



Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

Business Growth Groups Consultancy Brief

June 2022



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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been awarded funds by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to provide a dedicated business support function for Dorset.
- 1.2. The purpose of this function is to be a free service offering advice and support for businesses within the county. This includes providing them with business diagnostics and signposting to the most appropriate commercial or public funded assistance available to help them grow.
- 1.3. The programme will see the creation of up to three facilitated peer groups that comprise of high-growth or high-growth potential small and medium enterprises (SMEs) based in Dorset.
- 1.4. These groups are expected to support the growth of between 8 and 12 SMEs each across the Dorset LEP area. These groups should align with one (or more where there is an overlap) of the priority sectors or themes listed below under section 5.3.)

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Businesses in Dorset, like most other businesses in the UK, are continuing to experience a range of challenges such as increased cost of energy, skills/workforce shortages and supply chain disruption.
- 2.2. Dorset LEP wants to help ensure businesses are well placed to address and overcome these challenges whilst being well placed to take advantage of opportunities that arise through local and national programmes; these include the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Innovate UK funding and the planned south west investment fund that was announced by the Chancellor in autumn 2021.
- 2.3. The 2019 Business Productivity Review found that those businesses that adopt formal management practices are more likely to achieve higher turnover, employment levels and productivity growth. There is a broad base of evidence that suggests that businesses that seek external advice or undertake formal training are more likely to improve their overall business performance.
- 2.4. The Business Productivity Review reported that businesses are most likely to look to trusted peers and professional networks for advice first, often leveraging their networks and existing relationships with intermediaries to signpost and help them to navigate the business support market.

3. BUDGET AND DURATION

- 3.1. The contract is to run from 01 August 2022 until 31 March 2023.
- 3.2. There will be an optional 12 month extension which would lead to a potential contract end date of 31 March 2024, which would be triggered by Dorset LEP.
- 3.3. Any extension will be subject to the agreement of both parties and will require a new contract.
- 3.4. Any offer to extend the contract by a further 12 months will be made with a minimum of one month's notice, prior to the expiration of the existing original term.
- 3.5. The budget allocated is up to £24,000 per annum exclusive of any VAT charges that the supplier might incur.

4. OBJECTIVES

- 4.1. An increasing number of government funded programmes are looking at models that utilise equity co-investments with private sector investors in growth stage R&D-intensive British companies operating in high growth sectors or that help to address key economic and societal challenges such as Net Zero and automation.
- 4.2. This programme is aimed at supporting leaders and senior managers from the SME business community in Dorset who meet the eligibility criteria below:

Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
In operation for 2 year+	Demonstrate investment in R&D
At least 5 employees	Exporters or potential exporters
A turnover of at least £100,000	Have raised secured investment from private investors in previous funding rounds
UK based company with active operations in Dorset	Have secured funding or applied for funding from Innovate UK in the past (including Knowledge Transfer Partnerships)

	Participated in an accelerator, incubator programme or government Catapult
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4.3 There may be some scope to work with some businesses outside of these criteria.

5. COMMISSION

5.1 Dorset LEP is seeking to appoint a supplier to deliver up to three business growth groups. These groups are expected to support the growth of between 8 and 12 SMEs each across the Dorset LEP area. These groups should align with one (or more where there is an overlap) of the priority sectors or themes listed below under section 5.3.

5.2 The provider(s) will need to clearly demonstrate in their tender response how they will meet the required deliverables within the available budget and timescales.

5.3 Dorset LEP is keen to ensure that these networks are aligned with Dorset's Local Industrial Strategy and capitalise on existing and emerging growth sectors and capabilities. As a result, we are particularly interested to receive proposals that seek to work in/with areas such as the following:

Priority delivery areas	
Priority Sectors	Themes
Advanced Engineering and manufacturing (including aerospace)	Automation – including 5G and SMART Places
Marine and maritime	One Health (interrelation of human, animal and plant health)
Agri-tech and aquaculture	Net Zero
Digital health and care	Healthy ageing and improving health outcomes
Defence and security	Rural enterprise and innovation
Please note , this is an indicative list – not an exhaustive list – and we will consider proposals in addition to these suggested areas where there is a strong economic business case for doing so.	

5.4 Each business taking part in this support should be offered up to 12 hours of in-group support covering areas such as growth strategies, financial resilience, business planning, and leadership and management. In addition, those participating should be offered separate one-to-one support with suitably qualified growth/business advisors or coaches.

- 5.5 Dorset LEP would require that participating businesses receive a baseline assessment at the start of the programme and a further assessment at the end of the programme. The aim of this is to help demonstrate the benefits that business have derived through their participation in this support.
- 5.6 The supplier will be required to record all activity onto the Dorset LEP's CRM system to ensure support for business through the service is coherent and that referral destinations and effectiveness of the service can be monitored.
- 5.7 The supplier will collect, as a minimum, firm-level data for those businesses who receive 'medium' or 'high' intensity business support as detailed in **Annexe 1**.
- 5.8 The supplier will be required to use the Dorset LEP brand and comply with the associated brand guidelines.

6. OUTPUTS

- 6.1. The following outputs, outcomes and service levels are required by the LEP by 31 March 2022:
- Successful delivery of three business growth groups;
 - One overarching impact case study detailing the support and outcomes of customers who have received support;
 - Liaising with the LEP around potential high-growth, investment ready businesses; and
 - Minimum 80% satisfaction from businesses receiving support.

7. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

- 7.1. The work will be overseen by Dorset LEP's Business Engagement Manager (BEM).
- 7.2. The supplier must nominate a dedicated point of contact to act as Contract Manager to oversee the work and liaise with and report into the BEM. This will include some face-to-face meetings (either virtual or online), and updates in writing, including advising of any service delivery issues.
- 7.3. Dorset LEP requires a high level of accuracy in this piece of work, particularly in relation to the data and management information provided. The Contract Manager is responsible for ensuring the quality of the work and the accuracy of the information provided.

7.4. The supplier must be able to demonstrate that they have proven experience of working with businesses in an advisory capacity. In doing so, they must show examples of good customer engagement and feedback.

8. TIMETABLE

Invitation to Tender	20 June 2022
Deadline for the submission of Tenders	4 July 2022, 18:00 hrs
Interviews (if required)	Week commencing 11 July 2022
Appointment	Week Commencing 18 July 2022
Inception meeting	Week Commencing 25 July 2022
Contract start date	01 August 2022

9. TENDER ASSESSMENT AND COMMISSIONING PROCEDURE

9.1. Evaluation criteria

Supplier selection will be made at the discretion of Dorset LEP.

Scoring weightings are broken down as follows:

- Process – 20%
- Engagement – 10%
- Systems – 10%
- Resources – 30%
- Price – 10%
- Due Diligence – 20%

9.2. Scoring criteria

4 Excellent	Proposal meets and, in some places, exceeds the required standard.
3 Good	Proposal meets required standard.
2 Acceptable	Proposal meets the required standard in most respects but is lacking or inconsistent in others.
1 Poor	Proposal falls short of expected standard.
0 Unacceptable	Completely or significantly fails to meet required standard or does not provide the relevant answer.

Dorset LEP reserves the right not to make any appointment.

10. TENDER GUIDANCE

10.1. Developing and submitting your quote

- Take the time to read and understand this document
- In particular, develop a strong understanding of the objective and outputs sections
- In structuring your response, consider how it will be evaluated
- If anything is unclear or you have any questions please direct these to our point of contact, Finn Morgan, via email in the first instance to fmorgan@bournemouth.ac.uk
- Your response must be submitted via email for the attention of Finn Morgan to fmorgan@bournemouth.ac.uk by no later than **18:00, 04 July 2022**.
- Responses may be submitted at any time before the deadline but late responses will not be accepted under any circumstances

10.2. Conflicts of Interest

Dorset LEP may exclude the supplier if there is a conflict of interest which cannot be effectively remedied. The concept of a conflict of interest includes any situation where relevant staff members have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure.

Where there is any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise then it is the responsibility of the supplier to inform Dorset LEP, detailing the conflict in the supplier response to this tender.

11. ANNEXE 1: FIRM-LEVEL DATA

The following tables set out the **minimum** data to be collected for all businesses benefiting from either “Medium intensity” or “High intensity” by the supplier.

Business details and unique identifiers

	Type	Format	Notes
1.1	Contact name	Free text (no character limit)	
1.2	Contact e-mail address	Free text (no character limit)	
1.3	Contact telephone number	Free text (no character limit)	
1.4	Business name	Free text (no character limit)	Validate with lookup service
1.5	Company Registration Number (CRN) Issued by Companies House	8 digit number or 2 upper case letters and 6 digits e.g. 89675265 e.g. SL007945	Find/validate with lookup service If not a limited company and lookup failed, then leave blank If company is being registered soon, collect this once registered
1.6	HMRC VAT Registration number (VRN)	9 digits e.g. 123456789	Found on business VAT certificate

	[only needed if no CRN reference is available]		Validate with lookup service Find VAT service from name If not VAT registered then leave blank
1.7	HMRC employers PAYE reference number (not accounts office reference) [Only needed if CRN or VAT references are not available]	DDD/LDDDDD or DDD/LLDDDDD e.g. 135/A56789 e.g. 135/AB56789	L = Letter (upper case) D = Digit Also called Employer reference It can be found on HMRC business ePAYE letters OR by asking an accountant If not employing anyone on payroll then leave blank
1.8	Number of FTE employees at local business's office receiving support	Decimals allowed. e.g. 13.5	Full time, part time and subcontractors only
1.9	Turnover (£)	XXX,XXX	Total income/sales
1.10	Full address of local business's office receiving support	Free text (no character limit)	

1.11	Postcode of business local business's office receiving support	Free text (max 8 characters)	
1.12	Is this a multi-site business	"Yes" or "no"	
1.13	Brief description of what the business does	Free text (100 words max)	The product/service it delivers. The customers it serves.
1.14	Growth/Scale-up potential	Free text (100 words max)	Brief description of the firm's levels of ambition and potential to grow
1.15	Month business started trading	MM/YYYY	Month the business first started making sales Provides an objective measure of the maturity of the business

Note: In relation to unique business identifiers, Only one of CRN, VAT registration or PAYE reference number need be collected. For non-employers, who are not limited companies, and who are below the VAT threshold, all three fields can be left blank.

Summary of support

	Type	Format	Notes
1.16	Cumulative length of interaction since very first contact with the Growth Hub	Hours (whole number digits)	Roundup to nearest hour
1.17	Summary of what support the business says it needs	Free text (no character limit)	What is the nature of their enquiry and subsequent business need

Support given in each interaction (1 or more) - Separate spreadsheet cells for each interaction

1.18	Type of support	Free text (no character limit)	Brief description of the support given during an interaction. Examples: Diagnostic, Referrals, Answer question, Ongoing support, Follow up. A single interaction can involve several types of support.
1.19	Date of this support	DD/MM/YYYY	This is the date of interaction (not the date a referral is taken up).

Referrals and signposting (0 or more) - Separate spreadsheet cells for each referral

	Type	Format	Notes
1.20	<u>Name</u> of referral program / service	Free text (no character limit)	Included all referrals of any kind made by the hub.
1.21	<u>Purpose</u> of referral	Free text (no character limit)	e.g. developing management capabilities, access to finance, recruiting technical skills
1.22	Date of referral?	DD/MM/YYYY	
1.23	Was the referral accepted and taken up?	Free text	If known, please record whether a referral was

		(no character limit)	<p>“accepted” or “not progressed”.</p> <p>If pending, please record as “pending”.</p> <p>If not known, please record as “unknown”.</p>
1.24	Notes about this referral (optional)	Free text (no character limit)	