

Business & Market Engagement Update

To:	Business Board
Meeting Date:	12 May 2021
Public report:	Yes
Lead Member:	Chair of the Business Board, Austen Adams
From:	Business and Market Engagement Officer, Ed Colman
Key decision:	No
Recommendations:	The Business Board is recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Note the update on recent Business and Market Engagement activity; and(b) Note the forward plan of communications activity for the Business Board.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give Business Board Members an update on planned, ongoing and past communications activity.

2. Background

- 2.1 This update provides a summary of communications work completed between March and April, while looking ahead to opportunities up until the end of June. The update also identifies planned opportunities for Business Board members to play a more visible role in Business Board communications through a series of project visits following the end of the pre-election period and the mayoral election.

3. Communications Strategy

- 3.1 In March 2021, the Business Board endorsed the Communications Strategy presented by the Business and Market Engagement Officer, who has started to enact the activity within the strategy in partnership with the wider Combined Authority Communications Team.

- 3.2 To date, four opinion pieces have been published by members of the Business Board, a new tagging system has been implemented on the website and arrangements are being made for a series of business visits following the mayoral election on May 6th 2021.
- 3.3 It was agreed the strategy would be treated as a live document and continually reviewed and updated to reflect the Business Board's priorities and workstreams. An updated version of the strategy, including a breakdown of what has been delivered since the strategy's adoption in March, will be included in the Business and Market Engagement Update to be presented to the Business Board in July 2021.

4. Communications Activity – March – May 2021

- 4.1. Appendix 1 of this report details communications outputs from March 2021 up 30th April 2021. During this period, advice was followed from the legal team to ensure activity remained compliant with the pre-election period.
- 4.2. Some of the notable highlights include:
- (a) Growth Works Capital Grants: High level communications to celebrate the award of £2.025 million in Grants to 32 businesses, which will create 321 jobs and £11.184m in capital expenditure. This was followed up by three case studies to show grants were awarded across the region and across industry sectors.
 - (b) Local Growth Fund Interactive Maps: Two interactive maps have been built and are now live on the Combined Authority's website. The first map shows where investments have been made across the region and their forecast outputs, while the second shows this on a district basis. Following the pre-election period, we will launch a campaign to raise awareness of LGF grants, utilising these maps and content from business visits.
 - (c) Growth Works Skills Portal: The launch of the Growth Works with Skills digital talent platform to help employers, learners and workers across the region. Targeted communications to each audience to encourage them to register for the portal.
 - (d) Community Renewal Fund (CRF): Targeted communications to businesses to explain what the CRF is, followed up two webinars for prospective applicants. The first was to provide an overview of the CRF and its eligibility criteria and the second was to facilitate co-working between prospective applicants.
 - (e) Growth Hub Peer Networks: Communications to highlight the positive impact of the Growth Hub's Peer Networks Programme. We produced three detailed case studies from business leaders that completed the course, which have been used in our press release, on social media and will be used to market the second cohort of the Peer Networks.

5. Planned Activities: May 2021 – July 2021

5.1. Appendix 2 of this report provides a summary of the future opportunities to raise the profile of the Business Board, Business and Skills directorate and our future interventions.

5.2. Some of the notable plans include:

- (a) Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS): A series of infographics, short videos and social media graphics to demonstrate why the LERS is important to learners, leaders and workers across the region.
- (b) Business Board Interactive Annual Report: Production Bureau Ltd have been commissioned to design and build the interactive 2020/21 annual report for the Business Board. In late May, Business Board Members will be invited to help shape the dashboard which will also contain case studies and the 2021/22 delivery plan.
- (c) Business Board Interactive Map: Building on the Local Growth Fund Maps, we want to build an interactive digital map underpinned by case studies to show all Business Board investments across all projects. This will also include future and past scroll, so the user can see planned interventions in the LERS and LIS as well.
- (d) Local Growth Fund Case Studies: Business Board Members have been asked for the types and location of businesses they would be interested in visiting. Working with colleagues in our Growth Funds Team, we are currently finalising the arrangements for these visits.
- (e) COVID-19 Capital Grant Scheme: This campaign was initially planned for April but was delayed due to the pre-election period. We have a series of case studies with business who received grants and a series of social media animations to highlight the success of the campaign.

Significant Implications

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

8. Other Significant Implications

8.1 There are no other significant implications arising from the report.

9. Appendices

9.1. Appendix 1 - Business Board Communications Report (March 2021 – May 2021)

9.2. Appendix 2 - Business Board Communications Forward Plan (May 2021 – July 2021)

10. Background Papers

10.1 None