



EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Resources
LEAD OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
DATE: 15th October 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Resources
WARD/S AFFECTED: All

SUBJECT: Growth Lancashire Ltd – Lancashire Business Growth Hub (Boost 3)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Growth Lancashire is a company limited by guarantee under the control of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and other Local Authorities within Lancashire. The Council has provided an Accountable Body function for the company and is its employing body.

The company has been delivering services for Lancashire's Business Growth Hub (branded Boost Business Lancashire) since its inception in 2013. It has recently submitted a tender to Lancashire County Council to continue being a delivery partner between 2019-2021 (Boost 3) and to provide a Business Relationship Management service. The outcome of the bid is expected to be known in November 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the event that Growth Lancashire's bid is successful, that the Executive Member approves the Council (T/A Growth Lancashire) to enter into a contract with Lancashire County Council for the provision of a Boost Business Relationship Management service, with delegated authority given to the Council's Deputy Chief Executive to finalise terms.

3. BACKGROUND

Growth Hubs, such as Boost, are local public/private sector partnerships often led by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). They bring together partners to promote, co-ordinate and deliver local business support and provide a mechanism for integrating national and local business support so it is easy for businesses to access. Including Boost Business Lancashire, there are currently 38 Growth Hubs across England.

Lancashire's Growth Hub is predominantly funded through European Regional Development Fund monies allocated to the County, as well as match funding from Lancashire County Council. Activity is delivered across all 14 Lancashire districts.

During 2016-2018, Growth Lancashire (formerly Regenerate Pennine Lancashire prior to a change of name in 2016) has provided the central "Gateway service" for Boost 2. Activity delivered by the company has included handling more than 5,000 enquiries into the Hub (both existing businesses

and those looking to start a business); making more than 4,500 referrals to appropriate business support provision; conducting a Business Support Review with more than 1,500 existing businesses (a minimum of 3 hours of support) and administering a Growth Voucher programme which has provided small-scale grants to existing businesses investing in additional expertise.

Since its launch, Blackburn with Darwen businesses and residents have been amongst the biggest recipients of support through the Growth Hub.

Whilst the third phase of Boost (2019-2021) does not offer a like-for-like contract opportunity, the specified activities of the Business Relationship Service contract aligns with the company's track record and would allow the company to continue to use its impartiality and also add considerable value given its involvement in Boost to date.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Should Growth Lancashire be successful in its bid, payment of the contract will be subject to the achievement of outputs. Over 2019 to 2021, the KPIs are to provide "information, diagnostic and brokerage support" to a minimum of 1500 Lancashire companies currently trading; to engage with a minimum of 250 "new to Boost" clients, and to make 750 referrals to other Boost Programmes. The contract requires 30% of outputs to be achieved in year 1 (2019), 40% in year 2 (2020) and 30% in year 3 (2021), although the contract will allow for Lancashire County Council to enforce a break clause at the end of year 2. The company has so far met all of its required KPIs as part of its existing Boost contract which runs to 31st December 2018.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Lancashire Business Growth Hub provides Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, as well as other local authorities, a vehicle to deliver a significant amount of joined up business support in a cost effective way. The Growth Hub will continue to support new business start-ups, create jobs within existing businesses, help to develop new products or services and increase levels of GVA. These outcomes fit with the Council's strategic priority of creating more jobs and supporting business.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If successful, the contract value covers the cost of delivering the service.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has performed an Accountable Body function for Growth Lancashire.
- Lancashire County Council will act as the Accountable Body for the European Funding with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- If Growth Lancashire's bid is successful, the Council would be required to enter into a contract with LCC on behalf of the company. A copy of the draft contract was issued by LCC as part of the procurement process, and has been reviewed by Blackburn with Darwen's legal team.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Growth Lancashire's Interim Director will act as lead contact for the contract on behalf of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Other members of the management team will provide key resource on a day-to-day basis.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Boost programme is subject to independently commissioned mid-term and final evaluations, which includes consultation with interested stakeholders.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Matthew Sidgreaves, Interim Director, Growth Lancashire
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DATE:	15 th October 2018
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	N/A
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