

## Surrey Business Leaders' Forum, Thursday 7 September – Meeting

### Richard Grainger, Chair – Welcome and Introductions

Welcome to all members, and to new member Paul Mason (Senior Director / Customer Engagement Platform Lead, Pfizer).  
 Agenda focus – Asahi, Skills Update, LEP integration and impact, Mapping of Innovation Hubs, University of Surrey Research Findings.  
 Introductions (see Appendix for attendees and apologies)

### Ben Jenkins – Asahi Introduction

- Overview of the global business, headquartered in Japan, with 4 regions around the world.
- Asahi UK is part of the Asahi Europe & International (AEI) hub – 10,000 people, 19 production facilities in 8 countries.
- Group Holdings – includes many brands (such as Asahi Super Dry, SAB Miller), along with business brands from around the world (Grolsch Brewery, Peroni).
- Overview of portfolio – principally a lager brand in the UK, acquired traditional ale, cider, craft beers etc.
- New innovations in the business, particularly 0% alcohol drinks (large area of growth).
- Business Structure – Finance, Sales, Manufacturing, Supply Chain, Marketing, HR, Corporate Affairs.
- 8% market share in the UK – 4 ½ years ago the company was at 5%.
- 750 people working for Asahi in the UK (200 at Woking office).
- Corporate purpose – creating meaningful connections (be a force for planet positivity and serve up a positive and inclusive experience for people and society)
- Global Marketing of Asahi brand (e.g. Rugby Union World Cup) represents the global partnership (brokered in Japan) rather than local.

### Jack Kennedy – Skills Update

#### Skills Portal:

- Aim to create one place for Surrey residents to source a range of opportunities. Live learning opportunities and job opportunities in 1 Skills Portal to simplify the journey.
- Hope to have a version to share with businesses by the end of September, launch at Festival of Skills event in November.
- Portal supported with live information.
- Business opportunity to advertise their live vacancies, able reach out to a wider demographic and connect with people who may not directly find specific websites.
- Focus on young learners and those who are economically inactive.

#### Festival of Skills:

- Event on 23rd November at Sandown Park Racecourse.
- Aiming for 80 exhibitors (majority businesses).
- Year 10-13s target audience – understanding pathways, promoting opportunities as they're choosing next steps.
- Latter part of the day will open up to older learners, people looking to re-skill, parents of young people.
- Want it to be innovative and engaging

#### Discussion Points and Actions:

RG – queried how are businesses being contacted/involved?

Response: Developers of the portal are making connections with target businesses. Can facilitate connections to ensure businesses feed into the platform. Looking to also engage with Surrey Chambers of Commerce (SCoC) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) etc. Businesses can have an individual branded page or be included on a wider list of opportunities.

JP-L – noted some companies may have an exclusive HR recruiter, which prevents them from being part of the portal due to breach of contracts.

VC – questioned the link with colleges and universities, noting that there is a challenge around people going on courses that are not accredited / having the right qualifications to allow people to access roles.

Response: The portal will capture accredited skills development opportunities. There is college representation on the Surrey Skills Leadership Forum (SSLF) to ensure the right connections are made.

PM – queried the plans to promote the Skills Portal and how it will stand out? Likes that it is geographically orientated.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for BLF members to attend and exhibit</li> </ul> <p>Careers Enterprise Company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friday 1st September, SCC took on responsibility of the Careers Hub service from the 2 LEPs in Surrey.</li> <li>- Responsible for delivery Careers Hub Service on behalf of DfE.</li> <li>- Aim to improve capacity and capability of schools and colleges in Surrey to provide world class careers advice and guidance.</li> <li>- Shaping the careers advice and pathways that are promoted, link it to the working world in Surrey.</li> <li>- Opportunity for business engagement – role of enterprise advisors (business representatives) is to go to schools to offer mock interviews, job fairs, etc. – can facilitate the discussion between businesses and schools/colleges in a structured way.</li> </ul> <p>Skills Bootcamps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £1.8m funding with Hampshire County Council from DfE, to contract manage and facilitate the procurement of skills courses.</li> <li>- Short courses (typically between Level 3-5) and up to 16-weeks.</li> <li>- Aimed at those aged 19+, unemployed, self-employed, or looking to progress in work.</li> <li>- Focusing on digital and green skills.</li> <li>- Expected to support about 400 learners up to end of 2023/24 FY.</li> <li>- Expecting to put in a 2024/25 bid, hoping for £2.5m funding.</li> <li>- Want to understand where the skills gaps are.</li> <li>- Offers wraparound support for learners so they are prepared for work after the course.</li> <li>- Comes with a guaranteed job interview at the end (looking for businesses to engage with this process/offer).</li> <li>- Currently going through procurement to identify providers for the bootcamps (trying to promote the use of more local providers).</li> </ul>	<p>Response: Acknowledged risk of saturated market. Development team has created a marketing plan, which targets younger learners, as well as older learners that may want to re-skill or progress in work.</p> <p>CH – highlighted that it was helpful that Festival of Skills listed Surrey's core industries, providing guidance of what is available in Surrey. Having the interface between schools and businesses is vital. Schools also have difficulty going out to businesses, currently disjointed and lack of links.</p> <p>KM – raised challenges around work placement opportunities at school, and the difficulty to connect with businesses to apply for placements for young people.</p> <p>RG – queried if there something that businesses can do to feed in during this formative stage? Response: there is an active register of enterprise advisors – want to build from that and gain knowledge around gaps and needs in Surrey. Need to resolve current data issues, and then have a session to engage with businesses.</p> <p>KM – how do Skills Bootcamps feed into what D&amp;Bs are doing with the Youth Hubs? There is a risk of fragmenting the existing offer. Response: the Skills Portal and Skills Bootcamps opportunities will be advertised through Youth Hubs, they exist to connect people to opportunities.</p> <p>VC – highlighted that Heathrow are currently commissioning an Oxford Economic report, reviewing the economic growth of Heathrow airport, and looking to identify areas of improvement. Offer to support with the Skills Bootcamps and identifying gaps.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – KM to connect with JK regarding the GM Foundation that is being set up.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – JK to share details of the team that are developing the platform so that business representatives can connect.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – all Members to filter the Skills Update information back to relevant departments so they are aware.</p>
<p>Dan Murray – Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Integration</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities and challenges relating to the LEP integration.</li> <li>- Government announced in Spring budget, that they were minded to remove</li> </ul>	<p>Discussion Points and Actions:</p> <p>CH – acknowledged the challenges of being in an area covered by 2 LEPs, which often focused outside of Surrey (Hampshire and Brighton &amp; Hove).</p>

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sponsorship and funding for LEPs.

Confirmed on 4th August.

- Linked to Government commitment to devolution.
- Important for Surrey, which is split between EM3 and C2C. Scope for greater join up and efficiencies for the private sector.
- Need for a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice – what do businesses need in our region?
- Will continue with strategic economic planning (already have our growth plan and working on other documentation to develop this further).
- Will deliver a number of functions on behalf of government: Growth Hub and Careers Hub.
- Provides the opportunity to talk about Surrey in a single footprint, responsible for delivering across a single regional economic area development area. Will be more joined-up and can play an anchor role in terms of supporting economic growth.
- Recognises that Surrey has a large £42bn economy and this integration will help with our advocacy to UK Government.
- Now in the process of developing a LEP transition plan, consultation, and operational considerations.
- Guiding principles: improved economic outcomes for Surrey, Surrey geography, role of One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB) (business voice will be hugely important), transfer of assets to focus on Surrey's sustainable economic growth, go-live date 1st April 2024, drive improvements, reviewing and adapting to ensure maximum economic benefits, consideration of staffing changes.

### Next Steps

- Engagement to develop transition plan.
- Expecting more government guidance and details about funding.
- Will be a governance review of OSGB ToR and membership.
- Agreement on transfer of assets (March 2024).
- Transfer of functions (April 2024).

RG – noted the LEP legacy investments/commitments (around £30m) which need to be managed during the integration, and the money/resource coming into Surrey.  
Response: these issues are being discussed as part of the transition plan. LEPs can continue as private entities if they would like to (C2C looking at a service-led model).

VC – the integration is welcomed by Heathrow, to enable a centralised decision making process, enhance collaboration with the Council and align goals. Provides clarity about how we can move forwards.

Response: we need to recognise our role as an anchor institution to align and enable economic support/growth.

KM – queried if this change will include closer collaboration with D&Bs? Often businesses can't sit across multiple boards (upper tier and D&BSs).

Response: D&Bs will be involved in engagement and there will always be a role for localised economic development. Clarity is needed about the roles of these groups so that members can decide where/how to invest their time.

RG – SBLF's opportunity to help form what will be going on, recognising that we border other counties, and need to understand the impact. SBLF has previously had a focus on larger businesses (as they can filter down the support) but need to ensure that we're not excluding 60,000 businesses in Surrey. Consideration that we invite representatives of small businesses in Surrey (e.g. SCoC and FSB).

DM – acknowledged the public facing element. Conversation to be had about how we brand this so we have a business facing brand that aligns business support.

KM – noted we need this to recognise and promote Surrey as a place rather than the Council. Council branded offer may put many people off from accessing the support. People don't often associate the Council with progress.

RG – commented that this should be an apolitical function. Needs to reach beyond the next election and should focus on how we are growing Surrey for the future.

VC – has close connections with SCoC, and doesn't want to be in the same position with having to balance two entities, there is need for alignment. Also welcomed clarity around future impacts if the Council becomes a unitary authority.

KM – recognition of connection with County Deal and for integration not to be impacted by potential future changes.

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	<p><b>ACTION</b> – item for next meeting, what the LEP integration means in terms of finance and resources.</p>
<p>Dan Murray – MetroDynamics: Mapping the Innovation Economy in Surrey</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study commissioned to improve understanding of spatial distribution of Surrey's innovation economy, in order to improve ability to target support and to brand our key strengths.</li> <li>- Innovation Working Group (IWG) – established to focus on the challenge around key clusters and innovation sectors.</li> <li>- How the work was done: did not use SIC code raw data, instead used DataCity (machine learning algorithm) for 'data scrape' from company websites to identify firms that are part of the emerging economy and seen as key drivers of economic growth (most innovative companies). DC use Real-Time Industrial Codes (RTIC), which then layered on innovation assets (universities, anchor institutions, etc.). MD used a DBSCAN clustering algorithm to develop cluster maps to identify core and non-core points.</li> <li>- Produced 12 innovation economy clusters across Surrey – based on density-based clusters (rather than sectors).</li> <li>- Most are within the county boundary, but some show a dependency across other regions.</li> <li>- Illustration of most innovative companies and where they're operating across Surrey.</li> <li>- Demonstrates a NW/SE split across region.</li> <li>- Grouped clusters into 4 groups to show the density levels of the groups (measure of density of innovation activity).</li> <li>- Map shows sector concentrations – indication of sector strengths across Surrey.</li> </ul> <p>What does this mean?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guildford is the centre of our innovation economy, more than just gaming.</li> <li>- Distribution of our innovation economy is uneven, question about networks and linking areas of less and more density.</li> <li>- Need to look beyond our borders.</li> <li>- Place-based or sector-based approach – need to identify where we should be focusing our efforts and resource.</li> <li>- Innovation diffusion – how do we enable innovation activity that is happening to diffuse across the region? Business support element, support smaller businesses to innovate (digitisation etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>Discussion Points and Actions:</p> <p>VC – is the map based on large businesses or does it include SMEs? Response: includes any Surrey based business, defined by the requirements of the data scraping exercise (those seen as being part of the emerging economy).</p> <p>RG – noted the map is misleading, as it doesn't factor in AONB etc. that can't be developed. Need to find clusters/nodal points, invest in those to support other areas.</p> <p>KM – would be interesting to overlay connectivity map onto innovation clusters map, looking at workforce and commute. SCC is promoting active travel agenda – how does connectivity plan marry up with this, ensuring investment and connectivity in these sectors?</p> <p>JP-L – suggested connecting with the activity outside of Surrey, working outside of the border to gradually come into the county, expanding their growth.</p> <p>VC – highlighted the risk that you end up concentrating on an area that isn't the priority. Need to focus on the regions that are quick wins to grow innovation, and identify priorities for smaller areas.</p> <p>PM – would be interesting to also overlay socio-economic situation to target areas that need the focused support.</p> <p>BJ – what does 'focusing our efforts' practically mean? Response: we are looking at innovation space, finance, skills, and knowledge transfer, supporting innovative businesses. Established a cluster development programme (including Cyber, games, Creative Industries) to build communities and work out what those businesses need.</p> <p>CH – important to understand the constraints of businesses, especially emerging businesses that may not be fully formed yet. Encouraging businesses that spin out of universities to move to different areas within the county.</p> <p>RG – noted the difficulties around logistics, considering we have Gatwick and Heathrow that are out of county, large businesses and connectivity challenges.</p> <p>VC – highlighted that we need to support SMEs so they can develop in a more innovative way. Enables them to move</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do we use this work to inform our economic policy moving forwards?</li> </ul>	<p>closer to places where import/export can play a key role in their business.</p> <p>CH – consider the lifecycle of businesses. Moving from 30-100 employees is challenging for many businesses.</p> <p>DM – SCC are conducting a business support review, to understand where we should be focusing business support.</p> <p>RG – noted the number of head offices based in Surrey, we need to be much punchier about our brand at a global level.</p> <p>KM – highlighted that the branding of the Council needs to be developed so local businesses know what services they offer (such as land availability).</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – DM to circulate MetroDynamics report.</p>
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### Prof. Amelia Hadfield – Charting our Investment and Growth Potential: University of Surrey Research Findings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing Inward Investment study (following on from Post-Covid report). Mapping the Innovation Economy.</li> <li>- Need more business input.</li> <li>- Looking at inward investment and how well it's performing in Surrey's overall growth.</li> <li>- Breakdown of investment assets (commercial space, property, clusters, business incubators and catapults, integrated healthcare opportunities, etc.).</li> <li>- Will produce a scoping report (quantitative analysis) and strategy report.</li> <li>- Begun to map out data and areas of interest.</li> <li>- Challenges – maintaining inward investment and growth, post-brexite, ageing population, cost of living.</li> <li>- Current investment is not geared towards its strengths (clusters). Need to address cluster specific areas, prioritise location dependent clusters and think about re-purposing commercial space.</li> <li>- Collaborative approach necessary.</li> <li>- Interviewed 70 people from the decision-making side.</li> <li>- Brand of Surrey isn't as globally recognised as it should be.</li> <li>- Beginning scoping report – invite members to be a peer researcher to attend university and provide views on growth in Surrey and role of inward investment (specifically FDI orientated businesses). Encourage insights and observations from a focus group of about 20.</li> </ul>	<p>Discussion Points and Actions:</p> <p>VC – noted the importance of considering Surrey Chambers of Commerce (they have a portal to help businesses relocate into Surrey).</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – DM and AH to share information about focus group and invitation for Members to join (ideally second week of November).</p>
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Richard Grainger, Chair – AOB	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RG noted that the group is at an interesting stage, and must consider how it contributes to make a difference to the ongoing work. Will share meeting notes with the group to ensure we continue to feed into the Growth Board and ongoing work. Critical for the session to consider what happens next, feed in where possible and engage in between meetings.</li> <li>- VC – flagged that it would be helpful to be in contact with DM regarding the upcoming Oxford Commission. Noted the Heathrow Business summit on 16th November (networking opportunity between SMEs and tier 1 suppliers).</li> <li>- AA – Gatwick Business Summit on 16th November. <b>ACTION</b> – share next stage of planning process for Northern Runway Project, opportunity for stakeholders to share their views with Planning Inspectorate (29th October deadline) ahead of examination. Important for the community (especially businesses) to share their views – can link to economic opportunities that it presents.</li> <li>- BJ – offered to provide drinks for December networking.</li> <li>- <b>ACTION</b> – DM to share business support review survey for members to complete.</li> <li>- RG will attend OSGB on Monday 11th September, to reflect SBLF discussion and business view.</li> <li>- Date of next One Surrey Growth Board: Monday 11th September, Surrey Technology Centre (Guildford)</li> <li>- Date of next SBLF meeting: <b>Monday 11th December, McLaren Technology Centre (Woking). 16:00-17:30 and then 17:30-18:30 for networking drinks</b></li> </ul>	

**Ends**

### Appendix A: Attendees

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Membership
Richard Grainger	Chair SBLF	Dunelmia (Liberation Group)	Chair
Alison Addy	Head of External Engagement and Policy	Gatwick Airport	Member
Ben Jenkins	Corporate Affairs Director	Asahi Beer	Member/Speaker
Chris Hurren	Office Managing Partner	RSM UK	Member
Jack Nicholson	Land and Development Director	Berkeley Group Plc	Member
Jean- Philippe Launberg	Strategy & Business Director	Gordon Murray Design	Member
Katia Malcaus	Community Engagement and Public Affairs	Gordon Murray Design	Member
Paul Mason	Senior Director / Customer Engagement Platform Lead	Pfizer	Member
Vic Chetty	Senior Stakeholder Engagement Manager	Heathrow Airport Ltd	Member
Daniel Murray	Head of Economy & Growth	SCC	Observer
Bethany Reeder	Policy & Programme Advisor	SCC	Observer
Prof. Amelia Hadfield	Head of Department of Politics	University of Surrey	Speaker
Jack Kennedy	Head of Economy & Growth	SCC	Speaker

### Apologies

Amy O'Callaghan: Amazon

Andrew Smith: Pinewood Studios

Ben Clifford: Fidelity International

Chris Targowski: Amazon

Chris Lee: Jellyfish

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Claire Mohacek: Amazon

Dominic Wake: Sandoz

Graham Gibson: Allianz UK

Helen Foord: McLaren Automotive Ltd

Jon Elliott: Haleon

Mark Leftwich: Philips

Mike McNicholas: Atkins Global

Tim Wates: Wates Group

Yvonne Spencer: APHA

Matthew Furniss: SCC

Michael Coughlin: SCC

Dawn Redpath: SCC