



Meeting of the
Solent LEP Business Support Investment Panel
Wednesday 9 August 2023: 10:00 to 12:00

Item	Title	Time
1.	Introductions	10:00 - 10:20
2.	Apologies for absence	
3.	Minutes of previous meeting - 10 November 2022	
4.	Matters Arising	
5.	Declarations of Interest	
6.	Business Support Programmes Status Update Report	10.20 - 10.30
7.	Contract Updates - Local Growth Deal	10:30 - 10:50
8.	Future direction of BSIP / LEP - Update by Richard Jones	10.50 - 11.20
9.	SME - New grant fund	11.20 - 11.45
10.	Any Other Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel membership• Next meeting	11:20 - 12:00

Meeting to close at 12:00



SOLENT
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Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Business Support Investment Panel Meeting Notes

Held on Thursday 10 November 2022 11:00-12:00
Convened electronically via Zoom video conference

Present	Ex-Officio members present
David Bream	LEP
Caroline Carter	Chris Heath
James Fitzgerald - PCC	Kate Cloud
Lyn Davis	Paris Walker
Tim Fielder	Stu Baker
Apologies	
Adrian Went	
Cllr Derek Pretty	
Rob Dewing	
Paula Swain	
Mark Waldron	

Item		ACTION
1.	<u>Introductions</u> Tim Fielder welcomed members to the meeting.	
2.	<u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received from Adrian Went, Cllr Derek Pretty, Paula Swain, Lloyd Clark, Mark Waldron and Rob Dewing. Condolences were made to Rob Dewing and family. It was noted that the meeting was not quorate, but a briefing would continue to be provided to BSIP members in attendance as set out in the following meeting note. Decisions were made by written resolution after the meeting.	
3.	<u>Notes of previous meeting</u> The notes from the meeting on 4 April 2022 were Agreed as a correct record of the meeting. The notes will be signed electronically following the meeting.	LEP Executive to action accordingly

4.	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Panel members were advised that there will be changes to the table within Item 6 when the finalised figures from Natural Enterprise have been provided to the LEP.</p> <p>All other matters will be covered during the course of the meeting</p>	
5.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>An interest was noted for David Bream in a named beneficiary. This was noted by the Chair.</p>	

6.	<p><u>Business Support Programmes Status Update Report</u></p> <p><u>Loan Funds</u></p> <p>An update on the LEP Loan Funds and opportunities, covering loan funding utilised, applications received and number of contracted projects was given to Panel members</p> <p>The Panel were asked to provide their input on possible amendments to the loan funds to make them more attractive to SMEs.</p> <p>Panel member suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Product positioning” of the Loan Funds and how it differentiates itself from other similar offerings • The internal financial requirements / constraints that the SLEP must meet • “Go to market” strategy, to include how it can collaborate with other partners (eg banks) and improved marketing activity • Adding the Administration Fee to the cost of the loan • Better marketing of the Funds. • Giving more consideration around the deposits that SMEs provide, to ensure that they have a suitable amount of their own finances in the project. Caroline Carter offered to provide assistance where needed. • Consider banks as an ally to ensuring customers are directed down the path most suitable and beneficial to their situation • Review what gaps there are in banks current offerings to SMEs • Consider partnerships with the banks • Consider that banks may be keen to encourage financially stable SMEs to take loans from themselves rather than direct them to the LEP <p>Panel members agreed that there may be a gap for the LEP to fill; where businesses may or may not be able to get a loan from the bank because they can't cover twice the monthly repayments to satisfy eligibility criteria, the LEP could step in with a low/zero interest loan to potentially bridge the gap, making the repayments affordable for the organisation.</p> <p><u>IOW Natural Enterprise</u></p> <p>The LEP Executive had requested Natural Enterprise to return unallocated funding to the LEP. Further funds may also be returned as the LEP Executive is in discussion with Natural Enterprise over a couple of outstanding projects.</p>	
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	Confidential report has not been published as it includes information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, including information relating to an individual and/or relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person.	
7.	<p><u>Contract Updates</u></p> <p>Confidential report has not been published as it includes information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, including information relating to an individual and/or relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>This is the last Panel meeting for Lyn Davies, Mark Waldron and Adrian Went.</p> <p>Thanks to the Panel members for their service during their time on the Panel were given by Chris Heath on behalf of the LEP and Tim Fielder, as Chair of BSIP.</p> <p><u>Panel Recruitment</u></p> <p>Up to 5 new Panel members are to be recruited, with advertisements going out shortly.</p> <p><u>Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>Kate Cloud advised that the Terms of Reference need reviewing. This will be sent to Panel members for review and comment.</p> <p><u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>To be agreed, however currently anticipated to be towards the end of April 2023.</p> <p><u>Delivery Plan</u></p> <p>Kate Cloud advised that the 2023/24 delivery plan had been drafted and reviewed by FFPMG as it is due to be submitted to Government by 25 November. This will be shared with BSIP shortly.</p> <p>No further business.</p>	

**Meeting closed at
12:02pm**

Item: 6

Title: Business Support Programmes Status Update

Date: 09 August 2023

Purpose: To provide the Business Support Investment Panel with an update on Solent LEP SME grant programmes

Introduction

This report provides panel members with an update in relation to progress and changes to LEP Business Support programmes since the 10 November 2022 meeting. It includes high-level information on job outcomes and awards made.

Current Fund Status

The status of the funds and job outputs, as at 31 July 2023, can be viewed in Tables 1 and 2, below. Any changes since the last meeting have been shown, and the paper from the 10 November 2022 meeting is also available in the meeting pack for comparison.

	Solent Prosperity Fund ¹					
	Current Fund End Date: 31 March 2021					
	Project Cost		LEP Funding		Match Funding	
	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change
Crowdfunder	£854,972		£226,993		£627,979	
Solent Prosperity Fund	£3,953,150		£600,193		£3,352,957	
Small Business Programme	£3,706,785	£642,663	£597,226	£104,273	£3,109,559	£538,390
Z21	£929,312		£500,000		£429,312	
IoW Rural SME Fund ²	£3,514,774		£1,368,605		£2,146,169	
New Forest Rural SME Fund ²	£345,062	£71,982	£162,999	£35,991	£182,063	£35,991
Predecessor Programmes	£12,723,718		£1,875,708		£10,848,010	
Sub-totals	£26,027,773	£714,645	£5,331,724	£140,264	£20,696,049	£574,381

¹ Funded from the Local Growth Deal 2015/16 to 2020/21 including LEP predecessor programmes and investment programmes delivered by LEP partners Natural Enterprise (IoW and New Forest Rural SME Fund) and University of Southampton (Z21 Innovation Fund)

² This includes both Isle of Wight Rural Fund and Isle of Wight Rural Business Resilience Fund and New Forest Rural Fund and New Forest Rural Business Resilience Fund as appropriate.

Table 2- Outputs

	Solent Prosperity Fund ³					
	Jobs created by: 31 March 2021					
	Projects Supported		Jobs Created		Jobs Safeguarded	
	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change
Crowdfunder	98		37		441	
Solent Prosperity Fund	9		0		0	
Small Business Programme	12		26		7	
Z21	14 ⁴		41		0	
IoW Rural SME Fund ⁵	100	-2	135.4	-2.2	275	-9.5
New Forest SME Fund ⁵	25	1	16	11	34	
Predecessor Programmes	34		168		34	
Sub-totals	292	-1	423.4	8.8	791	-9.5

Administration of IoW Rural SME Fund and New Forest Rural SME Fund

The LEP Executive has received a total of £28,297 of unallocated funding back from the beneficiary as a result of two projects not completing their projects in accordance with the terms of their contracts which can be used in future funding for SMEs under direction of BSIP and the FFPMG. There is one outstanding matter relating to a beneficiary of the New Forest Rural SME Fund and the potential repayment of a part of the grant award. The LEP Executive is in regular contact with the beneficiary on this matter.

Solent LEP Growth Hub

The Growth Hub continue to lead on direct business support activity including specialist hubs as follows:

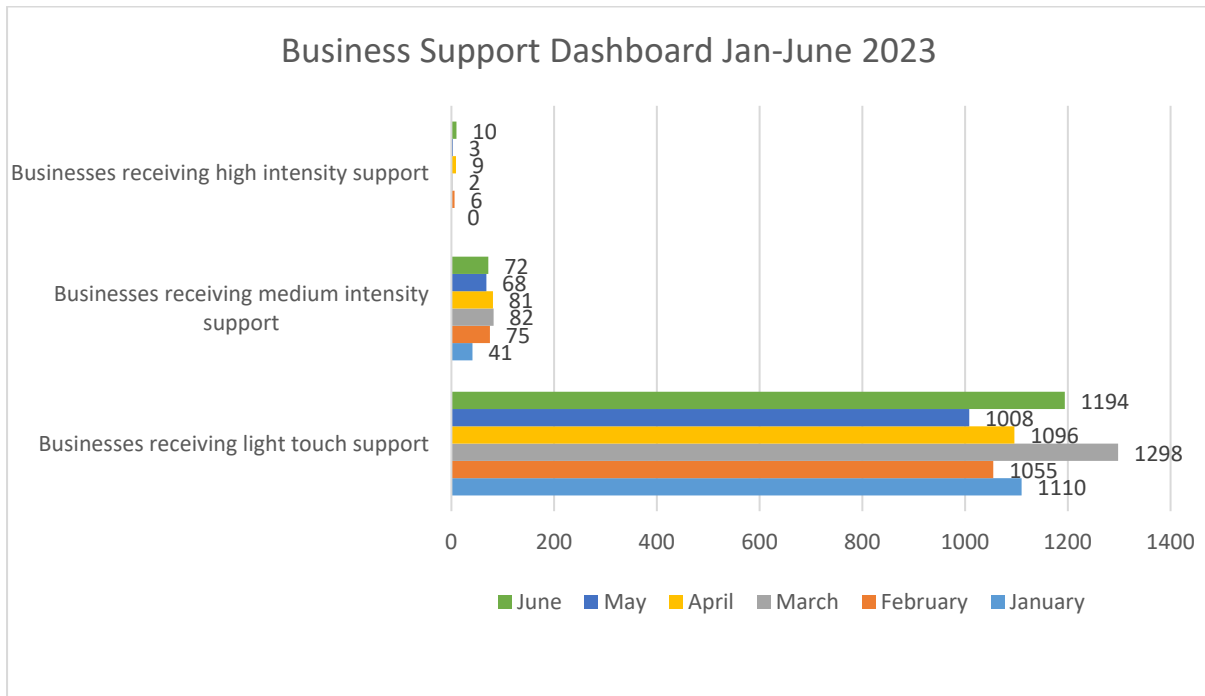
- [Coronavirus Support Hub](#)
- [International Trade Hub](#)
- [Green & Sustainable Business Hub](#)
- [Growth Hub Business Support](#)
- [Funding Hub](#)

The chart below graphically illustrates the levels of support provided by the Solent LEP Growth Hub to the local business community over the last six months.

³ Funded from the Local Growth Deal 2015/16 to 2020/21 including LEP predecessor programmes and investment programmes delivered by LEP partners Natural Enterprise (IoW Rural SME Fund) and University of Southampton (Z21 Innovation Fund).

⁴ This is the number of projects supported in the Z21 programme. Of these, 10 new start-up businesses have been formed.

⁵ This includes both Isle of Wight Rural Fund and Isle of Wight Rural Business Resilience Fund and New Forest Rural Fund and New Forest Rural Business Resilience Fund as appropriate. Figures taken from the final Accountants Report dated 31 May 2022 supplied by Natural Enterprise.



Businesses receiving high intensity support - These are businesses taking part in business coaching exercises.

Businesses receiving medium intensity support - These are businesses who have attended masterclasses, business clinics and webinars, and have therefore had an element of one-to-one or one-to-few support from the Growth Hub team.

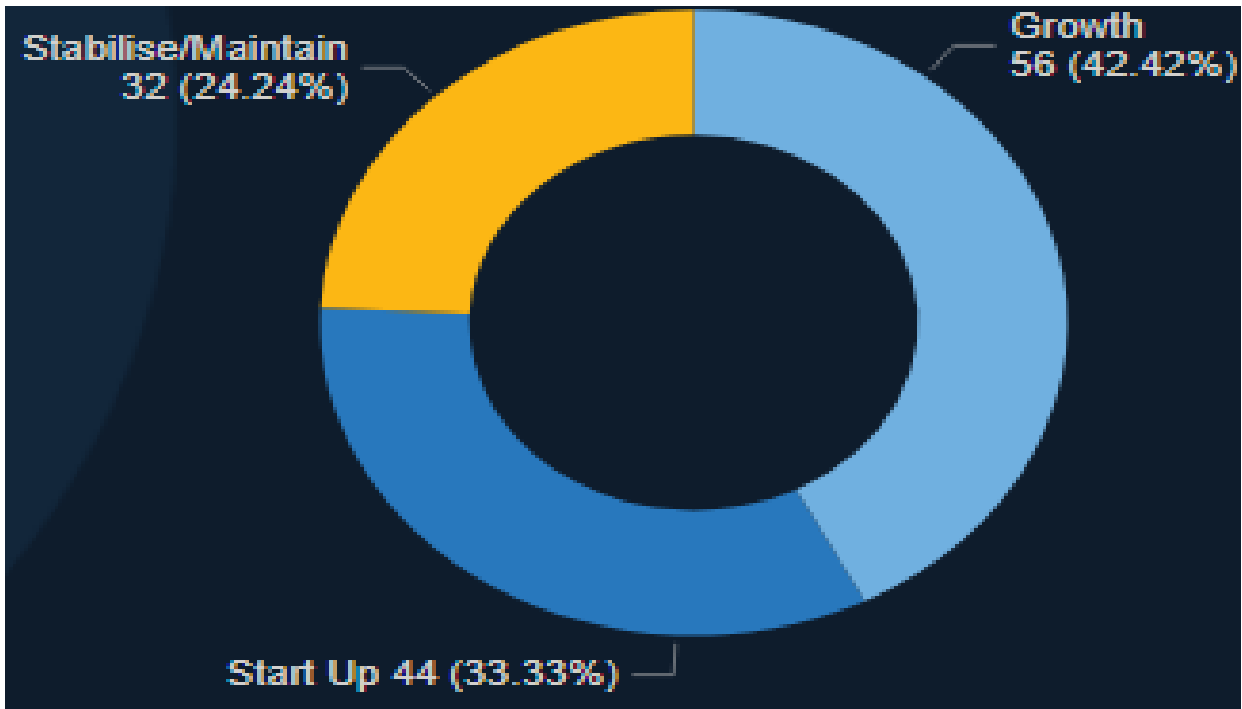
Businesses receiving light touch support - These are businesses who have made an initial enquiry by telephone or email or attended larger events with the Solent Growth Hub team.

The Solent Growth Hub have a wealth of data regarding their operations. Some examples are displayed below in order to better illustrate the breadth of activities across the areas:

The Type of Support chart below categorises activities into three main areas of growth, stabilise/maintain and start up. This chart illustrates the majority of activity this financial year has been in the area of business growth.



Types of Support April-June 2023



The Growth Hub Key Support Requests chart below gives a more detailed breakdown of the sort of enquiries coming forward to the Growth Hub so far this financial year. Finance & funding and coaching & mentoring have continued to see the highest number of requests, with a greater focus on group support and networking than reported at the last BSIP in November 2022.

Growth Hub Key Support Requested



These figures are monitored monthly and provide the Growth Hub with data that influences their responses to local needs.

Legal implications

To follow

Financial comments from the S151 Officer of the Accountable Body

There are no specific financial implications arising from the content of this report.

Item: 6

Title: Business Support Programmes Status Update

Date: 10 November 2022

Purpose: To provide the Business Support Investment Panel with an update on Solent LEP SME grant programmes

Introduction

This report provides panel members with an update in relation to progress and changes to LEP Business Support programmes since the 4 April 2022 meeting. It includes high-level information on job outcomes and awards made.

SME Priority Sectors Loan Fund

At the Solent Summit held at the new Horizon Cruise Terminal at Southampton on 8 June 2022 the Solent LEP launched two new loan funds. The first, Solent LEP Prosperity Loan Fund, which invited applications for loan funding between £100,000 and £1,000,000 and the second, Solent LEP SME Priority Sectors Loan Fund, which invited applications for loan funding between £15,000 and £99,000. The level of loan funding available was 50% and 80% respectively of total project costs.

In terms of the SME fund applicants had a deadline of 8 July 2022 to submit the Expression of Interest (EOI) form as the first part of the application process. The LEP received six EOIs requesting loan funding totalling £280,000 with the total cost of the projects being £438,000.

An initial eligibility check was completed on the submitted EOIs and two applicants were invited to submit a full application by 30 September 2022.

Ahead of the application deadline one of the applicants invited to apply discussed their application with a member of the Accountable Body's Finance team. Following this conversation, the applicant confirmed they were unable to provide appropriate security for the loan and would not be proceeding to application stage.

The deadline passed and no applications were received for the Solent LEP SME Priority Sectors Loan Fund.

The LEP received seven EOIs for the Solent LEP Prosperity Loan Fund. After the initial eligibility check was completed five applicants were invited to submit a full application. The LEP received three applications, and these are being considered by the Funding, Finance and Performance Management Group at their meeting on 8 November.

As a result of this initial round, the LEP Executive together with the Accountable Body are reviewing the prospectus of both loan funds. It is the intention to undertake a further round for both loan funds in the new year. This will be discussed further at the Funding, Finance and Performance Management Group (FFPMG) meeting on 8 November.

BSIP is asked to **advise** the LEP Executive on possible amendments to the loan funds in order to make them more attractive to SMEs.

Current Fund Status

The status of the funds and job outputs, as at 19 October 2022, can be viewed in Tables 1 and 2, below. Any changes since the last meeting have been shown, and the paper from the 4 April meeting is also available in the meeting pack for comparison.

Table 1- Financial

	Solent Prosperity Fund ¹					
	Current Fund End Date: 31 March 2021					
	Project Cost		LEP Funding		Match Funding	
	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change
Crowdfunder	£854,972		£226,993		£627,979	
Solent Prosperity Fund	£3,953,150		£600,193		£3,352,957	
Small Business Programme	£3,064,122	-£642,663	£492,953	-£104,273	£2,571,169	-£538,390
Z21	£929,312		£500,000		£429,312	
IoW Rural SME Fund ²	£3,514,774	-£124,181	£1,368,605	-£2,719	£2,146,169	-£121,461
New Forest Rural SME Fund ²	£273,080	-£11,135	£127,008	-£5,568	£146,072	-£5,568
Predecessor Programmes	£12,723,718		£1,875,708		£10,848,010	
Sub-totals	£25,313,128	-£777,979	£5,191,460	-£112,560	£20,121,668	-£665,419

¹ Funded from the Local Growth Deal 2015/16 to 2020/21 including LEP predecessor programmes and investment programmes delivered by LEP partners.

² This includes both Isle of Wight Rural Fund and Isle of Wight Rural Business Resilience Fund and New Forest Rural Fund and New Forest Rural Business Resilience Fund as appropriate. Figures provided on 12 July 2022.

Table 2- Outputs

	Solent Prosperity Fund ³					
	Jobs created by: 31 March 2021					
	Projects Supported		Jobs Created		Jobs Safeguarded	
	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change	Oct-22	Change
Crowdfunder	98		37		441	
Solent Prosperity Fund	9		0		0	
Small Business Programme	12	-1	26	-2	7	
Z21	14 ⁴		41		0	
IoW Rural SME Fund ⁵	102		137.6	9.5	284.48	4.1
New Forest SME Fund ⁵	24		5	-5	34	-1.25
Predecessor Programmes	34		168		34	
Sub-totals	293	-1	414.6	2.5	800.48	2.85

Administration of IoW Rural SME Fund and New Forest Rural SME Fund

The LEP Executive have received the final accountants report which covered the latest round of grant money awarded to cover the IoW Rural SME Fund, IoW Rural SME Business Resilience Fund, New Forest Rural SME Fund, and the New Forest Rural SME Business Resilience Fund.

The LEP Executive and Accountable Body have reviewed and have accepted the findings of the independent accountants report. The unallocated funding can be used in future funding for SMEs.

Solent LEP Growth Hub

The Growth Hub continue to lead on direct business support activity including specialist hubs as follows:

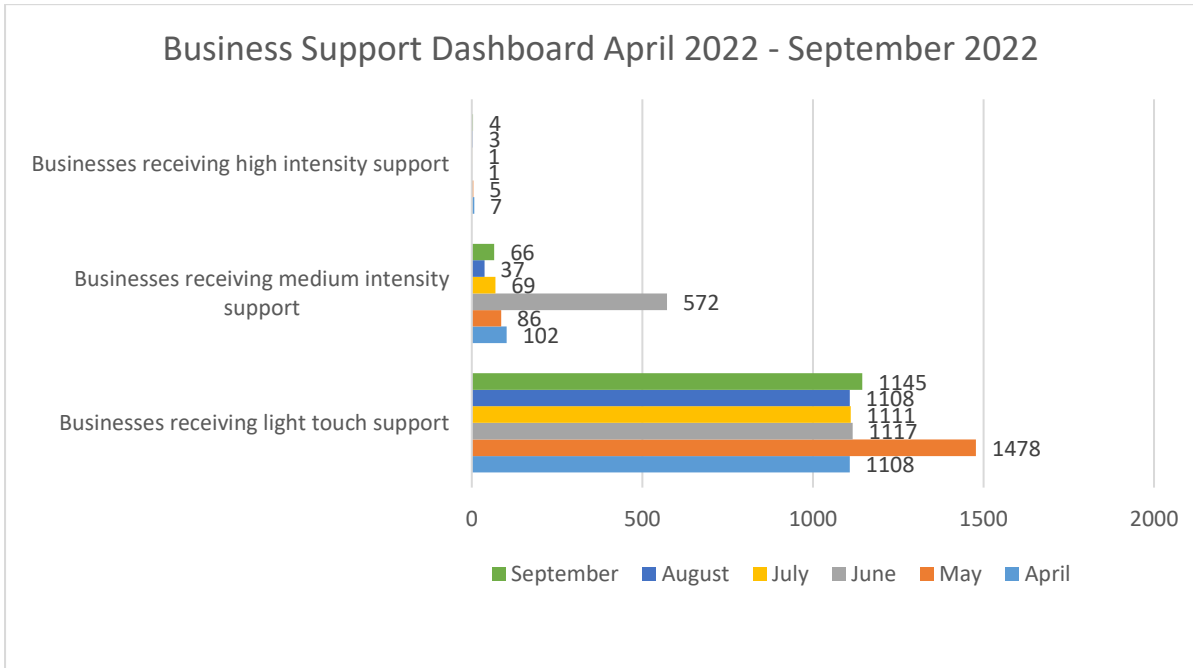
- [Coronavirus Support Hub](#)
- [Brexit Transition and Trading Overseas Hub](#)
- [Green & Sustainable Business Hub](#)

The chart below graphically illustrates the levels of support provided by the Solent LEP Growth Hub to the local business community since September 2021.

³ Funded from the Local Growth Deal 2015/16 to 2020/21 including LEP predecessor programmes and investment programmes delivered by LEP partners.

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Businesses receiving light touch support - These are businesses who have made an initial enquiry by telephone or email or attended larger events with the Solent Growth Hub team.

The Solent Growth Hub have a wealth of data regarding their operations. Some examples are displayed below in order to better illustrate the breadth of activities across the areas:

The Type of Support chart below categorises activities into three main areas of growth, stabilise/maintain and start up. This chart illustrates the majority of activity this financial year has been in the area of business growth.

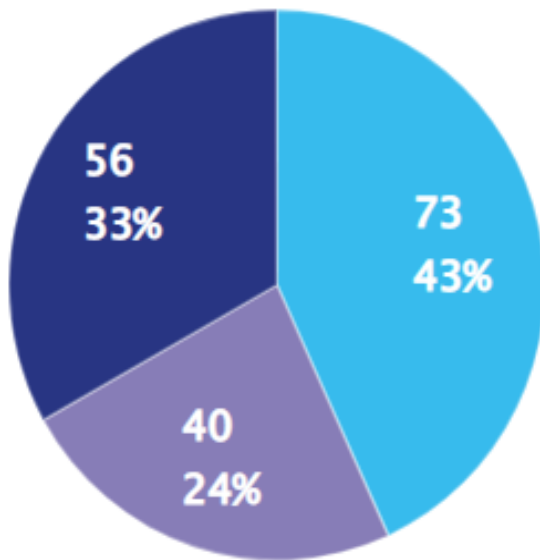


Type of Support



Type of Support

- Growth
- Stabilise/Maintain
- Start Up



The Growth Hub Key Support Requests chart below gives a more detailed breakdown of the sort of enquiries coming forward to the growth Hub so far this financial year. Finance & funding and coaching & mentoring have seen the highest number of requests to date.

These figures are monitored monthly, and provide the Growth Hub with data that influences their responses to local needs.



It is proposed that for future BSIP meetings, the existing Business Support Dashboard chart is removed and more detailed and illustrative data is presented. This will provide a better insight into Growth Hub activities, and could help to inform future discussions around funding support for SMEs.

Legal implications

No legal comments at this stage.

Financial comments from the S151 Officer of the Accountable Body

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.
 All of the grant funding streams referenced in this report form part of the approved Solent LEP budget as agreed by the Solent LEP Board.
 Where any funding is returned or recovered from beneficiaries this will become available for the LEP Board to redirect as they consider appropriate.

Item 7

Project Contract Updates

A confidential report will be considered at the meeting