

3rd February 2015**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, CORPORATE STRATEGY****THE D2N2 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP GROWTH HUB****Purpose of the Report**

1. To offer further details on the development of the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth Hub and to introduce a presentation on the Growth Hub by the lead officer from the D2N2 LEP.

Information and Advice

2. This Committee considered a brief report at its January 2015 meeting regarding the Council's response to the Growth Hub Strategy consultation and at that meeting, it was agreed that a further report be presented on the Hub's ambitions and timescales for development, complemented by a presentation from the LEP.
3. Growth Hubs have been introduced by Government with a national rollout via Local Enterprise Partnerships following a pilot phase within three areas of Manchester, Cumbria and the Norfolk. Growth Hubs are designed to offer the means whereby businesses across a defined area are offered a single point of access to comprehensive support services to enable them to start and grow.
4. In the recent Growth Deal announcement, the D2N2 LEP secured a total of £525,000 for the 2015/16 financial year as pump-priming resources to help establish a Growth Hub across its area, being a similar figure offered to other LEPs. The D2N2 LEP has been developing the concept and has "soft launched" the Hub from early December 2014 as a pilot phase, with the intention of progressing to a fully operational model in consultation with a range of partners by April 2015.
5. The Council responded positively to the consultation, reflecting on the much researched value that is placed by businesses on securing high quality advice, clearly and openly available, caveated by the need to have high quality advisors complementing the availability of information. Committee will have noted the considerations made by the Council in its response to the LEP's Growth Hub Strategy and given the presentation, this affords members the opportunity to learn more and reflect on the latest position.
6. Specifically, Committee may wish to reflect on the following issues:

- the proposed evaluation of the initial pilot phase and progress to date;
- to avoid confusing businesses, how will relationships with potentially overlapping Hubs be addressed and managed;
- what precise delivery options are being reviewed and anticipated given the proposed appointment of staff – and how will they relate to other business support offers both in place and proposed – nationally as well as locally;
- the financial sustainability of the proposals;
- how might the County Council's offers of support (as referenced in the response to the Strategy) be facilitated and what additionally might be helpful in ensuring a successful Growth Hub development.

Reason(s) for Recommendations

7. To support Committee's understanding of developments in the business support arena, an important part of the development of economic growth across the County.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described within the body of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. It is recommended that Committee notes the content of the report and welcomes the opportunity to review the Growth Hub's development through the presentation to Committee.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments [SLB 19.01.2015]

Economic Development Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments [SEM 16.01.2015]

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

Consultation response submitted under urgency procedure: the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub strategy, report to Economic Development Committee, 6th January 2015, published.

The Strategy and related background documentation concerning the development of the Hub by the D2N2 LEP can be viewed at: <http://www.d2n2lep.org/Growth-Hub/>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All