

Growth Lancashire Ltd

Annual Report
2022 – 2023

&

Business Plan
2023 – 2024

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Chair's Foreword



> *Another successful year despite the numerous unprecedented challenges brought about by external factors*

Never before have we witnessed such a multitude of issues facing UK businesses and organisations. A key strength of the company has always been its ability to be agile, adapting to meet the changing needs of its stakeholders and deliver cost-effective services.

Last year we welcomed Fylde Borough Council and the University of Central Lancashire onto the Board and we were congratulated as a Lancashire Skills Pledge Partner. This year sees the delivery of the remaining contracted outcomes of the 2022-2023 Boost Business Lancashire programme and the increase in activities relating to Specialist services.

Our role as a partner within Boost, Lancashire's Business Growth Hub, continues to go from strength to strength sitting proudly at the heart of Boost's day-to-day operations. In 2022 we handled over 1,500 enquiries. Our Team of Business Advisers created meaningful relationships with over 420 Lancashire based micro, small and medium sized enterprises by introducing them to the right support which includes more than 70 different sources of provision. The team regularly featured in Lancashire Business View magazine's hot topics and highlighted the key

issues and solutions facing the County's business community. Satisfaction levels remain high with 97% of business owners having been satisfied with the support we gave.

As European funding comes to a close, we look forward to a new Boost programme partly supported by Lancashire County Council and Local Authorities in receipt of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

We continue to grow our Specialist services team through increased demand from our Local Authority partners. The company now provides heritage support across ten Local Authorities within the region and over the last 12 months has provided advice on around 950 planning applications for listed building consent, or proposed developments affecting conservation areas or other heritage assets.

Our Arboricultural Officer provided professional advice to Blackburn with Darwen and Rossendale Councils. We have advised on around 200 applications concerning Tree Preservation Orders, works to trees in conservation areas and planning developments affecting trees. Since establishing

this service in 2020, we aim to grow our client base and also explore the delivery of Ecology Services in response to mandatory Biodiversity net gain for Local Authorities.

The framework of suppliers across 12 different complimentary offers is well established which can meet new needs across a broad range of services ranging from urban design and landscapes to bid writing and research.

As we enter this new financial year, we look forward to providing the capacity and expertise for both public and private sectors focussed on quality and value for money.

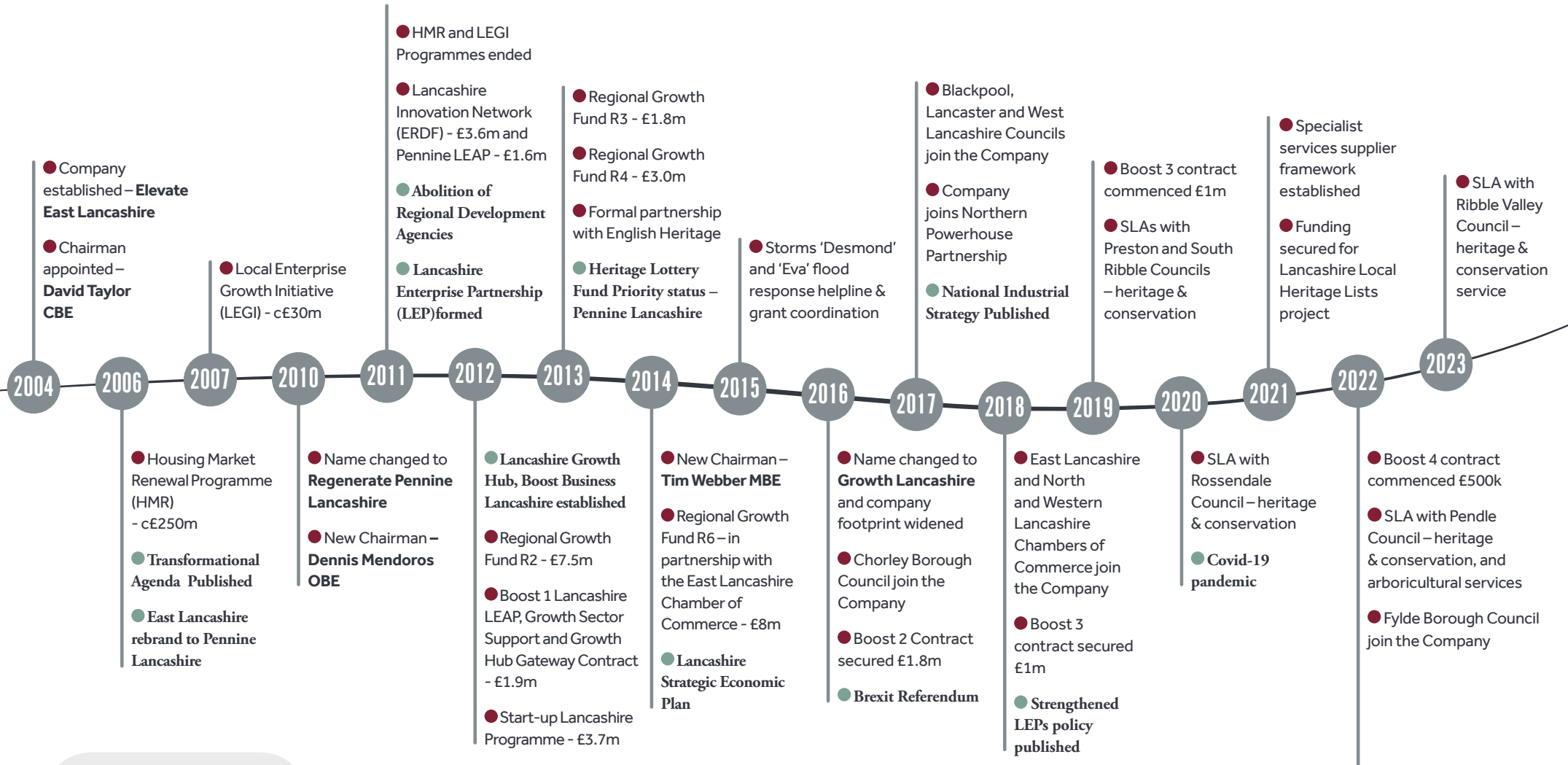
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Webber', with a stylized flourish at the end.

● **Tim Webber MBE**

Chair, Growth Lancashire Ltd.

Chairman and Managing Director,
Barnfield Construction Ltd.

Timeline



● COMPANY

● WIDER CONTEXT

Mission, Vision, Values

OUR CAPABILITIES

- Business engagement and support
- Heritage, environment and other specialist services
- Economic development and regeneration
- Research and intelligence



OUR ROLE

- ✓ A vehicle for partnership working
- ✓ Delivery capacity and expertise for Local Authorities and other stakeholders
- ✓ Supporting businesses to grow and simplifying support
- ✓ Caring for and developing Lancashire's heritage and environmental assets
- ✓ Securing and delivering external funding

Boost overview:

Growth Hubs are local public/private sector partnerships. In Lancashire, the Growth Hub, branded Boost Business Lancashire, has been backed by funding from the European Regional Development Fund, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and Lancashire County Council, and is supported by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. This year will see the European funding contribution finishing and the continuation of services with monies matched by Lancashire Local Authorities via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Through Boost, Lancashire businesses from start-ups to small, medium and large businesses can get access to a number of fully-funded support programmes in areas such as mentoring, innovation, international trade, leadership development, and accessing finance.

With additional pressures on businesses brought about by mounting inflation, high energy prices, rising interest rates, post-Brexit supply chain issues, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and, the UK is set to avoid a recession this year. Boost continues to provide essential support to tackle key business challenges and maximise new opportunities. Since 2013, Boost has supported over 12,000 businesses and helped create over 3,000 jobs. This support has helped add £100 million to the Lancashire economy.

Boost Business Owners Network is a new funded Lancashire business owner to business owner peer networking programme. It's practical, no-nonsense support from the people who know business best – other business owners, allowing them to tackle challenges and unearth opportunities through structured sessions, led by experienced facilitators. The programme includes a mixture of face-to-face and virtual support and as well as the group sessions and opportunities for one-to-one guidance.

Growth Lancashire's role:

Growth Lancashire is proud to have been a key delivery organisation since Boost's inception in 2012. Under the current programme, the company provides a Growth Support service, which sits at the heart of Boost's day-to-day operations.

We help businesses to navigate the complex local, regional and national business support landscape, ensuring that companies in Lancashire get the right support. This starts with our central role of handling all incoming enquiries via the Boost Freephone and website, providing Boost's frontline service to start-ups and businesses seeking a vast range of information and advice.

Eligible businesses are then offered a one to one meeting with a Business Advisor to understand their challenges and opportunities, create a Business Growth Action Plan and connect to the right business support to help achieve their goals.

During 2022, we have provided at least 3 hours of assistance to 420 of Lancashire's SMEs, introducing them to over 70 different sources of support across more than 50 partner organisations. This includes the core Boost programmes (Flying Start and Mentoring), Lancashire's Universities, Chambers of Commerce and Access to Finance specialists.

Our Business Advisors are experienced advisers in the world of business and have amassed many years of supporting thousands of Lancashire businesses. The team is an eclectic mix of sector and subject specialists covering manufacturing and engineering, food and drink, marketing and sales to name just a few.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Boost Business Lancashire contract delivery

Our Boost activity in 2022:

- 1,588** Enquiries handled
- 7** Experienced Business Advisors used in delivery
- 420** Businesses supported with at least 3 hours of support
- 670** Introductions made by Business Advisors
- 50** Partner organisations worked with
- 70+** Over 70 support products referred to
- 97%** Satisfied business owners
- 97%** Businesses would recommend the service to others

Activity for 2023:

- Continue to provide a key route for businesses into Boost, handling new enquiries from existing and start-up companies
- Support more than 330 businesses with at least 3 hours of assistance via an experienced Business Advisor
- More than 500 referrals to Boost and other programmes
- Effective relationship management of existing Boost clients
- Continue to build our knowledge and foster great relationships with other Boost delivery partners and wider provision, fulfilling our role as the “matchmaker” between business needs and support available
- Remain as a key and trusted delivery partner of business support services in the County

Client testimonials



I wish I found Boost earlier. The support that has been given to me in setting up my business has been phenomenal. The areas of my own knowledge have been expanded giving me ideas that I had never thought about. Having the extra eyes has stopped me from going down the wrong rabbit holes and has really started to focus me more on what my business actually does and how I sell it to clients as well. So am really grateful for the support I have had so far from Boost.



I wanted to say how fantastic your advisor was, she gave me great, quality advice that was easily understandable, whilst treating me like a person and listening to what I had to say. A massive thank you to her and the Boost team for all of your help so far. I feel much more on track to achieving what I want to achieve, even after this one conversation.



Meeting with you today feels like it has been extremely beneficial and a real morale boost. I will absolutely be utilising all of the available support.



Lingwood Security

A Lancashire security management company has seen strong national expansion, taking on more than 100 new staff and opening several satellite offices, following growth support from Boost; Lancashire's Business Growth Hub.

Over the past three years, Heysham-based **Lingwood Security** has grown to over 250 employees who are supporting a range of new contracts within Lancashire and across the UK.

This includes a three-year framework with Network Rail for the North and South of England to combat trespass, vandalism, cable theft and assist with suicide prevention on their sites.

The family company was established by ex-Royal Marine Alan Lingwood senior in 1995 and supplies guards, CCTV installation and monitoring as well as other services to sectors including rail, construction and utilities. His son Alan Jnr joined in 2000.

When Alan senior retired from day-to-day involvement in early 2019, Alan Jnr was looking for support to grow the company. He was introduced to the Boost Bespoke programme shortly after, through Sue Denver, Business Advisor from Growth Lancashire who he already knew.

Alan Lingwood, now managing director, said: "When my Dad retired, I was unsure on the direction I wanted to take the business. Boost has helped in a massive way to give focus and more confidence in sales and marketing. The support has been invaluable in pointing the business on the right track for sustained growth."

Sue Denver, said: "Lingwood Security is a company with huge potential which just needed some additional help to structure their business for the growth they have experienced. It's been great to experience the way the company has taken on board the support they've received and reaped the well-earned benefits."

Despite the pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly on its contracts in the construction sector, Lingwood was able to continue growing during this period. The company secured several contracts to provide increased security to hospitals. "Through the pandemic our staff worked tirelessly and that has supported our continued growth despite the challenges of lockdown," Alan added. To support its ongoing expansion, Lingwood has now opened satellite offices in Crawley and the South East.

Boost helps companies like Lingwood realise and achieve their growth ambitions by understanding their unique needs to ensure they receive a package of quality funded business support.

The company is continuing to receive support from Boost, with Sue Denver regularly speaking to Alan to discuss Lingwood's continued growth.

Overview:

The company has a long history of providing services for its Local Authority partners. This includes the company's specialism in providing heritage and conservation advice, and in 2020, also included a new in-house arboricultural service.

2022 has seen the company continue to grow its heritage service and add a new Conservation Assistant, providing further capacity and expertise, to our Heritage Team. Developing additional capacity and expertise means that we can move quicker and be more flexible in order to meet a new set of needs across a broader range of services, supplying both the public and private sectors.

Our activity in 2022:

- We have been providing heritage support services across ten local Authorities within the region
- Across those Local Authority partners, we have provided advice on around 950 planning applications for listed building consent, or proposed developments affecting conservation areas or other heritage assets
- Provided advice on Council-owned heritage assets, heritage projects and provided heritage support for Local Plan work. Projects have included work on the project team to help the Blackburn with Darwen Council with its aspirations to re-purpose the fire damaged St John's Church in Blackburn town centre and our continuing work on updating of Conservation Area Appraisals for Preston City Council. We also continue to provide on-going advice on the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) in Bacup Town Centre
- The management of the Lancashire Local List project, funded by the Government, on behalf of the Lancashire Local Authorities moved into its second year. During the year we continued to gather information regarding the County's unlisted heritage and have set up professional panels to start the assessment of the nominated buildings and sites
- Recruited a qualified and experienced Heritage and Conservation Assistant to join our team, to help continue to deliver our heritage work across the County
- Provided a number of Heritage Statements to support development proposals and investment in heritage sites and buildings for private clients across the North-West. Our clients including other Local Authorities and the NHS
- Delivered heritage and planning training to Local Authorities and UCLan students on Heritage and Architecture courses
- Continued to play a lead role on the Lancashire Conservation Officers group
- Recruited an experienced Tree Officer to deliver our arboricultural services
- Provided professional arboricultural/tree advice to Blackburn with Darwen and Rossendale Councils. Our Tree Officer and Associate Tree Officer have advised on around 200 applications concerning Tree Preservation Orders, works to trees in conservation areas and planning developments affecting trees
- Continued to help Local Authority Environment teams on the suitable approaches and methodology regarding effective Tree Management and safety
- Continued to look for opportunities to use our framework of suppliers across a broad range of 12 services, creating additional capacity and expertise for the company in delivering both public and private sector contracts

Activity for 2023:

- Further engage with Local Authority partners across the Region to help provide them with quality and good value specialist services to meet their delivery needs
- Continue our partnership working with Preston City Council to update their Conservation Area Appraisals
- To continue to build additional capacity through our Associates model to help us further develop and build capacity in our heritage and tree services with the private sector clients
- Provide new heritage training events to our Local Authority partners to help build in house skills and internal capacity
- Continue to provide training as part of course delivery at UCLan
- Continue to engage with Local Authority partners and regional partners, including Historic England, in helping to deliver wider strategic heritage projects
- To represent Growth Lancashire in regional and sub-regional forums
- Continue to offer opportunities, through our links with UCLan and Myerscough College for work experience roles in both heritage and arboriculture
- Continue to mobilise the company's new framework of suppliers across 12 different services
- Market the expanded range of company services and further promote our suite of services with the private sector
- Continue in the delivery of high quality services through our existing Service Level Agreements across Heritage and Conservation and Arboriculture, growing the activity to provide support for other Local Authorities, where there is demand
- To complete the delivery of the Lancashire Local Heritage List Campaign project



Fishergate Hill, Preston

Heritage advice for Local Authority partners

Preston City Council:

in 2022, the Council appointed the company to update the Fishergate Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which has involved undertaking a visual assessment of all the properties in the conservation area. The work has re-defined the special interest of the city centre conservation area and helped the Local Authority in identifying the buildings of high architectural and historic importance and the threats and pressures affecting the conservation area.

Work has now progressing on also providing an update of the Avenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which includes the areas of the city that saw the 19th century expansion of middleclass housing leading down to the River Ribble and the development of both Avenham and Miller Parks.



Avenham, Preston

Heritage advice for Local Authority partners

Blackburn with Darwen Council:

Our team has been providing heritage support to the Council during its updating of the Local Plan. The essential work has been providing assessments on the impacts of new Local Plan site allocations, for housing and business uses, on the boroughs important heritage and identifying where mitigation measures or changes might be needed to avoid or limit harm.

Rossendale Council:

Throughout 2022 the company has been helping Rossendale Council with its planning duties in relation to the assessment of the impacts of development on heritage including listed buildings and development in conservation areas. This has included assisting the Local authority in its Enforcement duties to protect heritage buildings and in Bacup Town Centre we have been continuing our support in delivering projects identified through its High Street Heritage Action Zone project, ensuring that they come forward within the programme timetable.



Heritage consultancy for private clients

Project: Curzon Park North, Chester

Growth Lancashire was appointed to provide a Heritage Statement in relation to a planning application for the construction of a large detached dwelling to be built on a plot of land located off Curzon Park North, Chester. The site is located adjacent to the Grade I listed Grosvenor Bridge and within the Curzon Park Conservation Area

Project: Imperial Chambers, Burnley

We were appointed by a local Architectural services company to provide a Heritage Statement for Imperial Chambers, a Grade II listed building within the Burnley Town Centre Conservation Area. This statement provided an understanding of the significance of the existing building and its value to the historic setting within the wider context of Burnley Town Centre and to assist in the determination of a planning proposal for the upgrade and re-use of the building.

Project: Peel Tower, Bury

We were also appointed to produce a Heritage Statement to provide an understanding of the significance of the existing Grade II listed building and its value to the historic setting within the wider context of Holcombe and Ramsbottom. This was to assist in the determination of a planning proposal for the installation of a web-cam style camera and flagpole on the building.



Curzon Park North, Chester



Imperial Chambers, Burnley



Peel Tower, Bury

SPOTLIGHT ON: New Services

Overview:

We will continue to develop and grow our heritage and arboriculture specialisms, offering a broader set of demand-led services continues to be a key driver for increasing the company's value to its Local Authority partners, and increasing the potential of the company to generate additional revenues from other sources, including work for private clients.

However, to do this effectively, the company needs flexible access to more high-quality resource which complements its existing in-house Specialist services team.

Local Authorities are currently moving towards the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity net gain (BNG). This is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. This is also an opportunity for the company to explore the direct delivery of Ecology Services.

Progress:

In 2020, the company launched a call for consultants via a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and since then we have been progressing its use in 2022. Unlike a traditional Framework, a DPS is open to suppliers throughout its duration, allowing new providers (subject to assessment) the ability to be considered for work.

Suppliers have been appointed to the DPS across a diverse range of 12 service areas, which had been jointly identified as part of the company's earlier scoping exercises with Local Authorities across Lancashire. In doing so we acknowledge that the work put through the DPS will be largely led by the needs of our Local authority partners.

Actions for 2023/24:

- **Continue to have regular engagement with Local Authority partners to understand current and future requirements, and where the company can add value, either through its in-house team or procured services through the DPS**
- **Build effective relationships with existing procured suppliers, and introduce new suppliers where there is demand for the particular service or specialism**
- **Business development activity with wider stakeholders, notably private sector clients – and to include appropriate marketing of all new services**
- **To use the DPS to help build efficient and cost effective additional capacity for both Heritage and Arboricultural services**
- **Explore direct delivery of Ecology services**

The 12 services cover:

1 Heritage and conservation services

2 Planning, urban design and landscape services

3 Bid writing, business development and research services

4 Arboricultural services

5 Agricultural services

6 Archaeology and historic environment services

7 Architectural services

8 Structural engineering and surveying services

9 Climate change and environmental services

10 Valuation and viability services

11 Project/Programme/Contract Management services

12 Ecology services



HRX People

Growth Lancashire were invited to partner with Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Councils to project manage their UK Government Community Renewal Funded Growth and Innovation grant project as these districts were identified as three priority places within the Government's index of economic resilience.

This was a hugely successful project as it met and exceeded outputs. A total amount of £962k was granted across 46 businesses, which created 194 jobs and 17 innovation plans. Growth Lancashire ensured that businesses from each local authority district equally benefitted from the grant fund to support business growth and innovations.

Burnley business, **HRX People Limited** were supported with a £10,000 grant to develop their sustainable and innovative cloud-based HR software system which can be accessed from any device, anywhere, at any time.

HRX People has been designed with simplicity in mind and supports sustainability by minimising HR paperwork. The system makes holidays, absence and drivers checks much easier to manage and embraces the latest technology to ensure a seamless user

experience. Furthermore, the system costs £2 per employee per month and is growing its user database fast.

In addition, HRX People are offering businesses the opportunity to partner with them, giving them the opportunity to earn 50% of any billed revenue.

The company won the 'Leading Providers of SME HR Software' award at the recent Northern Enterprise Awards, with the judges commenting 'HRX People showed dedication to customer service, satisfaction and retention and an ongoing commitment to providing excellence'.

Lisa Sourbutts, Managing Director at HRX People Limited said: "We're absolutely delighted to win! We've worked really hard to bring an innovative product into a crowded market and to be awarded the title of Leading Provider when we are so new to the market is amazing. Our early adopters have given us outstanding feedback and I'm so proud of how the design and development team have brought the system to life. All of this would not have been possible without the Community Renewal Fund grant."

Resources

Income

	<i>2023/24 Estimates</i>
Boost Business Lancashire contract delivery	£ 300,288
Local Authority core funding	£ 195,000
Specialist services delivery	£ 256,340
Carry forward	£ 37,370
Total	£ 788,998

Expenditure

	<i>2023/24 Estimates</i>
Staffing	£ 678,468
Overheads and project delivery	£ 110,530
Total	£ 788,998

Reserves

	<i>Estimated balance 31.03.2024</i>
Total	£ 236,252



Governance

Established in 2004, Growth Lancashire is a private company limited by guarantee.

Growth Lancashire's **Board of Directors** comprises representatives from the **private sector** and **Local Authority Councillors** from Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale, Lancashire, Lancaster and West Lancashire Councils.

The company provides services across the entire County area and it remains the aim of the Board for its governance arrangements to be pan-Lancashire.

Further details and biographies of Growth Lancashire's board can be found at www.growthlancashire.co.uk



Chairman

Tim Webber MBE
(Barnfield Construction Ltd.)



Company Secretary

Laura Sales
(Lancashire County Council)



Location:

The Globe Centre,
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Accrington, Lancashire,
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Registered Office:

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Growth
Lancashire Ltd

**NORTHERN
POWERHOUSE**



LANCASHIRE
SKILLS PLEDGE

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*View from Clitheroe Castle
Courtesy of Marketing Lancashire*