

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Announces Two New Appointments

Submitted by: C8 Consulting

Tuesday, 31 July 2012

Berkshire, 31st July, 2012. The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) announced today the appointment of Tim Smith MBE as its first full-time Business Director, and the appointment of Amanda Gee to the Executive Board. Tim Smith's position will further strengthen TVB LEP's relationship with the sub region's business sector and the wider community. Amanda Gee, Managing Director of Berkshire Media Group, will take the role of 'SME Champion' helping to drive share of voice for SME's in the community.

Steve Lamb, Chair of the TVB LEP comments: "These are two significant positions that will help to drive TVB LEP forward. When recruiting for the role of Business Director we knew we needed a strong candidate who could promote innovation, enterprise and business diversity, as well as develop policy and strengthen and extend our existing relationships as well as build new contacts. Tim Smith's impressive track record made him our unanimous choice. Likewise Amanda Gee is an excellent addition to our Board. Not only is she the Managing Director of a prominent SME business in the region but also 80% of Amanda's customers are local SMEs. The board therefore felt that she was an excellent candidate to pick up the SME mantle as we know she is extremely well versed on issues that impact this sector."

Executive search firm Odgers Berndtson conducted a thorough and extensive national recruitment process for the role of Business Director. 48 candidates were initially selected for review with three high calibre professionals shortlisted to present the TVB LEP Executive culminating in the unanimous decision to appoint Tim Smith MBE.

Tim brings a wealth of experience and expertise in managing and directing business change in the local area. During the last 15 years he has held a range of senior positions in the Thames Valley including Executive Director at Reading UK CIC and Chief Executive at Newbury Town Council. As the Executive Director at Reading UK CIC, Smith spearheaded several successful projects including the first business improvement district in the southeast securing £2m private sector investment. He also designed and led the formation of Reading's first Economic Development Company, which has sustained Reading's economic performance as one of the UK's top five 'cities' for the last five years.

Tim will take up the post as Business Director for TVB LEP on 17th October 2012 and will assume responsibility for a wide range of work streams and projects, championing the aims and ambitions of the LEP. In the meantime Deborah Wharton, Interim Business Director, will continue in the post until she hands over to Tim in October. Tim will lead a delivery 'hub', which will be the focal point for all LEP activity across Thames Valley Berkshire including the management of the Growing Places Fund. Tim will also seek to capitalise upon a range of funding streams and stimulate private sector involvement.

Tim comments: "I am proud and delighted to be moving to the LEP having been involved with its development from the very beginning. TVB LEP is now a thriving initiative going from strength to strength and I'm eager to provide the driving force that takes it to the next level. I am confident that through collaboration we will achieve the maximum success for Thames Valley Berkshire in the future."

Jo Lovelock, Leader of Reading Borough Council commented, "Tim Smith has made a huge contribution to the economic successes of Reading and, while I am sorry he is leaving Reading UK CIC, I am delighted he will still be working in Berkshire. Tim is highly regarded by all who work with him and I wish him well in his new role."

With immediate effect, Amanda Gee takes up the position of TVB LEP Executive Board member representing SMEs. Amanda has a wealth of experience of running SME businesses having held senior positions within Berkshire Media Group for the past seventeen years. Prior to this Amanda held a variety of senior media roles in London. A working mum, Amanda is a Rotarian in Slough, a Chair of the Windsor District Chamber of Commerce, and until recently Trustee of the CBEBP. Amanda also sits on the TVB IAG.

Amanda regularly communicates with 45,000 SMEs in the area through the Berkshire Media Group's regional newspapers and is well positioned to bring real day-to-day issues to the Board from this sector. She is also keen to deliver positive outcomes for SMEs by collaborating and lobbying on behalf of this community with government through the LEP.

The next TVB LEP SME Forum is set to take place on 4th September 2012 from 8.00 am to 10.00 am. Amanda is keen to ensure that the Forum is regionally focused and transparent and would like to make this accessible to businesses. In terms of immediate goals Amanda will lobby on behalf of SMEs for wider broadband access throughout the region and also look at ways to make local authority procurement more available to SMEs.

Amanda comments: "I am delighted to be part of the TVB LEP. I am passionate about championing the needs of the SME community and believe that I can make a real difference in the region because I understand the issues that matter most to these organisations."

The TVB LEP is a business led body, working to maintain the status of the region as the engine of the UK economy, and to further attract inward investment. Its central initiatives are improving transport and infrastructure through the Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH) programme, widening access to superfast broadband throughout the Thames Valley, and ensuring a work-ready population through the development of skills and education opportunities. For more information on the TVB LEP, its key initiatives and how to get involved, please visit www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk.

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About Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

TVB LEP is business led and made up of key leaders across the business, education, the voluntary and community sector and six unitary authority areas of: Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor, and Maidenhead, and Wokingham. For more details of the membership of TVB LEP please visit the website <http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk>. Organisations interested in bidding for funds should contact Deborah Wharton or Richard Tyndall on 01628 796020. You can download a full briefing and FAQs document on Growing Places Fund via the website.

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