

Coast to Capital

Reference: Coast to Capital Board Meeting
Date: 27 January 2021
Report Title: Executive Report
Report by: Executive Team
Item No: 4
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to note the Executive Report.

1. Introduction

The company continues to operate effectively in remote working mode, with a continued focus on maintaining morale and engagement of staff. We continue to operate weekly Pulse surveys to understand points of most importance to the team, including a detailed survey in January to help develop plans for the long-term impact of the crisis.

The main focus of work has been to develop a business plan which will ensure we can adapt to unknown Government policies on future regional policy. This will include supporting the development of local infrastructure bids as well as identifying and leading on bids of regional importance.

As an example of the latter, we have been asked to lead regional work to develop a Freeports bid for the region, focussing on Manor Royal, which we are delighted to do. Henry Smith MP has highlighted the importance of this work in Parliament.

2. Corporate update

Board Development

Our approach to Board Development is currently under review by Chair's Committee following the Board Development session in September. We are planning to hold another Board Away Day in March to continue the momentum on the discussions that took place at the September session. It continues to be a challenging time for Board leadership given the continued remote way of working and pressure on Board Director's time which is a priority for the Chair and Chief Executive to consider over

the coming months.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion continues and a Management Progress and Plan for 2020/21 can be found at Annex A. We have sought expert communications advice to help us finalise:

- The Diversity Statement in our Assurance Framework;
- Our updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- An Anti-racist Pledge; and
- Content on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on our website.

Governance

A full Governance update is covered in item six; however, the following updates should be noted:

- Our **Annual Review** with Government will take place on 3 February and in advance of this we are pleased to report that no issues have been identified from a compliance check which took place in October/November.
- Following the October Board meeting the updated **Risk Appetite** has been approved by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting in November and can be found in the updated Risk Policy on the [website](#).
- **Company risks** are being actively managed, with the top risks identified in Annex B. A thorough review has been conducted of all departmental risks in light of the recent Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions. No significant changes have been identified and we continue to successfully work remotely.
- Our **Internal Audit** plan progresses and we have completed two follow up audits of our HR processes which have identified no significant issues. Kreston Reeves will be undertaking an independent audit of our Backing Business Fund before the end of the financial year and BDO will be undertaking an independent audit of our compliance with GDPR regulations in February.
- We have let our Local Authorities know that we are happy to participate in any **Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees**.
- We have no live **complaints**.

Communications

Our focus over the last quarter was to promote our COVID recovery activity in particular the Getting Building Fund and our Growth Hub support. Highlights include:

- **Getting Building Fund** – press releases for the approved Getting Building Fund projects have been shared with government for ministerial quotes and will be issued over the coming months.
- **Recovery Grants** – we have been identifying key success stories from grant

recipients which we plan to promote on social media as a priority.

- **ERDF Kick-start Tourism and Restart and Recovery SME Grants** – a successful campaign to promote the remainder of these funds was completed before the festive break.
- **Diversity** – we are currently requesting quotes from suppliers to help build a more in depth and strategic picture of our diverse businesses across the area to target our communication.

During October, November and December we issued the following press releases (including highlights from mentions in stakeholder news):

- [Coast to Capital Growth Hub to deliver Peer Networks programme in partnership with MDHUB](#)
- [Government commits to South East transport strategy but says time isn't right for devolution of transport powers](#)
- [Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 – A Statement from the Chief Executive at Coast to Capital](#)
- [Skills Strategy and Action Plan for the Coast to Capital area launched](#)
- [Construction of new station building takes off at Gatwick Airport](#) (featured in Business Edge magazine, Mid Sussex Today, Crawley Observer, West Sussex County Times, Rail News)
- [What Next Sussex – a great success for the region!](#)
- [Ceremony marks official opening of Haywards Heath College](#)

We also issued a blog [Reflecting on 2020 – a year of adapting, evolving and innovating](#).

In total we were mentioned in 74 articles between October and December.

Stakeholder Engagement

Over the last three months we have continued to deliver our new coordinated and joined up approach to stakeholder engagement. We have continued to provide regular updates on the ongoing support that we are providing to businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the UK transition from the EU. These are issued regularly to Local Authority Chief Executives, Leaders, Economic Development Officers and MPs across our area and Growth Hub partners (over 500 stakeholders and partners). We continue to receive good feedback and engagement in particular from MPs, Local Authorities and Chambers, with key Growth Hub business support information being shared regularly with their networks.

Engaging with Local Authorities has been a priority in January and the Chief Executive has presented to the following meetings:

- Brighton and Hove City Council Executive Leadership Team Meeting
- West Sussex County Council District and Borough Chief Executives Weekly Meeting

- Surrey County Council District and Borough Chief Executives Meeting (with Enterprise M3)

Looking ahead we are preparing to implement a more targeted and focused approach to engaging with key businesses and organisations. This will include introducing stakeholder mapping, prioritisation and tracking; reviewing our approach to MP engagement; increasing opportunities for collaboration with Business Representative Organisations; supporting Board members in their stakeholder engagement; and considering specific consultation activity in relation to Stronger, Smarter, Greener and the Business Plan.

Marketing

Over the past three months, the following marketing highlights include:

- The Coast to Capital **Twitter** account was mentioned 405 times with 104,900 views (impressions). We have 80 new followers now with over 4,539 followers.
- Trending topics on Twitter included promotion of our updated Growth Hub portal, the second ERDF grants call, and the published 'Build back Stronger, Smarter and Greener' plan.
- Following an increase of 79 followers we now have 1,493 followers on **LinkedIn**. There was a total of 875 page views, with 365 unique visitors and 9,067 views on individual posts.
- Top trending topics on LinkedIn included the CEO reflections on 2020 and the comprehensive spending review, our sponsorship of the Crawley STEM Fest event, and promotion of internal job opportunities.

Events

In December virtual launch events were held to launch the Skills Strategy and Action Plan and the Careers Hub set out in more detail in the strategy section.

Organisational Developments

Following Respect training which took place in February 2020 and additional engagement activity the team has developed and launched a Respect Pledge (Annex C). This captures key terms and words that the team feel describes Coast to Capital and how they wanted to be treated. This is being discussed within teams and its implementation will be supported by training and team activities. This complements our approach to mental health and wellbeing and is particularly timely given the increasing pressure of lockdown and continued remote working.

We have undertaken a review of how we can operate as effectively as possible as a team that is working remotely for the foreseeable future. As a result, we will be implementing Office 365 over the next few months which will bring considerable benefits to the organisation. We are also reviewing our internal communications and seeking feedback from the team to ensure we build on our strong communications

activity over the past year.

The following changes have taken place in the Coast to Capital team:

- **Jake Daniels** has been promoted to Communications Manager in recognition of his performance and development progression from Communications Officer and to support the growth of the organisation.
- **Millie Bew** has been promoted to Project Manager in recognition of her performance and development and she will be focusing on the delivery of the Coast to Capital Skills Strategy and Action Plan.
- **Fiona Anderson** has joined the team as Growth Relationship Manager. Fiona will be working closely with the Growth Hub team and with high growth potential businesses to help them develop their growth plans.
- **Vanessa Perdomo** has joined the team as Growth Grants Administrator providing administrative support to the Growth Hub team to deliver the Growth Grants Programme.
- **Nick Darwin** has joined the team as Governance Officer to deliver our governance, ensure compliance with our Assurance Framework and lead our commitment to exceptional governance and transparency

We are in the process of recruiting a **Corporate Administrator** as a Kickstart placement to support the Corporate Team. We are using Chichester College Group as a Kickstart Gateway as we have applied for less than 29 placements.

3. Services

Coast to Capital Growth Hub

Core Growth Hub Activity

The Growth Hub team are still dealing with high numbers of business enquiries. Many of these relate to the funding introduced to help business respond to the impact of COVID-19 and future recovery.

For the period 1 April to 31 December 2020 the Growth Hub has

- Responded to 2537 enquiries through the Growth Hub website
 - Key topics have been COVID 19 impacts, Start Ups having been made redundant, funding to recover and grow, general advice regarding pivoting and making business more resilient.
- Provided support to 2208 unique companies
- Been in contact with 5970 business across all programmes and communications including emails, surveys, calls and newsletters

The Growth Hub continues to report to the Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU) on a weekly basis regarding business issues and local economic conditions, particularly around COVID-19 response/recovery and the pre and post EU Transition period.

EU Transition Business Readiness Funding

Coast to Capital has been awarded £203,550 by BEIS for EU Transition Business Readiness Funding. £81,000 of this is ringfenced for Advisor outreach and advice. A further £108,000 is available to cover Specialist and General Adviser support including outbound telephone, email contact, webinars and workshops. The remaining £14,500 covers Intelligence, Analysis and Metrics and Evaluation.

Coast to Capital has issued a number of requests for quotes, following the Procurement Policy, to identify partners to deliver the elements of the funded support.

Coast to Capital has procured the delivery of the EU Transition Advisers for Outreach and Advice from Newable who will allocate 3 EU Transition Business Advisers and an Outbound Engagement Expert to this programme for 12 weeks. The Specialist and General Adviser support will be delivered by membership and business support organisations who responded to a request for quote.

We are also working with Enterprise M3 and Thames Valley Berkshire to work with a top ten accountancy practice to deliver specialist high profile webinar covering the key topic areas related to Post EU transition – International Trade, Indirect Taxes and Customs and Duties.

Supplementary Growth Hub Funding

Coast to Capital has entered into an agreement with BEIS for supplementary Growth Hub funding for 2020/2021 of £167,500. This funding is being used to provide additional front line support to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and EU Transition period.

A Request for Quotation tendering process was undertaken and Coast to Capital has procured the services of three Interim Growth Relationship Managers from October 2020 until March 2021.

Peer Networks programme

Coast to Capital secured £150,000 to deliver the BEIS funded Peer Networks. Peer Networks is a national peer-to-peer networking programme for small business leaders that want to grow and develop their organisation for future success.

Our delivery partner, MD Hub has been delivering the programme since November and we have fully recruited our target number of 10 cohorts. The final three cohorts will commenced delivery during January 2021. In addition to the peer network sessions every business receives 3.5 hours of One to One coaching.

We have introduced a number of unique and innovative elements to the programme including the use of graphic recording at the start and end of the Peer Network sessions. We are also creating a “Talking Heads” piece of evaluation research to get

feedback from participants. This will be reflective of the gender, age and ethnicity diversity of participants. 38% of participants are women.

A senior BEIS official observed one of the Peer Network meetings and highlighted her positive experience of our “excellent” programme to a national meeting of LEP Chief Executives.

We are mindful of the risk of cohort member drop out due to the 3rd National covid-19 lockdown and changing MD priorities but the satisfaction ratings of the programme to date has been very high and will help with cohort member retention.

Coast to Capital Business Recovery Grants

Coast to Capital is delivering its £2.1 million Business Recovery Grants supporting businesses across the Coast to Capital area. The grant programme provides up to 50% of an expansion project for organisations that can demonstrate a clear link to COVID-19 recovery and future growth.

An impressive 451 expressions of interest have been received with grants request worth £16.5m. 43 full applications worth £1.7m in grants have passed through the due diligence stage with 31 approved to date for £718K. 7 grants for £678K to date are being reviewed by the large grant panel. 21% of approved grants have been awarded to women owned businesses.

There have been applications from across Coast to Capital the Coast to Capital area and from a wide variety of sectors. Most application have been from entertainments and arts, manufacturing, sports and leisure, hospitality and CDIT businesses.

It is forecast that the grant pot will be fully spent.

ERDF Kickstart Tourism Grants and Restart and Renew SME Grants

Coast to Capital, alongside its Cluster Growth Hub Partners in EM3, and Thames Valley Berkshire, have been delivering the ERDF Kickstart Tourism Grants and Restart and Renew SME Grants providing grants of up to £5,000. Exemphas have been delivering these grants for the cluster.

The visitor economy grant letter offers have totalled £101,809 to 34 businesses and the wider economy grant letter offers have totalled £218,274 to 59 businesses. There is a waiting list for both grants and the funding pot will be fully distributed.

Experts in Residence

Vicky Stevens, our banking Expert in Residence, has recently resumed her activity with Coast to Capital this month after being paused due to Natwest requiring additional resources to address the Bounce Back Loan scheme. Vicky will help the Growth Hub promote our programmes to women business leaders.

Coast to Capital is the first LEP to procure mnAI which enables us to identify women business owners in the Coast to Capital area. This will help future targeting and critically the platform will enable us to properly identify, record and report on our engagement with women business owners and track our improvement over time in this area. A Coast to Capital working group has been established to deliver this important area of activity.

4. Strategy and Policy

For delivery of Stronger, Smarter, Greener – see agenda item 3.

Skills

Our growing responsibilities in this area include the day to day operation of the Skills 360 Board and implementation of the recently launched Skills Strategy and Action Plan; ensuring that the remainder of our £28m allocation of European Social Fund is fully contracted and supports delivery of our strategy; and delivery of the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub.

Skills 360 Board

The last meeting of the Skills 360 Board was on 24 November.

Board Leadership

With a clear direction and focus, there is now real opportunity for the Skills 360 Board to adopt a strong leadership role and secure strong engagement from employers, education providers, central and local government and the third sector, encouraging collaboration and bringing in the investment that the region needs. In order to do this, we have introduced Board Champion and Project Sponsor roles, which are opportunities for Skills 360 Board members to use their particular area of expertise.

There are a mix of roles which have been identified as key to the success of the Skills 360 Board and delivery of its Skills Strategy and Action Plan. The sector focused roles are based on the sectors where we have significant competitive advantage and those that employ or have the potential to employ high numbers. There is a project sponsor for each of the transformational projects outlined in the Skills Strategy and Action Plan.

Sector Spotlights

As part of the sector champion roles we will be inviting sector champions to present at Skills 360 Board meetings going forward. At the November meeting, Liane Richardson and Tim Walder presented the first of these 'sector spotlights' on Construction (presentation [here](#)) which was well received by other Board members, and we will be carrying out follow-up work in 2021.

Skills Strategy and Action Plan Launch Event

On 3 December we held a successful webinar to launch the Skills Strategy and Action Plan. The webinar was well received by the 96 participants dialled in which were a variety of stakeholders from both in and outside of the Coast to Capital area. The event is available to watch on our website [here](#).

Local Skills Report

The Department for Education (DfE) have asked Skills Advisory Panels to produce a 'Local Skills Report', which the Skills 360 Board will produce for Coast to Capital.

Local Skills Reports will provide a clear and consistent view of local skills needs across areas in a relevant and engaging format for local partners. The reports will be a key source of local skills information that enable cross-area comparison and feed local intelligence to the national [Skills and Productivity Board \(SPB\)](#) and central government.

A first draft of the Local Skills Report will be reviewed by DfE in February 2021, and the document will be published on the website by 31 March 2021.

European Social Fund (ESF)

The ESF allocation in Coast to Capital supports people in the area to gain employment, integrate into society and progress their careers by providing innovative skills and training opportunities. There have been 24 projects contracted in the area to date, with 18 currently delivering and four in the pipeline with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Managing Authority.

We have recently been successful in securing two Calls from the ESF reserve fund for new projects, estimated to open for applications on 18 January. One of these Calls will be for projects supporting people into employment, and the other will support employees to upskill and/or retrain.

Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) and the Careers Hub

Enterprise Adviser Network

The Enterprise Adviser Network continues to strengthen despite the challenges of Covid-19. The team are working with their education Centres to ensure that opportunities for virtual employer encounters and experiences of the workplace are signposted and utilised.

The impact of Covid-19 has been extremely challenging for schools and curriculum delivery and pupil attendance has taken priority. We continue to meet virtually with our Careers Leaders and to listen to feedback on how we can best support them during this difficult time. This term has focused on the [delivery and/or support of virtual projects and activities](#) to support our institutions:

- Two [My Choices transition events](#) across Sussex and Surrey for Year 11 pupils. We recorded an excellent number of school registrations, high levels of

- engagement and really positive feedback.
- [Crawley STEMfest](#) - enabled all pupils of secondary school age from across the Coast to Capital region to engage in live STEM employer encounters.
 - [Professional LinkedIn Training](#) for Careers Leaders and in Brighton & Hove, and training for [Careers Link Governors](#) to ensure they understand their role.
 - Our Enterprise Adviser volunteers have been supportive in helping to create a [bank of videos](#) and resources for schools.

Planned events for next term include the delivery of virtual [Open Doors events](#) for pupils, a [virtual Careers Fair](#) and resources to support teachers to embed careers into the curriculum with a particular focus on delivery during National Careers Week.

The team will also be delivering a series of [special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) Master Classes](#) for school support staff.

Careers Hub

The implementation phase of the Careers Hub is now complete and the [Careers Hub Steering Group](#) has met twice to begin to provide direction for Hub projects and initiatives in 2020/21. The Steering Group includes business representatives, key stakeholders and delivery partners and is chaired by Liane Richardson, HR Director of Thakeham Homes, and a member of the Skills 360 Board.

We are actively working with five [Cornerstone Employers](#) from a range of growth business sectors including healthcare, construction, engineering and the green economy and are in discussion with another four from transport & aviation, rail operators, financial services and pharmaceutical sectors to complete the group.

On the 8th December, we delivered a virtual Launch Event for the Careers Hub. Over 120 people attended the live event and the recording is now available to [view](#).

Our next steps will be to review all the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) for our Hub education centres. We'll be identifying where there are gaps in the Benchmarks and developing initiatives that can support all schools and colleges in closing these gaps. The team will work closely our Lead School and College to ensure we continue to understand the current challenges and to check that our plans are workable and realistic.

Energy Strategy

Coast to Capital is working with the [Energy Systems Catapult](#), local authorities and education providers on Skills for Net Zero. This is part of a national effort to create a model for the widespread skills infrastructure needed to meet demand for clean and energy efficient homes. Coast to Capital is one of six regional centres of excellence involved as pilots for the programme.

The Energy Systems Catapult have convened discussions with industry representatives and between regional centres of excellence, in order to develop practical solutions and identify funding streams. Coast to Capital are in the planning

stages of the pilot and will be working with partners locally to deliver on four distinct areas of work, skills provision, learning factories, Innovation hubs and housing stock.

This is a substantial, national programme of work to be developed and delivered over an anticipated 5-year timeframe, with the pilot for our area initially focussed on two local-authority areas within the region, Brighton & Hove and Crawley, both with significant social housing stock.

5. Diversity Statement

Our approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion has been covered above.

6. Legal Statement

No legal position has been sought on this paper.

7. Finance Statement

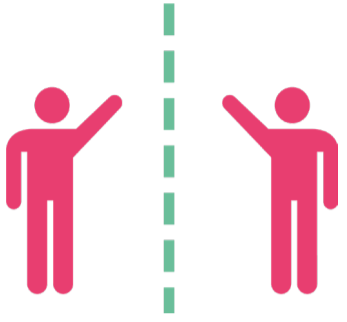
There are no decisions to be taken in this report and therefore no financial implications.

Annexes:

- **Annex A** – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Management Plan
- **Annex B** - Company Top Risks
- **Annex C** – Coast to Capital Respect Pledge

Our Respect Pledge

Coast to Capital Principles for Respect



Boundaries

Being mindful and understanding



Challenges

Creating insightful conversations

Communication

Varying methods improve effectiveness



Diversity

Our differences make us stronger



Honesty

Being open about how we feel



Kindness

Showing empathy for others and ensuring self care



Professional

Considering our language and actions



Responsibility

Being accountable for actions

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Management Plan – 2020/21

The Coast to Capital Senior Management Team is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a priority. The following sets out the progress and plan for 2020/21 which is ongoing and not exhaustive:

Quarter 1: – April – June

- Ongoing EDI activity continued by new EDI activity paused due to pandemic.
- Finance Expert in Residence activity paused as prioritised to NatWest loan activity.
- Internal Diversity Working Group suspended.

Quarter 2: – July – September

- Internal Diversity Working Group re-established.
- Team training on unconscious bias delivered by Diversity & Ability.
- Chair recruitment exercise and marketing strategy delivered with diversity at its heart.
- Catalyst South joint marketing activity on diverse recruitment to LEP Boards led by Coast to Capital.
- Inclusion Maturity Review undertaken on our approach to review the inclusivity and diversity of our organisation in particular in relation to disability access and support.
- AGM 2020 video published on YouTube with subtitles and video protocols updated to ensure subtitles included in any videos going forward.

Quarter 3: – October - December

- Review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Diversity statement within the Assurance Framework undertaken.
- Creation of a draft anti-racist pledge for consideration.
- Line Manager training on disability and neurodiversity delivered by Diversity & Ability.
- Finance Expert in Residence activity re-established to support the Growth Hub.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations given to the delivery of the Peer Network Programme.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations given to the delivery of Recovery Grants.
- Two week trial of the mnAI platform in October to investigate the benefits of data analysis on female owned businesses.
- Licence to mnAI platform secured and Growth Hub starting to utilise data.
- Chair participated in panel discussion on the British Business Bank Report 'Alone, together: Entrepreneurship and Diversity in the UK'.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reports shared with the Board and team.
- Communications Strategy reviewed to include Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations (ongoing).

- Stakeholder Strategy reviewed to better reach diverse groups and networks (ongoing).
- Social Media Diversity calendar actions agreed and delivered (ongoing).
- Social Media campaign for Black History Month delivered.
- Work commissioned to analyse the diversity of the Coast to Capital region to establish a benchmark and identify diverse networks and representative organisations.
- Growth Hub training on barriers facing BAME owned businesses planned.
- Communications support commissioned to review our EDI messaging and documentation.

Quarter 4 – January - March

- Scope (including budget implications) the work required for the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for delivery in the 2021/22 financial year.
- Identify EDI Board member learning and development – both ad hoc and as part of the potential EDI Strategy development.
- Prepare for active Board Director recruitment in 2021/22 to establish a diverse Board.
- Deliver agreed Inclusion Maturity Review recommendations (subject to budget limitations).
- Confirm the required Finance Exert in Residence activity for quarter four to support the Growth Hub.
- Lead work to update and enable LEPs to sign the 'Investing in Women' code.
- Implement and review enhancements to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations in the work of the Services, Strategy & Policy, Investments and Corporate team specified in the EDI Policy.
- Growth Hub to continue to utilise disaggregated business data and identify further data use enhancements.
- Disseminate best practice across Catalyst South and the LEP Network (notably around gender disaggregated data and business support).
- Create and agree the Management Plan for 2021/22.