

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	30 August 2017
Subject:	Growth Hub
Report of:	Katie Power, Economic Development Officer
Corporate Lead:	Annette Roberts, Head of Development Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Economic Development and Promotion
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

In Autumn 2016 a successful funding bid was made to GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to establish a Business Growth Hub in the Tewkesbury Borough Public Service Centre (PSC).

This report provides further information on the Growth Hub and asks the Executive Committee to provide delegated powers to the Deputy Chief Executive to approve and sign any agreements relevant to the expedient delivery of the hub.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the information and updates within the report be NOTED.**
- 2. That it be RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion, the Head of Finance and Asset Management and the Borough Solicitor, to implement the Growth Hub, including entering into appropriate agreements.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Growth Hub will form part of the Council's Economic Development Service delivery, supporting business growth across the Borough. It is also a key aim within the Borough Council's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2017 – 2021.

The reasons for this recommendation are:

1. To provide Executive Committee with an update on the Growth Hub and its delivery.
2. To seek delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive to take the necessary steps to implement a Growth Hub and enter into any appropriate agreements.

Resource Implications:

It is not anticipated that extra resources will be required for this project.

Due to technological changes and external factors, we are able to absorb the navigator business support role within the current establishment. We have opted to use existing internal resources, which will be equivalent to one full-time equivalent (FTE) and provide flexibility for service delivery. This may need to be reviewed at a later date.

A marketing budget of £5,000pa has been allocated to promote the project. This will come from existing economic development budgets.

Legal Implications:

In respect of the agreements in Paragraph 5.3, the Council will need to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Risk Management Implications:

A full risk register will be in place and is to be carefully monitored throughout the project. This risk register will interlink with that of the wider Public Service Centre refurbishment project. Risks will also be mitigated via consultation with appropriate bodies and partners.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The Growth Hub will have a clear delivery plan and outputs, linked to the capital funding. A full monitoring and evaluation programme will also be in place. This will be reported to GFirst LEP and internally through the quarterly Performance Tracker.

Environmental Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** In Autumn 2016 applications were invited from GFirst LEP to create a network of Business Growth Hubs across the County. These will be linked to the main Growth Hub, based at the University of Gloucestershire's Oxstalls Campus in Gloucester.
- 1.2** The Council made a successful bid for funding to create a Business Growth Hub within the Tewkesbury Borough Public Services Centre, which will offer business support services to enterprises across the area. The Council will be one of the first partners to provide location specific support to businesses as part of the Gloucestershire Growth Hub rollout across the County. The main hub at Oxstalls, is currently the only hub in Gloucestershire.
- 1.3** The project forms part of the wider Council office refurbishment which will create a new integrated reception area and transform the offices into a full Public Service Centre.
- 1.4** The hub is a dedicated space for business support and will be located on the ground floor, forming part of the refurbished reception area. The project will also upgrade the technology available within the Committee Room suite and enable these areas to be more business friendly.

2.0 GROWTH HUB SERVICE

- 2.1** The hub will be a place where businesses can meet, network, get access to important resources and secure grant funding. Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in the area, it is hoped the hub will drive economic success right in the heart of Tewkesbury borough - the fastest growing part of Gloucestershire.
- 2.2** The service within the hub will provide:
- A full business navigator service, offering: impartial advice, signposting and brokerage support to enterprises. This will be available via telephone, face to face and online.
 - A meeting and training space for businesses.
 - A focus for more integrated delivery from other Council services and agencies within the building for the business community e.g. Planning, Business Rates, Licencing, Environmental Health, DWP Jobcentre, Police, GCC and Citizens Advice Bureau.
 - Added value to the Council's existing Economic Development Service and Business Support Programme, including training/grant schemes.
- 2.3** This space will include:
- Three business incubator units – providing office space for start-up enterprises.
 - A dedicated meeting room within hub.
- An open resource centre with pods/'touch down' areas for businesses.
- 2.4** Capita funding from Growth Funds is required to develop the project in this area. The addition of the hub in Tewkesbury Borough will also ensure consistency of offer across the Growth Hub Network and help maximise the impact of the M5 Growth Zone, as highlighted in Gloucestershire's Strategic Economic Plan.
- 2.5** A business hub located within the Public Services Centre will provide the perfect place to reach and support growing businesses in the area, acting as a conduit for the relevant council service areas. The Economic Development Team already has established relationships within the business community which will support hub development. There is also natural footfall from businesses to other services, within the building, such as business rates and planning.
- ## **3.0 FUNDING BID**
- 3.1** The original funding bid was approved by both the LEP and Growth Hub Boards for £385,000. Since approval the Borough Council has developed a brief and commissioned architects to look at the whole refurbishment project, including the Growth Hub
- 3.2** The concept plans developed by the architects indicate an area of 84.5m² is required within Tewkesbury Borough Council's PSC for the development of a Growth Hub. The original bid proposed an area of 46.45m².
- 3.3** It is felt that the larger area will allow flexibility of space and incorporation of all elements proposed in the original brief (a meeting room, 3 incubators and wider touch down/resource centre area). This increased space will provide improved flexibility for the delivery of Growth Hub Services, achievement of proposed outputs in the original bid and encourage business engagement.

- 3.4** To facilitate the refurbishment of this extra space, and ensure consistency of look and feel, an increased funding request has been proposed to GFirst LEP for consideration. This results in an additional investment request of £80,068.50. This takes the new total overall funding request to £465,068.50. This revised amount has received approval in principle from the LEP Sub Group Board but will need to be confirmed by the Board in due course.

4.0 PUBLIC SERVICES CENTRE REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

- 4.1** The hub is a linked workstream within the wider Public Service Centre (PSC) refurbishment project and the refurbishment and construction side of the hub development will be carried out using the SCAPE framework.

This project has a clear timetable and the hub will need to meet the timeframes, so extra costs are not incurred.

5.0 PROJECT DELIVERY TIMETABLE

- 5.1** The Council is working closely with GFirst LEP on delivery and implementation of the Network Business Growth Hub within Tewkesbury Borough PSC. This includes a due diligence process and agreement of relevant documentation and is following this timeline:

- Growth Hub Network Centre Proposal submitted - September 2016.
- Proposal approved by LEP Board – October 2016.
- Full business case submitted and due diligence - June 2017.
- All hub agreements signed/approved by Tewkesbury Borough Council for signature - September/October 2017.
- Growth Hub Board agreement/approval Mid-September 2017.
- LEP Board agreement/approval– 10 October 2017.
- Draw down first allocation of funding - December 2017.
- Growth Hub opens spring 2018.

- 5.2** A final review regarding the operation and delivery of the Growth Hub is currently being undertaken with GFirst LEP to finalise the funding agreement and this is crucial to achieving the project timetable. It will also allow for the funds to be awarded and drawn down on the proposed claim dates. Completion of this process will enable the Council to finalise and approve all relevant documents appropriate to hub delivery.

- 5.3** This will include the approval and signature (where relevant) of the following documentation:

- Network Growth Hub Funding Agreement. (Capital funding contract and delivery)
- Growth Hub Data Sharing Agreement. (Data protection responsibilities)
- Growth Hub Brand and Marketing Guide.(Guidance on use of the growth hub brand and marketing, to ensure consistency across the network)
- Growth Hub Partner Code of Conduct. (Code of Conduct for all growth hub network partners)
- Growth Hub IT Delivery Guide and Digital Infrastructure Manual. (Guidance on IT infrastructure and operation)
- Growth Hub Navigator Form. (The form which the Navigator will complete with businesses when visiting the hub)

- University of Gloucestershire Service Level Agreement (SLA). (The Growth Hub delivery is a collaboration between GFirst LEP and University of Gloucestershire). The funding agreement with GFirst LEP covers the capital funding and an SLA will be required with the University of Gloucestershire regarding some elements of service delivery, such as marketing.

5.4 This report provides an update of Tewkesbury Borough growth hub progress and delivery to date. The hub is a great opportunity to support development of the local economy and enterprise. Having a hub located within the Public Services Centre will also provide the perfect place to reach growing businesses in the area.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the local business community and relevant partner organisations through a business survey.

This demonstrated clear support for the hub and also helped shape the bid.

7.2 The hub is supported by key local partners and organisations.

8.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

8.1 Council Plan.

Tourism and Economic Development Strategy 2017 – 2021.

9.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

9.1 Government's National Growth Policy.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

10.1 None directly associated with this report.

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

11.1 None directly associated with this report.

12.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

12.1 None directly associated with this report.

13.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

13.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: None.