

**Enterprise M3 Board Meeting**

**8 February 2024**

**Managing Director's Report – Item 4**

**1. LEP News**

- 1.1. On 19 December, the Government published further guidance relating to the integration of LEP functions into upper tier local authorities. This defined three “core functions currently delivered by LEPs – namely, business representation, local economic planning, and the delivery of government programmes where directed.” Government will “expect local authorities to create or continue to engage with an economic growth board (or similar) within their functional geography” and will provide “up to” £240k of funding in 2024/25 for each upper tier area; the exact amount is still to be confirmed. We also continue to wait for confirmation by DBT of the amount of Growth Hub funding for 2024/25.
- 1.2. EM3 continues to have two overriding priorities. The first is to maintain our focus on delivering outstanding programmes and services, right up to the point of LEP integration. The rest of this report highlights some of the ways in which we are doing that.
- 1.3. The second priority is to work constructively with both of our county councils and other partners, to support a LEP integration process that minimises disruption for our customers and stakeholders. We have made good progress in ensuring that the county councils understand our organisation and activities, identifying the practical issues that need to be addressed, and beginning to work through them. During February and March, we will also be working closely with both county councils to ensure that the change is communicated effectively.
- 1.4. In respect of our people, all EM3 staff have been invited by Hampshire County Council HR to attend a staff briefing session on Tuesday 6 February. I will provide a verbal update at the EM3 Board meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Growth Hub Activity**

- 2.1. The focus for the Growth Hub has continued to be “business as usual”, driving workshop attendance to existing and new businesses, increasing business engagement, supporting partner and stakeholder events, and providing deep dive business support to growth SMEs. This has helped the team to remain on track for achieving KPIs this year.
- 2.2. The 15-workshop series is halfway through its programme and has been very well received with over 400 registrations already. A big marketing push resulted in December seeing 40 attendees at the AI conference in partnership with the University of Surrey and DMH Stallard. The events have provided an excellent opportunity to partner with local venues and stakeholders, with face-to-face workshops in the last quarter being held at the Login Lounge in Camberley, RHS Wisley, Bordon Business Centre and Southampton Science Park.
- 2.3. The team are regularly asked to support stakeholder events as speakers or panel members, including at the Surrey Heath business budget breakfast, and a skills conference being held at Brooklands College and delivered by Runnymede and Elmbridge Councils.
- 2.4. The Growth Hub continues to facilitate stakeholder activity, including the weekly Surrey EDO meetings with Surrey Chambers, and weekly business intelligence gathering with business support partners.
- 2.5. We are in dialogue with both county councils, in order to enable a seamless transition of business support services post March 2024 (subject to confirmation of Growth Hub funding, due shortly).

**3. Growth Hub Cluster**

- 3.1. EM3 continues to lead fortnightly South Central Cluster meetings which allow us to update the group on key points from the national Growth Hub cluster call with DBT, and to discuss potential collaborations across the cluster area.
- 3.2. The cluster has agreed to progress a collaboration focused on AI. The cluster will form a working group and undertake a needs assessment, and is keen to learn from EM3 pilot AI work taking place in February and early March, with advisers benefitting from the workshops as a CPD activity. The

develop of a collaboration will enable the cluster to bid for future funding opportunities should these become available.

- 3.3. Innovate UK will present to a future cluster meeting to discuss our respective priorities and improve cross referrals and collaborations.
- 3.4. DBT are currently seeking to map out the different forms of non-Governmental business support schemes across England. Also, DBT arranged a virtual meeting with the Local Government Association and Growth Hub regional leads to share intelligence on the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund); the proportion of UKSPF being spent on business support varies considerably across local authorities.

#### **4. Trade and Investment**

- 4.1. Inward investment projects are at a lower level than last year with 5 successful supported projects posted so far, however, there are some significant projects that could land or be finalised in the next couple of months, and the overall pipeline consists of an additional 15 companies with some potentially large CAPEX and job numbers expected. The larger projects cover the video games, biopharma, leisure and aerospace sectors.

#### **5. Sector/Cluster Development**

##### ***Jet Zero***

- 5.1. We have launched a Hampshire and Surrey Jet Zero Task Force with core members of the Steering Group, but with an invitation for key primes including Boeing, Gulfstream, Qinetiq and Safran to join to help progress the Jet Zero action plan. We plan to meet in February to further the partnership. We hope to involve Innovate UK to help us drive more funding into the emerging cluster.

##### ***Defence & Security***

- 5.2. HCC colleagues have organised a roundtable event with Airbus and some selected SMEs to explore further the establishment of a Defence & Security Accelerator (DASA) as part of a national network.

##### ***Life Sciences***

- 5.3. We are holding a life sciences event with Growth Hub colleagues and in conjunction with Wessex Innovation (the Wessex Academic Health Network) and Wessex Health Partners on the 8<sup>th</sup> March at the Future Towns Innovation Hub. The roundtable event will focus on developing a life sciences strategy, taking into account both national and local healthcare priorities.

##### ***Animal Health Innovation Network***

- 5.4. We attended a planning meeting with colleagues at DBT and the University of Surrey to discuss how to take forward the network. We agreed to update the High Potential Opportunities presentation pack and support the launch of the University's new Animal Health Incubator. This will be the first of its kind in the UK; businesses will be supported by Set Squared and have access to specialist industry focused advice. We have provided a lead for a Hong Kong company who are looking to locate in the UK.

##### ***Creative Industries***

- 5.5. The University of Creative Arts is running an event in March in conjunction with Surrey County Council to present a consultancy report on the various video games clusters in the UK and in Europe, to look at how they perform against various metrics (which we will attend). We are also attending the Guildford Games Festival in February.

##### ***Sector data metrics***

- 5.6. We received a report from the Economic & Business Intelligence Service team at HCC which provides useful benchmarking on business densities, sector growth rates and employment patterns pre and post pandemic for our key sectors. We intend to analyse the data further and draw on some other sources to develop a more rounded picture, to feed into discussions with HCC colleagues about future work on sectors.

#### **6. Skills**

- 6.1. The EM3 FE Principals' meeting took place on 23 January, with representation from all FE Colleges across the EM3 area plus the Principals from East Surrey College and Nescot. During the meeting, alongside updates on economy, labour market and skills projects, the group also discussed how they

would like the forum to continue, after EM3 has been integrated into upper tier authorities. This discussion will continue and should conclude before the end of March 2024.

- 6.2. With project management support from EM3, the LSIP has continued to deliver to the LSIP road map including: a refreshed monthly newsletter; successful monitoring meetings with the DfE; updates to the Future Skills Hub website; a further business development networking session for college staff; and support for college-led activity, linked to the LSIP.
- 6.3. With project management support from EM3, the LSIF project is focused on capital expenditure and revenue activity. Included in the revenue activity is around 100 hours of new learning materials – some of which will be hosted by the EM3-funded Innovation South Virtual Campus: <https://em3.isvc.co.uk>.
- 6.4. Over 100 learners have commenced or will be commencing shortly on various Skills Bootcamps including: Data Analytics, Digital Marketing, Electric Vehicles, Engineering, Heat Pumps and Retrofit. Hampshire County Council (leading on delivery) are now working with EM3 to prepare for a second round of Bootcamps that will be delivered between April 2024 and March 2025, linked to LSIP priorities – many of which have been highlighted previously by EM3.
- 6.5. EM3 is supporting the Government's 'Skills for Life' campaign. Three articles will be published between January and March, each highlighting a different area of work EM3 has led on to make a difference to the local skills landscape.
- 6.6. The next EM3 Skills Advisory Panel is due to take place on 14 March with a focus on changes to local skills governance and partnerships in anticipation of LEP transition.

## **7. Careers Hub**

- 7.1. EM3 Careers Hub interventions in the first term have impacted positively across several aspects of careers guidance in Hampshire schools. Our strategic plan for the academic year 2023/24 prioritised supporting disadvantaged pupils, and additional support and information for parents. We are also working to overcome barriers to apprenticeship and technical education take-up, and this is central to all our projects during this academic year.
- 7.2. We have recently delivered training sessions which engaged more than 30 careers leads in Compass Plus use and Gatsby Benchmark One planning. This work continues in term two to ensure future success. Specialised training for careers leads has increased Compass Plus engagement to 78% in term one. The target is 80% engagement in schools across north and central Hampshire.
- 7.3. The Careers Hub will hold a SEND Training Conference in collaboration with Hampshire County Council, together with a programme of support for SEND schools, a Degree Apprenticeship Fair and a Digital and Space event in March 2024, with schools from across Hampshire attending. There will also be a Provider Access Legislation programme delivered for schools in January and February 2024.
- 7.4. The Careers Hub has established a successful Steering Group and a new Cornerstone Group of employers will launch in March 2024. We expect this work to continue following the transfer of responsibility for the Careers Hub to Hampshire County Council, where there will be opportunities to collaborate further with Hampshire Futures, and other HCC colleagues.

## **8. Enterprise Zones**

- 8.1. The final report by Cushman and Wakefield on the new Implementation Plan was considered at the EZ Programme Steering Group in December 2023.
- 8.2. Partners also discussed potential options for management of the Enterprise Zone post transition of the LEP. It was clear that Surrey partners, while they wish to see the EZ continue, have a preference for the Longcross Park site to be managed separately, rather than under a cross-boundary arrangement.
- 8.3. We are meeting partners that cover specific sites for a focused discussion on their overall vision and priorities for each site and views on proposed interventions. We also have a meeting in early February with colleagues at Hampshire and Surrey County Council to discuss future management and governance of the sites.

## **9. Communications & Stakeholder Engagement**

- 9.1. The Comms Team has continued promoting the Growth Hub workshops, via social media with emphasis on sharing video content. Several newsletters targeting existing Growth Hub clients and potential new clients proved to be very effective in increasing sign-ups for the Growth Hub events.

- 9.2. All online and in-person events have been supported and attended by the Comms Team, including those held at the University of Surrey and the Login Lounge in Camberley, as well as the four-part Engaging Leaders Programme, presented by motivational business coach Steve Jones.
- 9.3. Articles summarising the Growth Hub workshops have been shared on the EM3 website and via social media. These include:
- [Follow the Net Zero journey to save money while keeping your customers happy](#)
  - [Discover the secret ingredient to turbocharge your marketing strategy](#)
  - [Become a great leader and an employer of choice](#)
- 9.4. We have also supported the Careers Hub, by updating and adding information on the website and producing marketing materials for its upcoming Careers Fair. Work continues on updating the EZ3 Enterprise Zone directory.
- 9.5. In December, the Comms Team supported a Jet Zero Cluster meeting at Farnborough Airport and shared the outcomes in the following news articles as well as a Jet Zero themed newsletter:
- [New task force to take the lead in developing Jet Zero Cluster](#)
  - [Innovative companies based in the EM3 region lead the way in sustainable aviation](#)
- 9.6. We have been proactive in supporting Hampshire County Council in preparing and launching the marcomms collateral and campaign activities for the Skills Bootcamps programme.
- 9.7. Our January newsletter – issued on Friday 26 January – highlights the range of policy, service, and developmental activities that EM3 continues to lead on, which demonstrates the added value we bring to economic development activities across the region.

## **10. European Funding**

- 10.1. The delivery of the ESIF programme is now fully complete. The programme was closed on 31 December 2023.

Stephen Martin - EM3 Managing Director  
1 February 2024