order to discuss areas of mutual work/interest and also to discuss ways of working, targets and ongoing opportunities. It is this close working including shared offices that helps facilitate the continued excellent working relationship between the 2 organisations.

20. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub delivers greater value for money, by making best use of free national assets (e.g. GOV.UK and GREAT) and the national Business Support Helpline (e.g. to support pre-starts).

The LEP regularly reviews the Growth Hub's activities (as outlined above) and referrals, signposting and use of the national assets are evidenced through 1:1 activity on the CRM and also via the BBFGH's website which signposts to over 350 different specialist organisations including all of the national assets. Analytics are provided monthly to senior management for analysis and discussion.

The BBFGH has a comprehensive system in place for dealing with all calls including those from pre start and start ups through to high growth and those exit planning - the LEP currently does not have any plans to work with National Business Support Helpline as delivery by the BBFGH is considered sufficient.

21. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub proactively promotes those programmes (public and private) that:

- a. enable more businesses to access new market opportunities and be more confident in trading internationally;

With almost 11,000 businesses in membership, Buckinghamshire Business First's reach into the business community is unparalleled (30% of the business population are BBF members). This level of engagement has been achieved through listening to our member's needs, talking to businesses in a language they understand and working in collaboration with local and national partners in order to make it easier to access available support.

As such, we are uniquely positioned to connect dots and wrap all available support into programmes of activity and events that are joined up, focussed on priority areas and importantly, easy and attractive for businesses to engage with.

We continue to champion 'International Trade' in our Business Awards and through our partnership working with the Department of International Trade and the Enterprise Europe Network. News stories promoting [Trade Missions and Fairs](#) are a regular feature in newsletters and social media, along with [online sources of support](#). We also offer representatives from the Department of International Trade a platform at events such as the [Buckinghamshire Brexit Summit](#) and shine a light on businesses who are benefiting from the connections made with the DIT through the growth hub. Watch our [member video here](#).

- b. are most successful at stimulating business investment in science, research & development and innovation, and encourage the adoption of innovative technologies and management best practice;

Working with partners such as 'Do It Digital' 'Nominet' and 'Google Digital Garage' we ensure that our members have access to digital skills at whatever level they require for their organisation, from start up to scale up.

We have held three successful Digital Summit's and partner with projects that can help Buckinghamshire businesses access support to implement digital solutions within their business, either through connecting them with other members or by promoting projects such as the ICT

Escalator, or helping to create digital innovations with ERDF innovation projects such as CityLabs.

We are working closely with Catapults such as the SAC to help raise awareness of the Business Incubation Centre at Westcott and are helping raise awareness of [InnovateUK](#) support and funding through our website and events such as [Focus on Funding and Growth](#).

- c. enable more businesses to source the right people, access apprenticeships and develop workforce skills to enable businesses to attract and employ new workers and fill gaps in technical and basic leadership and management skills;

Buckinghamshire Business First works in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub and the local and national apprenticeship providers to raise awareness of apprenticeships through initiatives such as:

- ❖ #Talent Tuesday events - that match employers with live vacancies with apprenticeship training providers and local young people looking for placements. See <https://bbf.uk.com/event/bucks-talanttuesday-2018>
- ❖ Creating guides that make it easy to grasp the process of taking on an apprentice, understanding the apprenticeship levy and accessing available support. See <https://bbf.uk.com/business-support/apprenticeships>
- ❖ Creating case studies of local businesses who have successfully recruited apprentices such as [June Medical, Brace IT](#)
- ❖ Shining a light on exceptional employers with our 'Apprentice Employer of the Year' category in the [Buckinghamshire Business Awards](#).
- ❖ Holding Twitter Talks focussed on Skills and Employment. See here <https://bbf.uk.com/event/twitter-talk-on-skills-employment>

Work continues with partners to champion the strategic priorities for economic development in Buckinghamshire through business briefings to MPs on priority areas such as digital skills and infrastructure, transport infrastructure, public procurement and support for STEM careers opportunities. These 'Think Tank' events are developed in partnership with Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP

- d. increase business awareness and participation in public procurement and major infrastructure projects, improving the knowledge needed to compete successfully and increasing SME procurement capabilities?

Buckinghamshire Business First's Saunderton Business Hub played host to the Buckinghamshire HS2 Supply chain roadshow in July 2017 where over 100 local businesses found out about the opportunities to bid for billions of pounds worth of contracts. See <https://bbf.uk.com/news/hs2-supply-chain-event-brings-contracts-to-light>

BBF also provides an online platform on its website <https://bbf.uk.com/contracts> where local contracts are drawn down from national websites and also where the BBFGH members are able to post contract opportunities for other local businesses.

22. What steps will the Growth Hub take to work in partnership with the BBB, banks, accountants and others to raise awareness of mainstream and alternative sources of finance covering debt, equity (e.g. private equity funding, venture capital, alternative bank lending), leasing, diversified funding streams and microfinance to increase supply of finance options for growing firms?

BBF holds regular 'Focus on Funding' events, to which banks, accountants, the national business support organisations, alternative business funding solutions providers as well as grant opportunities present to an audience of businesses and also business advisers also from lending and other business funding providers. An example of such events can be found [here](#).

BBF's Business Growth Advisers also attend these events in order to update their own knowledge of what is available so that they can best support businesses.

In addition, a new and exciting service has just been started called the Investment Readiness Service which is part of the Growth Programme's offer and will provide up to 8 hours of intensive support to 50 companies over the next 12 months.

BBB are representatives as part of the quarterly Growth Hub meeting. For example, as a result of their participation, they are supporting the development of BTVLEP-led business growth fund which will complement BBB resources such as the Midlands Growth Fund.

### **Principle 5 – Ambitious and high growth businesses (Scale-Ups)**

Make best use of available national and local data sets to identify and target those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow. Develop deep relationships with public and private sector providers and use these to curate impactful interventions (including those offered by universities, export, access to finance and innovation support and private sector programmes).

23. What plan is the LEP putting in place to further develop and deliver against locally agreed 'Scale-Up Plans' to ensure that recognised scale-up challenges are overcome and businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow are prioritised and supported by the Growth Hub?

The LEP and the BBFGH created its Scale Up Plan last July, in order to ensure that the high growth companies within the county are fully supported to continue growing and also to help other business to aspire to similar growth. This plan will be reviewed in the summer of 2018 by the BBFGH and presented to BTVLEP. In the meantime the current plan, as previously provided to BEIS, is being monitored and outputs are being collated.

The significant areas of support will be:

- Growth Programme

1:1 meetings and workshops to address all aspects of:

- Leadership and management
- Operations and logistics
- Markets and competition
- People and skills
- Customers and selling
- Products and services
- Investment Readiness Programme
  - One to one support with business plans, forecasting and funding pitches
  - Workshops
  - Identification of appropriate development finance
- Financial Support
  - Low carbon , Growth or Leader grants
  - Investment Readiness Support
  - Workshops and events
- Workforce Support
  - Brokerage to training providers
  - Support for apprenticeships
  - Young talent support via increased careers information via Skills Show & Enterprise Advisers
  - Apprenticeship events (incl Talent Tuesday)
  - Online guides and templates

24. How will the Growth Hub use national and local data such as the Scale-Up Institute (SUI) map, the Fast Track 100 and those made available by Government to identify and target those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow?

BBF proactively uses the Scale Up data from the Scale Up Institute and the Fast Track list to identify businesses within Buckinghamshire that are or have the potential to be 'scale ups'. These businesses are flagged on our CRM system and this is supplemented with local intelligence to identify those with growth ambitions, intentions or ability.

This information is used by the marketing team to ensure that marketing messages and topics of specific interest can be targeted to our high growth companies as appropriate. Also, the Growth Advisers use the CRM to identify these businesses in order to target its activities of providing ongoing support to as many of these businesses as possible as well as those smaller ones with aspiration to grow.

In addition to this, we use local insight which includes local authority liaison, annual business award applications, and detailed local media monitoring. This is supported through the quarterly Growth Hub meetings.

This data is also supplemented by local insight, most notably from the Buckinghamshire Business Awards where BTVLEP sponsor the Growth Business of the year category.

25. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub is able to broker/introduce high quality face-to-face Account Managers that have the skills and experience to:

- undertake a high level ‘diagnostic’ review that takes a 360 degree view of areas for development across the business;

A new online diagnostic tool - the [Virtual Adviser](#) - has been integrated into the Buckinghamshire Business First website and our Advisers’ toolkit. Businesses are able to take an automatic ‘health check’ which generates a bespoke report and action plan which can be shared by business leaders with members of their teams. The report identifies key strengths and any skills gaps in the business. Performance is benchmarked against other similar businesses in their sector nationally. The bespoke reports detail suggestions for action, resources available and events the business may wish to attend. These reports also enable the Advisers in BBF’s Growth Team to generate quality leads and develop intelligence about our member business’ DNA and also highlight potential scale up businesses in the county. The diagnostic is also used as the first stage in any adviser/business relationship and before any visits take place in order to enable the Growth Advisers to be better informed and understand the issues pertaining to that particular business.

The diagnostic includes 7 proficiency areas being:



In the past the reports have been shared with partners to undertake skills brokerage in order for them to be able to contact the company and troubleshoot areas of training need and broker suitable training solutions. Opportunities for this type of information sharing with relevant partners will be further explored in 2018/19

Over 500 companies have completed this diagnostic since last May.

- spend time with the senior management team of the business to identify the barriers that are preventing them from achieving their high growth ambition and broker a solution;

The diagnostic outlined above provides the major lead for the Business Growth Team to introduce themselves and organise 1:1 meetings with either the business owner or a member of the senior executive. The Growth Programme is ERDF funded and provides for 12 hours of business support for each of 200 companies. The 6 Growth Sectors as identified by the LEP are the priority sectors for the Growth and marketing teams to target activities.

- work in collaboration with the private and public sector to draw on impactful programmes such as the London Stock Exchange’s ELITE programme, Goldman Sachs 10k SMEs together with any locally driven bespoke programmes;

BBF’s website provides over 350 links in its Business Support section alone which includes links to schemes such as Goldman Sachs <https://bbf.uk.com/news/are-you-looking-to-grow-your-business-or-social-enterprise> . In addition, there is a member directory for each of the 11,000 business members <https://bbf.uk.com/member-directory> who are provided with their own webpage and personal Url. Many of these members also provide member to member workshops on topics such as GDPR, IP and many more

In addition, BBF works in collaboration with national partners and has regular meetings with all of

the national support programmes and works closely with the emerging technology clusters at the county's enterprise zones at Silverstone (high tech engineering) and at Westcott (space and rocket propulsion)

- maintain close relationships with these programmes and develop a strong understanding of local provision in order to help identify the most appropriate package of support;

The Head of Skills and Business Support at the BBFGH along with BBF's team of Growth Advisers hold quarterly meetings with HMRC, IPO, DIT, INNOVATE, KTN, and British Business Bank in order to understand the range and uptake of business support activities being undertaken within the county. These meetings also enable mutual understanding of each other's work and to ensure trusting relationships are created.

The Business Support team at the BBFGH, are tasked with ensuring that all new business support provision is investigated and where it is felt that it could benefit any of our local businesses, details are added to the BBF website, added to e-newsletters (sent fortnightly), or added to the BBFGH's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn)

- manage the relationship with the business over the life of the intervention and report progress along the firm's growth journey, improving the LEPs, Growth Hubs and Government's' understanding of the challenges this group of businesses face and the solutions they need now and will potentially need in the future.

The BBFGH makes excellent use of its CRM in order to monitor how its businesses are faring – their turnover, employment numbers, etc., over time, plus how they are growing, what their issues/barriers to growth are, how they are engaging in support and much more. This information is used to provide the evidence of need for the development of new programmes.

Every encounter with a business including phone calls, attendance at events and workshops, 1:1 visits, provision of grants or investment readiness advice, completion of online diagnostics, entries to the Business Awards, or simply general information picked up in conversations is all recorded on the CRM. This ensures that details are updated regularly including that of turnover and employee numbers, so business growth and increases in GVA can be monitored.

**Note:** Where available please confirm the level of this resource (e.g. 1 FTE); their skill levels; any sector/other specialisms; where they are located and whether alternative sources of funding are/will be used to fund the post/s (e.g. ERDF).

No of staff	Skill Level	Sector / specialism	Office Base	Funding of posts
1 FTE	Senior Manager	General Business Support and Skills	Aylesbury	Core funding (BEIS/BCC/SME) / ERDF Match
5 x FTE 2 x P/T	Programme Managers	1 x Rural 1 x Low carbon/energy 1 x Engineering 1 x Retail 2 x Skills 1 x General	Aylesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERDF</li> <li>• RDPE</li> <li>• Core funding (BEIS/BCC/SME)</li> <li>• Careers Enterprise Company</li> </ul>

		business support and start up		
2 x P/T	Business Advisers	1 x Food and Drink Manu 1 x General Business Support	Aylesbury	ERDF
3 x FTE 2 x P/T	Project Officers	3 x Low carbon/energy 2 x rural	Aylesbury	ERDF RDPE
2 x P/T	Enterprise Coordinators	2 x Skills	Aylesbury	BTVLEP/Careers Enterprise Company
1 x FTE 2 x P/T	Administrators	n/a	Aylesbury	ERDF RDPE
<p>The above is the customer facing/delivery team. However, there is also a marketing team of 8 x FTE and 2 x P/T, an operations team of 3 x FTE and 3 x P/T, plus 1 x Head of Funding (FTE) and 1 x Head of Economic Research (P/T)</p> <p>This provision ensures there are effectively 12 FTEs engaged in Account management activity and businesses are actively managed through all their interventions with the GH and its partners as their growth journey unfolds.</p>				

26. Please set out below proposals for any other local innovative approaches identified and defined by the LEP aimed at those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow, which have the potential to become local or cross-LEP/Growth Hub test and learn pilots, with best practice shared across LEP and Growth Hub Networks and feeding into and informing future business support policy thinking (agreed with BEIS on a case by case basis).

The LEP has identified 3 innovative approaches which have been created by the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Hub which could be rolled out nationally and which can be used to help identify those companies with aspiration to grow.

### 1. Virtual Adviser

A new online diagnostic tool - the [Virtual Adviser](#) - has been integrated into the Buckinghamshire Business First website. Businesses are able to take an automatic 'health check' which generates a bespoke report and action plan which can be shared by business leaders with members of their teams. The report identifies key strengths and any skills gaps in the business. Performance is benchmarked against other similar businesses in their sector nationally. The bespoke reports detail suggestions for action, resources available and events the business may wish to attend. These reports enable the Advisers in BBF's Growth Team to generate quality leads and develop intelligence about our member business' DNA and also highlight potential scale up businesses in

the county. The reports can be shared with partners to support best provision of assistance.

## 2. Member 2 Member Workshops

Our member to member workshops are where the Buckinghamshire business community comes together in the spirit of cooperation and supporting each other.

Workshops are hosted by members for members and are a great way to share skills and expertise, get answers to business questions, build relationships and make quality contacts, all helping to build a stronger network of businesses across Buckinghamshire.

The themes of our M2M workshops and are supportive of the needs and requirements for a range of businesses are often in line with the 7 proficiency areas in the 'Virtual Adviser' tool:



Themes include R&D Tax Credits, GDPR, Business Strategy and Exit planning, Marketing, PR, Sales, Management techniques, HR issues, website, social media and digital marketing master classes.

To find all our current member to member workshops please go to <https://bbf.uk.com/events>

## 3. Buckinghamshire 'Growth Champions'

To promote the idea of business growth in Buckinghamshire and encourage businesses to get involved in the Business Growth Programme delivered by Buckinghamshire Business First, we have created 'Growth Champions' in our community.

These local businesses leaders who have achieved successful growth are used to inspire others through sharing their real life experiences with the wider business community.

By creating 'growth champions' we are demonstrating to our predominantly micro business community that growth is something real and achievable and something to aspire to. We are telling the story of growth from the customer perspective and our growth champions, in turn are advocating the support from their local growth hub, Buckinghamshire Business First.

The growth stories of our Growth Champions are being used to create content which encourages the use of support networks and will focus businesses on the 7 areas of growth/proficiency we use in our online Virtual Adviser tool: Leadership, Finance, Markets, People, Operations, Customers & Selling, Products & Services.

In this way we can link the stories back to a tangible source of support and promote the workshops and support available as part of the Growth Programme.

These stories are told in the form of case studies, interviews, top tips and are being disseminated across all our digital channels (website, social media, email, e-newsletters) traditional press and at our events.

Buckinghamshire Business First have filmed a series of [interviews with the Growth Champions](#) as they impart their advice and top tips on growing a business. Available at [www.bbf.uk.com/news/get-](http://www.bbf.uk.com/news/get-)

[winning-advice-on-growing-your-business.](#)