

BUSINESS BOARD	AGENDA ITEM No: 1.4
23 SEPTEMBER 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

BUSINESS ADVISORY PANEL UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2019

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To receive the minutes of the Business Advisory Panel (BAP) meeting on 22nd August 2019 and consider the recommendations made to the Business Board.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	Austen Adams, Interim Chair of Business Board
Lead Officer:	John T Hill Director Business & Skills
Forward Plan Ref: N/A	Key Decision: No
<p>The Business Board is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Note the minutes of the Business Advisory Panel meeting held on 22nd August 2019; and (b) Consider the recommendations from the Business Advisory Panel as set out in Section 3 of the report. 	

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Business Advisory Panel was formed to fulfil the following functions:
- To serve as a consultative business group that is representative of the business community, to inform the Combined Authority Business Board, Combined Authority and partners on the issues, needs and opportunities facing the Combined Authority area's business community.
 - To consider and review the Local Industrial Strategy and provide practical business feedback and guidance to the Combined Authority on its prioritisation, development and effective implementation.

- To comment to the Combined Authority on the Local Industrial Strategy implementation and the Growth Hub activity.
- To support the Business Board with representation from a local, membership-based business community in a transparent and apolitical manner.

2.2 The BAP held a meeting on 22nd August 2019, of which the minutes are attached as **Appendix 1**. The following recommendations to the Business Board were agreed by the BAP, with supporting documents in **Appendix 2**:

- (i) Support the retention and recruitment of EU workers at all skill levels with settled status documentation filing; upskilling; languages and incentives to stay and encourage others to join; in order to combat the outward flow of workers back to the EU and encourage those that stay to make more use of the qualifications and skills they bring with them as this could improve productivity;
- (ii) Encourage Local Authorities, District Councils, Unitary Authorities and the County Council to follow the CPCA example and make good use of the EU Exit Funds allocated by Central Government for these purposes;
- (iii) Encourage the town twinning principles that would support better business and people collaboration across countries, which has been effective in other regions to promote cooperation and business growth;
- (iv) Note that banks are being more sector focussed on lending and are showing signs of restricting cash advances, taking a stronger conservative approach to risk over this challenging period. UK Export Finance is no longer available for sectors related to fossil fuels due to greening of products and social, environmental impacts, for example;
- (v) Note that there is evidence that HMRC are delaying Tax Refunds and recent concessions on HMRC Import Duty deferral are causing cash flow issues with SME's instead of alleviating same, as banks are required to provide bonds as security which require cash deposits or other security to obtain;
- (vi) Note there is evidence that insurers are refusing to insure due to the Brexit uncertainties;
- (vii) Note requests for events on cyber-crime; fraud online; carbon neutral; high street IT skills training; and
- (viii) Note concerns of rural businesses on water resources; carbon neutral by 2040; and the potential loss of EU funding due on the 1st December 2019.

3.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no significant implications.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications.

6.0 APPENDICES

7.1 **Appendix 1** – Draft Minutes of the BAP Meeting on 22nd August 2019
Appendix 2 – Supporting Documents to the BAP's Recommendations

<u>Background Papers</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	N/A