CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL www.carlisle.gov.uk	**Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel**	**Agenda Item:** **A.4**

Meeting Date:	19th January 2017
Portfolio:	Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy and Budget Framework	YES
Public / Private	Public

Title:	Progress Update to Business Support Task and Finish Group Recommendations
Report of:	Director of Economic Development
Report Number:	ED 03/17

Purpose / Summary:

To update the panel on progress made regarding the recommendations of the Business Support Task & Finish Group (Report dated October 2015)

Recommendations:

To note the update on progress made.

Tracking

Overview and Scrutiny:	19th January 2017

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel previously commissioned a Task Group to look at Business Support as they had concerns about the provision in the District. The Task Group were asked to look at the roles of the different agencies and how they work in partnership. The Group presented their findings and recommendations at the Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel in October 2015. The four recommendations of the Group were as follows:

Recommendation 1: Audit of networks

An audit of the business support and business start-up networks, both formal and informal, should be undertaken. This audit will provide current content for a refresh of the business support pages on the new Carlisle.gov.uk website and help to ensure that the Council plays a role in signposting those looking for support. The monitoring of the performance of these pages will further aid the understanding of the need for business support in Carlisle.

Recommendation 2: Rebranding the Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre is renamed and rebranded to represent its current use as managed workspace. The centre is no longer the epicentre of business support in Carlisle; it does however continue to offer a range of affordable workshops, studio and office units in a City Centre location. To continue to present the space as an Enterprise Centre risks ongoing confusion about its role in the business support offer available in Carlisle.

Recommendation 3(a)(b): Business support and devolution

(a)The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be influenced by and therefore responsive to Carlisle's needs.

(b) The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be structured in such a way to enable local scrutiny.

Recommendation 4: Communications and marketing strategy for business support

A communications and marketing strategy should be implemented to support all the recommendations adopted. This strategy needs to include key players such as the Job Centre, BIC, Growth Hub and banks.

1.2 Implementation of the above recommendations was initially delayed for a number of reasons including:

- the December 2015 floods – all available resources to help flooded businesses were deployed, with Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Growth Hub business advisors taking the lead in supporting the business community to apply for flood recovery and resilience grants and provide advice on getting back up and running efficiently. City Council officers supported these efforts as well as leading on directing and supporting businesses to alternative available premises to enable them to keep trading during this time;
- the key post tasked with taking forward these recommendations, the Economy & Enterprise Officer post, remained vacant until an appointment was made in April 2016. The post holder, Angela McDougall, being new to the role was afforded an appropriate induction period to get familiar with the role and responsibilities.

2. PROPOSALS

Update Recommendation 1: Audit of networks

2.1 Recommendation 1 states that an audit of business support and business start-up networks, both formal and informal should be undertaken to provide content for a refresh of the business support pages on the new Council website and to ensure that the Council plays a key role in signposting those looking for support.

2.2 Since moving into post in April, the Economy and Enterprise Officer has been actively engaging with local businesses and partners to reenergise contact and find out what support is on offer externally for businesses as well as how the Council can help to support them. This includes meeting with formal support networks such as: Cumbria Chamber to discuss the business support they offer; Federation of Small Businesses; and representatives from the Job Centre who outlined the support available to people looking to start their own business through the New Enterprise Allowance. Whilst informal networks are, by their nature, more difficult to identify, Carlisle Ambassadors has helped to contribute towards expanding business networks, highlighting the emphasis the Council places on business engagement and recognising the SME's as well as the large employers that contribute vitally towards the economy of Carlisle District. This networking opportunity instigated by the City Council provides a valuable platform for like-minded business owners and third sector partners to engage and forge links to enable future working.

2.3 Good progress has also been made with regards to the business website, www.carlisle.gov.uk/carlisle-business (Appendix 1, Figure 1 - landing page) which was launched in early 2016. Since April, the Economy & Enterprise Officer has continued to add content to the site which has a whole range of information for those currently located in Carlisle District as well as prospective employers looking to locate in the area. There is also a detailed section covering Business Support from the Council and our Partners which includes signposting to external support from the LEP, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and the University of Cumbria (Appendix 1, Figure 2 – partner support). The website has received 11,785 views between February 2016 and January 2017 with hits continuing to rise.

2.4 The website is also providing an up to date and easily updatable tool for signposting to funding opportunities or support available for businesses, for example, the latest news section draws attention to the latest advice and events etc. (Appendix 1, Figure 3 – Latest News). It also provides the opportunity for more informal business support to be highlighted, including for example work that Carlisle Library is undertaking with Google Digital Garage to help small businesses get online.

Update Recommendation 2: Rebranding the Enterprise Centre

2.5 This recommendation is concerned with renaming and rebranding the Enterprise Centre (EC). The rationale behind this was that continued use of the name risked ongoing confusion about its role in the business support offer available in Carlisle. Whilst the proposal to rebrand the EC is theoretically sound, further exploration of the issue has indicated that practical implication could be complicated.

2.6 In terms of background, the EC comprises of 60 individual units which are made available for let on the open market, with no restrictions in terms of the size or age of business which can occupy them. Each of the units also has a unique postal address, within which explicit reference is made to the unit number and ‘Carlisle Enterprise Centre’ as a key component.

2.7 Discussions with existing business tenants at the Centre has highlighted that their address is regularly replicated on promotional and other business related material. For some their address is also that used with regards to their company house registration and other official purposes such as banking. Concerns were raised by tenants that any rebranding would give rise to a number of implications and ‘burdens’ including for example the rebranding and reprinting of their own materials,

livery, insignia etc. as well as updating details with suppliers, banks etc. Whilst the rationale for any rebranding was explained, tenants by in large sounded unconvinced that the inconvenience (for them) it would give rise to was truly necessary.

2.8 In terms of third party organisations it must also be recognised that any rebrand and consequential address change would have implications for established systems of billing and invoicing. This reflects that beyond a small number of exceptions the tenant for each unit is responsible for entering into a contract with an electricity provider of their choice. Tenants for each unit are also liable for a United Utilities commercial levy linked to water and drainage and beyond this business rates liability. From an administrative perspective the City Council already encounter problems with regards to the appropriate unit identification and any further change could risk amplifying this and undoing good work which has been undertaken to alleviate issues on this front.

2.9 It is therefore not considered prudent to progress a rebranding of the Centre at this time. Whilst it is accepted that the existing name can give rise to a degree of confusion, this problem is not of a scale which it is considered would robustly justify a rebranding at this time and the resources required to support this, including support for tenants. Clearly however this situation needs to and will be kept under review.

2.10 Rebranding aside the Enterprise Centre continues to attract interest from new and existing businesses, with a number of recent lets aided by enhanced marketing efforts which have sought to better utilise the Council's website and for the first time social media to promote opportunities at the Centre. The opportunity was also taken to advertise space at the Centre through an advert in Carlisle Focus resident's magazine which has also led to a number of what remain active enquiries. A key theme of this promotion has been making clear that the space is available for old and new businesses alike.

Update Recommendation 3(a)(b): Business Support and Devolution

2.11 This recommendation was forthcoming at a time when negotiations in relation to a devolution deal for Cumbria were at their most active. Given any devolution deal is now unlikely; no new deal for business support is likely to be forthcoming in the short term. Notwithstanding this the Executive have resolved, despite this matter being out with their hands, to endeavour to ensure scrutiny of any future new deal would occur.

2.12 In terms of the current arrangements two key strands of support are those delivered through the Chamber of Commerce as follows:

- The Growth Hub supports existing businesses looking to develop and grow through taking on staff or increasing sales and growing the business. Support on offer includes one-to-one time with a business adviser, access to online resources and portals, Cumbria Forum intensive development programme, Family Business network, free a match funded subsidy for specialist consultancy support and much more.
- The BSUS programme gives free advice and training to anyone looking to start their own business or in the first three years of trading with support including one-to-one time with a business adviser, help with a business plan, a three day business training course and other free training, seminars and workshops. There is also a match funded subsidy for specialist consultancy support once the business is up and running, with any new business that starts as a result of support receiving a year's free Chamber membership.

2.13 Both of the above programmes are part funded through the European Regional Development Fund and are on the basis of match funding. Owing to a shortfall in match funding the Chamber have recently approached each of the Cumbrian Districts with a view to contributions to help address the shortfall. This potentially presents an opportunity to exert greater control over the allocation of this funding as well as putting in place robust arrangements for non-eligible sectors. Discussions with regards to Carlisle are ongoing.

Update Recommendation 4: Communications and Marketing Strategy for Business Support

2.14 As described above, the business website is vital in delivering an effective strategy. It provides advice regarding the support offered by Carlisle City Council in terms of the free use of the Carlisle Story branding and access to Carlisle Ambassadors and the range of associated benefits.

2.15 The site also signposts to our partners' support including Cumbria Business Growth Hub, Cumbria LEP, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and the University of Cumbria. This enables users to directly access partner websites and receive the most up to date information on support and grants available. In addition to this, the Latest News section provides an opportunity for the Council to share funding opportunities, opportunities to exhibit products/services and details of relevant studies published that may be of interest.

2.16 As the website develops further, there is the opportunity to further enhance its content and ensure that it provides an effective service for people looking to grow their business, relocate their business or set up a business.

3. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 As highlighted within this report, good progress had been made to date in relation to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. The key thrust of the recommendations relate to business support, which is regularly evolving. As such, the valuable resource of the business website will allow all parties to remain up to date with what support is available.

3.2 Members of the Panel are asked to note the 2016 updates to the recommendations identified within the Business Support Task & Finish Group Report (October 2015).

4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

4.1 The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and the updates provided within this report contribute directly towards achieving the vision of the Carlisle Plan – 'To improve the…economic prosperity of the people of Carlisle', and its Priority 'Support business growth and skills development to improve opportunities and economic prospects for the people of Carlisle'.

Contact Officer: **Angela McDougall** **Ext: 01228 817172**
Economy & Enterprise Officer

Appendices attached to report: **Appendix 1: Carlisle City Council Business Website Screenshot Examples**
Appendix 2: Business Support Task & Finish Group Report

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:
N/A

Appendix 1: Carlisle City Council Business Website (www.carlisle.gov.uk/carlisle-business) Screenshot Examples

Figure 1

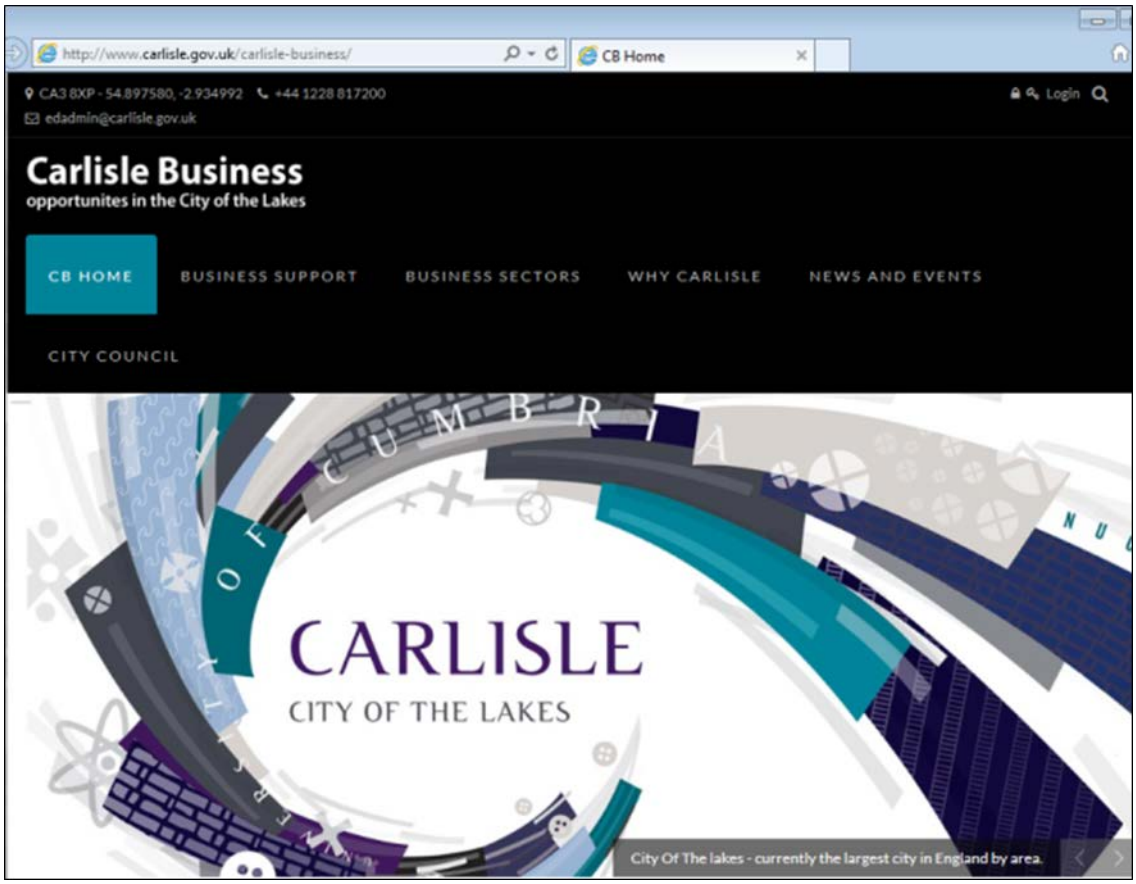


Figure 2

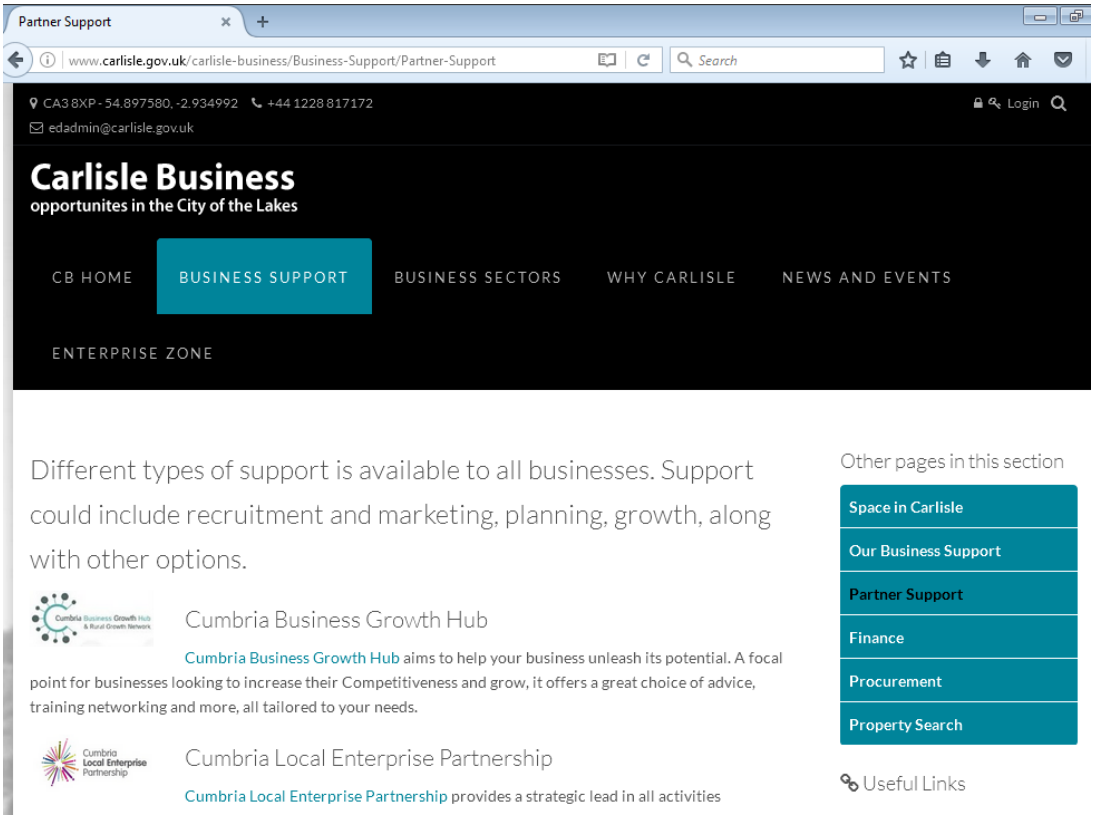
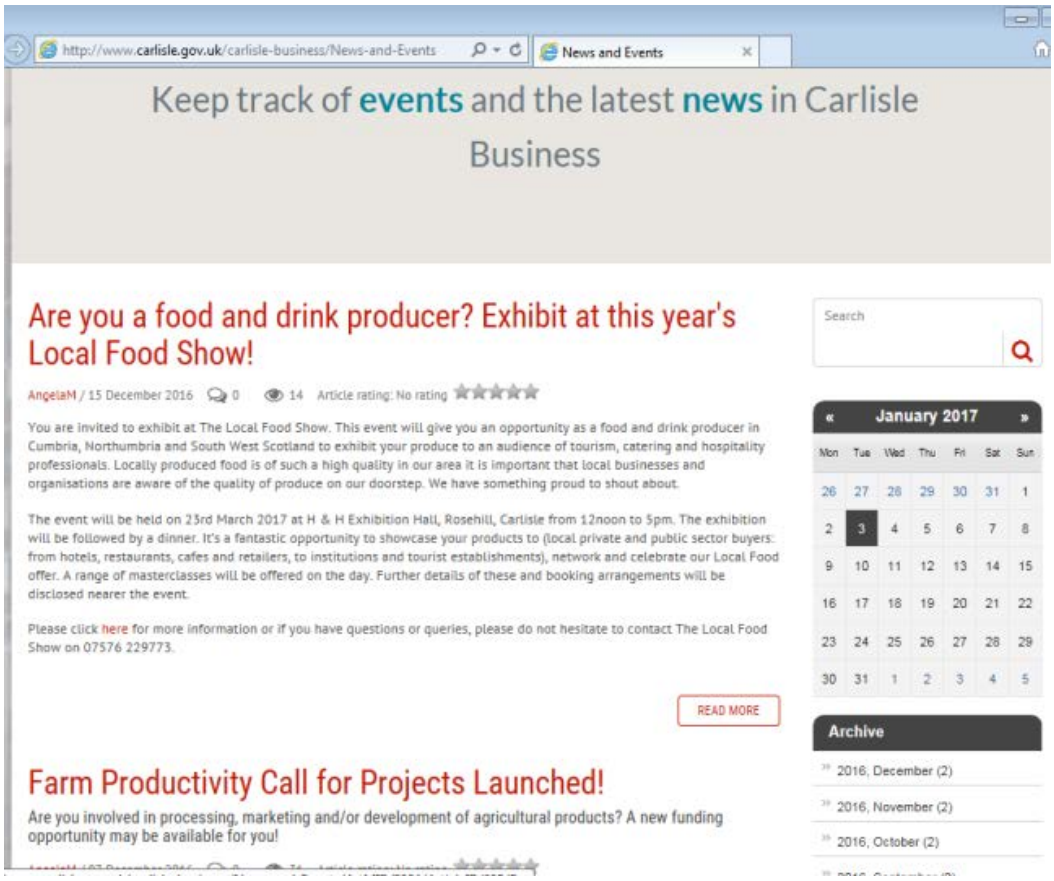


Figure 3



Appendix 2

Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Business Support Task & Finish Group **Report**

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

www.carlisle.gov.uk

October 2015

Contents

Contents 1
Recommendations 2
Background and Introduction 3
Methodology 7
Summary of meetings 8
Conclusions 23
Appendix: BIS North West Presentation 25

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Audit of networks

An audit of the business support and business start-up networks, both formal and informal, should be undertaken.

This audit will provide current content for a refresh of the business support pages on the new Carlisle.gov.uk website and help to ensure that the Council plays a role in signposting those looking for support. The monitoring of the performance of these pages will further aid the understanding of the need for business support in Carlisle.

Recommendation 2: Rebranding the Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre is renamed and rebranded to represent its current use as managed workspace.

The centre is no longer the epicentre of business support in Carlisle; it does however continue to offer a range of affordable workshops, studio and office units in a City Centre location. To continue to present the space as an Enterprise Centre risks ongoing confusion about its role in the business support offer available in Carlisle.

Recommendation 3(a)(b): Business support and devolution

(a)The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be influenced by and therefore responsive to Carlisle's needs.

(b) The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be structured in such a way to enable local scrutiny.

Recommendation 4: Communications and marketing strategy for business support

A communications and marketing strategy should be implemented to support all the recommendations adopted. This strategy needs to include key players such as the Job Centre, BIC, Growth Hub and banks.

Background and Introduction

Business support is a wide ranging topic, the objectives are to help businesses start, improve and grow.

The type and nature of business support can vary depending on the size and purpose of the business and whether it is a business which is just starting out or a business which is well established. Over the last 10 years business support and how it is delivered has fundamentally changed with greater emphasis on small business performance and growth delivered mainly through an online information service.

The type of support which has been offered in the past can be split into a number of categories:-

- Business Finance including small loans for business
- Advice for new and high growth businesses this included free advice to help people start a business and advice and mentoring on all aspects of setting up and running a successful business, from an assessment of a business idea to advice on business planning and finance
- Innovation and Efficiency – Grants for Research and Development
- Manufacturing Advisory Service – advice and funding to reduce costs and improve productivity
- Training and Development - funding of accredited employee training and development
- International Trade
- Advice and funding to support preparation, entry and expansion into overseas markets

This advice and support was accessed through Business Link Northwest which was run by the North West Development Agency (NWDA).

Following the change in Government in 2010 and the abolition of Regional Development Agencies the Government reviewed how business support was delivered. The key principles were:-

- Business Growth – resources focused on improving small business performance and growth
- Business Start ups – a package of measures including the New Enterprise Allowance to help the unemployed become self employed
- Modernise the provision of online information so all businesses can access what they need, when they need it
- Business advice to be provided by experienced business people
- Address the barriers to enterprise for all groups
- Greater use of private providers of business advice as well as business networks both online and offline and intervene only where there is evident market failure

In addition to the above the organisations and agencies delivering business support changed. The Regional Development Agency and Business Link were abolished and business support is

led at a strategic level, through the Department of Business Innovation and Skills and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

Business Support – Carlisle

In Carlisle business support is delivered by the Cumbria Business Growth Hub which is run by the Chamber of Commerce. The Growth Hub encompasses a range of private and public sector partners and a range of activities supporting small and medium enterprises through a range of co-ordinated activity. The Growth Hub includes a range of local, regional and national partners for instance UK Trade & Investment and the University of Cumbria.

In August 2013 the University of Cumbria's Business School was opened at the Business Interaction Centre (BIC) at Paternoster Row. It offers a range of activities and support for local businesses including:-

- Courses e.g. MBA, HR and IT short courses and FdAs in professional practices for Business
- Information and access to events and networks
- Access to consultancy and research
- Student enterprise and incubation

In addition to the above the City Council continues to support businesses with a series of focused events and individual business support. In particular as part of our "business account" management function we provide the link between businesses and the LEP and supporting any bids for funding. Local initiatives and support include:-

- Inward Investment Enquiries: Liaison with Invest in Cumbria, submission of BIDS (e.g. Alhere), identification of sites/premises
- Knowledge Transfer Partnership: Collaborating with the University, College to help the independent retailers in the City to develop an 'online independent retailer department store and app'.
- Delivery of business related events: e.g. Small Business Saturday, Apprenticeship Event, Think Local, Business Boost, Start-Up Bus
- Exhibitor at partners events: e.g. numerous Chamber networking events, Skills Fair, Global Enterprise Week, Inspiring Youth Enterprise, GrowthTwenty14, CVS Funding Surgery
- Sense of Place; Carlisle Story, Prospectus, banners, marketing material (folders, postcards, e-banners etc)
- Business Organisations Supported; Centre Business Group, Brampton Economic Partnership, Brampton Business Association
- Young Enterprise; Financial and practical support
- Special projects: MOD Longtown, M6 Corridor
- Enterprise Centre: Management of centre

The Economy & Environment Scrutiny Panel commissioned a Task Group to look at Business Support as they had concerns about the provision in the District. Members required more of an understanding of what role Carlisle City Council has, as this has changed over time. The Task Group were asked to look at the roles of the difference agencies and how they work in partnership. Following a dedicated Panel meeting in October 2014 which outlined the background and gave Members an understanding of types of support to businesses, the following Members were appointed to the Task Group to undertake the review:

Cllrs E Mallinson (Lead Member)

Cllr S Bowditch

Cllr R Watson

Cllr T Allison

Cllr A Mckerrell

Cllr S Higgs

It was agreed that the Task Group should present their findings and draft recommendations to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel during the 2015/16 Civic Year.

The Task Group held their initial meeting on 9th December 2014 and agreed that their Terms of Reference would be:

- Gain an understanding of the provision of business support in the District.
- To understand what the role of Carlisle City Council in the future to facilitate growth of business in the city.
- To understand who accesses support, how it is accessed and to assess signposting and marketing of services to appraise whether a full range of enterprises who stand to gain are aware of what provision and/or funding is available.
- To identify any gaps in the provision or duplication of services and look at how the various agencies work in partnership to provide a full range of services to businesses.
- To look at the journey of a new business to identify the accessibility, awareness and effectiveness of support.

A particular focus will be on small and medium enterprises.

It is recognised that business support operates within a wider context and plethora of efforts and initiatives concerned with supporting economic growth and prosperity across the District. Owing to this a number of matters arose which, whilst recognised as being outside the scope of this report, were nevertheless considered worthy of acknowledgement as follows:

- *Borderland Initiative*

An increasing focus and efforts on cross boundary collaborative working with Northumbria, the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway was acknowledged and welcomed. Whilst recognising the difficulties of ensuring synergies given different rules and regulations on each side of the border, it would seem logical to maximise opportunities to address business support as far as is possible across this geography where to do so adds value and is mutually beneficial.

- *Joint working*
- *European Funding*
- *Moorside development*
- *Enterprise Zone*

The group had initially excluded the Enterprise Centre from the scope of the T&F group. However, the discussion around the need to present a clear and confident position on business support brought the centre back into focus. The Enterprise Centre is therefore included in a draft recommendation.

This draft report is presented for formal approval by the Panel. Once approved the report will be finalised and referred to the Executive for a full response.

Methodology

In order to develop the evidence base for the review Task and Finish Group Members considered a wide range of information and data including the following:

Meetings of the Task Group were held on:

Date	Purpose
21/10/14	Environment & Economy O&S Panel held at Carlisle BIC with agenda dedicated to Business Support. University of Cumbria, Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses, representative from Carlisle Economic Partnership were in attendance.
09/12/14	Task Group meeting to scope review
23/01/15	Visit to Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
12/02/15	Meeting with Dr Ian Hanley, BIS North West
04/03/15	Visit to Carlisle Business Interaction Centre and discussion with Ewan Pullan and Sandra Booth, University of Cumbria.
13/04/15	Evening session with SME's held at Carlisle BIC

Summary of meetings

Chamber of Commerce

Mr Johnston provided Members with his background and his route to the Chamber of Commerce. Mr Johnston provided Members with the background to the Chamber and its associated funding.

The Chamber currently has 1500 members who between them employ 65,000 people. Businesses range from single persons to large employers. The Chamber had developed a number of projects including the Growth Hub which was being held up as an exemplar and had received praise from a number of Government Ministers.

Mr Johnston explained the Chamber's relationship with the former RDA and the LEP; Mr Johnston is the Chair of the Private Sector Advisory Panel.

- *Does the Chamber have any influence with banks with regard to support for small and emerging businesses? The Chamber was not on my radar when a relative needed funding for his business.*

The Chamber currently has 17,000 business addresses on its database. While the Chamber cannot deal with a bank on behalf of a business it will offer advice to the business on possible re-financing and other funding that may be available.

- *How does the Chamber reach its businesses?*

The Chamber was currently working on expanding its database and sponsorship in Cumbria through its e-magazine and through the Business Development Team talking to businesses and intermediaries. The Chamber hosts 200 events per year and much of the work of the Chamber was promoted through social media. Many of the projects were funded through DEFRA, partners and the Chamber.

- *Does the Chamber make money through providing training sessions, etc for its members?*

The Chamber works to a social enterprise set-up and was a third sector organisation grown out of sophisticated larger companies it helps people to deliver social aims eg caring for people, local community shops/pubs and advises them how to keep their money and use it to deliver their business.

The Chamber currently has advisors, volunteer mentors, sets up training courses and other courses in respect of social media, bookkeeping, selling, etc.

- *Can you provide examples of how the Chamber has helped people in the Carlisle District?*

Some clients can get financial support when they move into the Growth hub but there was currently no funding for start ups other than a Government loan. The LEP provides grants to SMEs but start ups are not eligible to apply so it is difficult for them to get funding.

The Chamber was working with the Job Centres in respect of the New Enterprise Allowance.

- *The Group would appreciate any information about new businesses that have been successful with assistance and support from the Chamber.*

The Chamber had recently set up a family business network running events and mentoring sessions for those working within family businesses. There is also a focus business group for European funding to assist small businesses to move into marketing and trading in other countries. The Chamber also hosts a number of networking events for businesses. The next event was scheduled for 13 February 2015 at 5.30 at Barton's Yard in the Halston.

There was some discussion around Carlisle's Assisted Area status. Funding was able to assist areas such as Kingmoor Park. A lot of work had been done by Mr Stewart MP, Mr Stevenson MP, the County Council and the Director of Economic Development from the City Council.

The Investment and Policy Manager advised that the City Council was working with the Chamber to ensure there was no duplication of work and to catch anyone that may have fallen through the Chamber's net.

- *People in Carlisle were worried about moving their business on due to the high rental cost of premises.*

That is a challenge and there is a problem with funding for retail. In areas where there is a BID the situation is easier.

- *Some Councillors feel that they are unable to help people setting up in business? The Redfearn Public House was due to close. People complain to Councillors about such issues.*

The Chamber cannot solve all of the problems. The market is changing and the Council has to be mindful of planning strategies. Businesses need stability.

Members received a presentation on the Growth Hub which was available to all businesses. When a business registered onto the Growth Hub there was a raft of information available on several issues including funding, technical and financial advice and a forum where people could 'chat' to each other. Information on the Hub was constantly updated. The Growth Hub provided a lot of peer to peer support.

The Growth Hub was available as an app for i-pads and smart phones as well as PCs.

BIS North West

Dr Hanley and explained that the purpose of the presentation (Appendix 1) was to determine how the City Council interacted with the BIS (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills), particularly in Carlisle and what the City Council could be doing to support businesses.

Dr Hanley reminded Members that Carlisle was close to Southern Scotland and the Borderlands.

- *Does that weaken our position?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that Officers would need to work with colleagues north of the border.

Dr Hanley added that the Scottish Office was also involved and the BIS lead on the devolution agenda.

- *Does the City Council have a critical mass to influence LEPs?*

Dr Hanley explained that because of their location the City Council had unique opportunities and had influential businesses sitting on the LEP.

- *How does the City Council benchmark against other authorities?*

Dr Hanley advised that it was too early to tell at present. The work that the LEP was doing was seen as exemplar activity. Although nothing had been delivered to date the processes were in place to show that the process was open and transparent.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the Leader of the Council was the City Council's representative on the LEP Board in Cumbria.

Dr Hanley stated that the Government saw the LEP as providing a high level overview in Cumbria. Officers were doing the work with money channelled through from the LEP. If the LEP was not working the BIS would assist. The Government wanted LEPs to be successful. However it was not clear what the position would be after the forthcoming general election.

- *The City Council seems to have less representation on the LEP than when it was set up.*

Dr Hanley explained that 50% of the representation on the LEP was from the private sector and that was still the case.

- *How would pooling the authorities affect Carlisle?*

Dr Hanley advised that that was not necessarily happening but was aspirational at present.

The Director of Economic Development added that such changes took a long time to come to fruition and advised that the Local Plan was not a living document.

- *This group needs to ensure that our aspirations fit into the Local Plan and the Economic Strategy.*

Dr Hanley added that the Council's aspirations also needed to fit into the European Strategy and transport. There were signs of a new transport infrastructure in West Cumbria with the development of the new power station. The electricity would be used nationally therefore the money should not come from the local pot.

It was agreed that there were massive differences between the north and south of the County which made the challenges different.

Dr Hanley advised that the Government's letter on funding had been sent to the Council. The money would be used to develop the Durranhill Industrial Estate. Growth Deal 1 had been confirmed and anything in Growth Deal 2 would be subject to a Business Case. It was important therefore that the Council had projects ready.

With regard to the Nuclear Industrial Strategy Dr Hanley stated that Carlisle was the focal point of Cumbria and a long term strategy would give businesses confidence to invest in growth in the area. The existing workforce would be monitored and it was important that research and development was in place for future growth.

- *The City Council had links with the university in respect of skills for the new power station. Within the Department for Energy and Climate Change the remit was originally to close down nuclear power station but that view had changed. How would that affect Cumbria?*

Dr Hanley stated that Cumbria was included in the nuclear strategy and the required skills were known.

The Director of Economic Development added that Carlisle would try to get energy out of the West Coast. Carlisle has the supply chain and connections which were supported by the University.

Dr Hanley agreed to provide a briefing note to assist the Council. Any businesses working within the nuclear industry would need accreditation. There will be billions invested in the industry and people will need places to stay and roads etc to get to the site.

- *Moorside would be the biggest power station in Europe. There would be a knock-on effect and Carlisle would need a skills base. The City Council would need a Business Case. How could the Council enhance the accreditation in the area?*

Dr Hanley explained that a lot of the skills would cross over and many businesses were currently working within the nuclear industry. Work could also be done with the University.

Hinkley were working with the local college to ensure the skills were up to specification. They were looking at quality housing for the elderly and building houses which could be adapted in future for assisted housing. Dr Hanley and the Director of Economic Development agreed to discuss the skills issue further.

- *There was a big opportunity for businesses to take on apprentices.*

- *There was an apprenticeship programme in Cumbria but we need to look at it through the University. Story were keen to sponsor a building apprenticeship course through the college.*

Dr Hanley went on to explain that the Business Growth Service was the first point of contact to take businesses forward. The Service was launched in January 2015 and Dr Hanley agreed to provide literature.

- *If there is Business Growth Service in Carlisle we have to ensure that the Terms of Reference are relevant to Carlisle and that the Service is included in the Local Plan.*

With regard to Growth Hubs Dr Hanley advised that the approach was for top-down with every stakeholder and provide one point of call. Dr Hanley was working with the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that their Growth Hub was aligned with the new approach.

Dr Hanley explained what the Growth Hub should look like. The Director of Economic Development advised that LEP money would be used to improve the LEPs or could be used elsewhere.

- *The City Council needs to understand the new legislation and ensure that the Growth Hub is compliant and fit for purpose.*

The Director of Economic Development added that the Council also needs to ensure that businesses in Carlisle are benefitting.

Dr Hanley advised that European funding would be available. All areas would have a Growth Hub which would be tailored to the needs of the area.

Dr Hanley explained that the Growth Deal process would be led by the LEPs and they would control the tenders. The County Council was the lead authority. Dr Hanley believed that the Growth Deal would make it easier to get business support and would avoid duplication of service and overlapping services.

- *The Growth Deal would tie in with localism.*

Dr Hanley explained that SMEs had not had this type of support in the past.

The Director of Economic Development advised that one issue was communication and that small businesses could only access the support if they knew about it. The Local Authority had the knowledge and could point people in the right direction. The Council needs to know who is delivering the service.

The Durranhill project is key to the growth of Carlisle. Infrastructure would be put in to open up the site. If the Council could get funding more businesses could come into the site.

Dr Hanley believed that local people knew the sites better that Government and the Chamber of Commerce had to be the conduit for the knowledge about the Growth Deal.

The LEP would create a local Growth Hub funding for which would come initially from the BIS and thereafter from European funding. Dr Hanley would be working with the LEP and the County Council.

The Director of Economic Development advised that at present the City Council had not put any money into the LEP but had put in resources in respect of her time.

Dr Hanley advised that the Growth Deal would not stop the requirement for the Council to do anything. He was looking at the growth landscape and channelling funding to see what could be got out of it. The money that had already been allocated was not ring-fenced and it would not be clawed back. It was not possible to pre-empt what the Government would do in future, particularly with the forthcoming General Election.

Immediately after the election there would be a Comprehensive Spending Review the results of which would be announced in July. It was anticipated that money would flow into the localism agenda. The LEP would then ask for projects and if Carlisle had projects ready they would be in a good position as the LEPs would need a number of projects.

- *We need to look at this to ensure it ties in with the University in respect of new courses for growth and have something ready. We also need to look at how banks work with small businesses and how the Council could be the conduit. The Group would also need to look at how Councils work in West Cumbria and the new skills that will be required.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that the upgrade of the A595 would help. The Strategy would need to highlight Carlisle and what the City had to offer including the University, housing, sites, transport and retail. Those things were important to Cumbria and South of Scotland.

- *The Council needs to be Carlisle focussed and ensure there is time to draw down development money in conjunction with the BIS and the Chamber of Commerce.*

- *If we improve the transport links to Carlisle income in West Cumbria could become higher than that in Carlisle and Carlisle could then become a commuter town.*

Dr Hanley stated that if that was the case people would still spend money in Carlisle.

Carlisle Business Interaction Centre (CBIC)

The University of Cumbria opened **Carlisle Business Interaction Centre (CBIC)** in the autumn of 2013 to create a high-profile entry point for businesses, employees and students seeking to access university expertise and support.

CBIC is based in Paternoster Row, in the heart of Carlisle city centre, and is a hub which acts as a central interface between academics, students, established businesses, start-ups, business support services and research, and is the base for the University of Cumbria Business School in Carlisle.

The University is also working closely with Free Range Industries to support the growth and development of the emerging creative and digital sector within Carlisle. Businesses are able to access support, advice and networking via various regular workshops and meetings.

- *Was there a limit on the length of time a space in the Centre could be rented?*

There was no set time for renting space but there would probably be a natural progression as businesses grow. Digital creativity migrated here as there was no specific provision elsewhere. The Centre was more of an interaction zone which provided support, networking opportunities and seminars. The facilities need to be where people need office space.

With regard to new start ups the Centre runs masterclasses and networking events. Six events had been held in the past year with 40plus people attending each event. It was important for people to acquire knowledge but networking was also important.

- *Are the Free Range events held each week?*

They are held each Friday morning and anyone is welcome to come along and meet many people in a similar situation as themselves. The events had been useful to find out what people want when starting up in business. It may also be useful for Councillors to attend. The events were an opportunity to launch new initiatives and the networking gave the opportunity to publicise their businesses on Facebook and Twitter which were now part of the culture of business.

- *Where was the interface between the creative part and the physical manufacturing connection? Where are the manufacturing facilities in Carlisle?*

One of the ladies who rent space here develops design using CAD. She had attended an event in West Cumbria which focussed on energy and renewables. That was about manufacturing and connectivity. A number of larger companies were also in attendance. The event provided the opportunity for young people to show off their skills and be part of a pool that they could tap into. That was what the BIC was trying to do.

- *What were the expectations of the students in with regard to business start up?*

The BIC was linked to the employability of students in Cumbria and there were a number of student placements available within Cumbria some of which run for three years. The Unite with Business project had been successful but was now coming to an end.

- *Not all apprentices were suited to dirty work or working shifts. Apprentice placements should look at who wants to do the job rather than who is best qualified academically.*

That is part of our career development.

- *Are schools/6th forms aware of the BIC?*

All schools are aware of the BIC. Many have input from the Universities teacher training courses which teaches school leadership and governance as well as recruitment and admissions. The BIC was funding an outreach programme that had strong links to employability and the reality of employability. The programme looked at skills gaps and included career guidance which was not necessarily academically based.

- *A lot of young people don't know what they want to do when they complete their education.*

The university holds open days which gives the opportunity to meet lecturers and students. Because the university had a number of campuses they are generally smaller sites than some other universities.

- *What support is given to starting up small and medium enterprises and how does the BIC work with the Chamber of Commerce?*

The Chamber of Commerce and the BIC are close working partners and have initiated a number of events both at the BIC and other sites in respect of Global Entrepreneur week.

The BIC also used the networking events put on by the Chamber of Commerce and the BIC was a key partner in the Growth Hub. The BIC offered masterclasses and graduate placements where students managed projects. The placement would be highly intensive and the BIC paid the graduates who were seconded to the businesses.

Ms Booth outlined her vision for Growth Hub 2 which would be to look at the different support required once a business was set up.

- *What was the BIC doing to help people to move on once the business was established?*

In Staffordshire there were four business villages which saw the same problems as new businesses at the BIC. People using the BIC could move on through the Growth Hub. The BIC needed to be more linked to other locations.

- *How do people find out about the BIC?*

The University recently undertook some research which included some small business in the Carlisle region. 70% of those who responded had not heard of the BIC. Information about the BIC was on the university's website. The BIC would monitor the use through footfall but there was a lot of work to be done to get the message out.

There were also regular articles in the local newspapers and magazines and on local radio stations. The BIC promotes events and the Growth Hub needed to promote their events.

- *Was the BIC too esoteric?*

We had asked people who were engaged with the university and 70% said no.

The BIC had engaged an external consultant to assist with medium businesses which had been good. At a recent event in London, representatives from Bristol explained that they had done some work mapping the use of social networking and asked who had helped people setting up their business.

- *Have you any links with the banks?*

The BIC should be better engaged with the banks. Royal Bank of Scotland initially promoted the programme. At a recent meeting in London representatives from Santander explained about a new project working with universities.

The nature of business support had changed and there were now a mix of people offering business support. The university acted as an intermediary.

The BIC was in the process of applying for the Small Business Charter which would open doors for additional funding. The assessment would take place in March/April.

- *Was the main business school still in Lancaster?*

The undergraduate business school was based in Lancaster and the post graduate courses were in Carlisle. The university would like to bring more of the business school back to Carlisle and if work could be commissioned it would give confidence to do that. The computing top-up course was for undergraduates. There were students in the interaction centre during the tour who were from the Lancaster campus.

- *How can the Council and the Councillors help? Is there anything the Council can do to help?*

The BIC had been impressed with its dealings with the Council at both Member and Officer level.

- *The list would need to be realistic and indicate how the Council could support the BIC, facilitate programmes and signpost people to the BIC.*

- *There was a concern that more could be done for small and medium businesses in Carlisle in respect of the energy coast. There was the danger that people would live in Carlisle and commute to other locations.*

The BIC were looking at how they could provide a scientific/technical provision which would include businesses on the West Coast and encourage investment.

Session with businesses

Maureen Colohan – Unique Solutions
Paul Crooks – Cache4IT Solutions Ltd
Lauren Dalton – Hairdressing Salon
Iain Dickie – Spectrum Counselling Service
Michael and Linda Fern – The Oaks, Welton
Peter Fleming – Business Doctors Cumbria
Tracy Lazonby – Final Journey
Joel Porter
Amy Story – Web Video Content
Sean Wright – Cumbria Tech Repair

Ms Booth, University of Cumbria facilitated the session and advised of her background in Business Development. Ms Booth explained that the event was about listening as big businesses appeared to hog the limelight in respect of networking groups, LEPs and funding. The event was a forum for small businesses and to enable Councillors to listen to experiences in respect of what was lacking and what would have helped or got in the way.

Each of the participants introduced themselves and gave a brief background to their experience of being in business.

Small businesses are the backbone of the economy and the City wants more small businesses and to look at how small businesses can support the City with the City as its focus. People may have found information through the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses or a website.

Any examples of programmes, advice and how they were helpful.

"The Chamber's start up course was helpful and was a good way to get to know people. They are working on European funding and run free courses, etc. I don't know what will happen next. Initially assigned an advisor and they packed a lot in and provided an overview and went through questions. They did not know anything about accounts. I had one meeting. There was other support through the UCLAN programme. The business mentor was very helpful but that is finished now, he was a business advisor and had been an engineer. He was self-employed so had dealt with accounts and customers. His background did not matter as long as he could help"

"The whole procedure has moved on since I started but the funding was now coming to an end and I am not sure what happens next. I have coached 40+ people into small businesses and will continue to be a business support for the Chamber but I don't know what that will look like. I don't know if the Council can help."

Is the support free?

"Yes at the start. The programmes and support are free and then it goes just when people are getting to know their support. There is a query about the consistency of the support."

"I lost my job last year and started my business from home. I made the Job Centre aware that I was working from home but there was no information available at the Job Centre. They were just interested in trying to get me into work. It would be better if they listened to people's ideas and pointed them in the right direction. Everything I have learned has been through Peter's (Fleming) advice and networking groups and that was where I became aware of the BIC. I didn't know it was here. There are fantastic facilities for small businesses but the place is not advertised. When customers come to see me they ask where is it?"

"there should have been more information available at the Job Centre."

"There is the New Enterprise Allowance scheme that has been going a while. The Job Centre should have said about it last year. S could have had £1400. The Job Centre has to advise about the Chamber of Commerce to get someone through the planning stage.

"I had great advice from PF but from an unemployment point of view the Job Centre is not the place to go if you want to be self-employed. When you register they have a responsibility as well. You get bits of funding advice through networking and through courses. There should be a pack available with everything available to allow you to plan."

Would it be better if the Job Centre recommended the Chamber of Commerce?

"That would be one way of doing it. I was in full time employment. The Job Centre should not focus on just finding another job – they should point you in other directions. Registering the HRMC should trigger that advice is needed."

"We first went into business in the 70s and didn't have any help. We learned by our mistakes. We have been self-employed for a long time and now have a new business. We are now hearing about things we never knew existed. That first help leads to something. We did not know where to go and look for things like grants etc."

Where have people looked?

"I saved and did it all myself. My godfather is in business and gave me some guidance but I didn't think about grants. When I have sent queries I have had to wait a long time for people to get back and they often pointed me to someone else and I had to wait again. It is frustrating. If you go wrong you have to figure a way out. I would have preferred to be able to go to one person. I was in full time employment until I had enough money saved. Unless you are pointed in the right direction there is nothing when you are in full time employment."

"It is a challenge. I have helped a lot of start-up businesses and people training when people have become lost and need more support. It is a confidence thing. Coaches gave me confidence."

Moving on how do you manage growth once you get past the initial stage? How do you get that confidence?

"There are no grants. If the support was done pre-start you would have got in. You can ring the Chamber of Commerce."

If you don't have a business background you may not have heard of the Chamber of Commerce.

"I had heard of the Chamber because I have been in business 15 years. Like when talking about the BIC how do you let people know about them. I was in employment and didn't go to the Job Centre but just flew by the seat of my pants."

"The Chamber of Commerce is a mystery – do you have to ask to join?"

"People don't do networking – they talk to people. I go to useful events. I'm in a public house. I have learned more after events just talking to people. I knew nothing about running my own business. I get customers as well. It's good to have events as it points you to where to get help."

"I left school at 16 and had the same job since I was 15. I haven't spoken to anyone and I am now past that support stage. My accountant told me about this event. I didn't know about the BIC."

"You are the pioneers – you have taken the risk and set up a business. People can learn from you. You need to spread the word using social media."

"I have been in business for 6-7 months and the busier I get the more I need investment but banks won't lend money. Councils should have some allocation and allow the business to pay it back. Before I came to the BIC I had looked at shops but the business rates were a killer."

Is there one thing that you are hoping that the City Council can help with?

"Just a look at how to incubate and accelerate small businesses."

"Does the City council facilitate any networking events? I know what the Chamber of Commerce does but the whole stuff is fragmented. I didn't know about the BIC and I don't know how it got its name. I went to a networking meeting in Tullie House after I moved here from the North East where I had to close a business to move here. I was stagnating and looking to get a proper job. Then I went to the networking event and within 2 weeks I was employed. Networking puts people in touch with people they can work with. The bias is on growth and employing other people. I will support other people but that is not valued the same as taking on an apprentice. In the long term there should be grant support/sustainability for sole traders to enable them to carry on being successful."

Do others go to networking forums or other groups?

"The event I went to at Tullie House was advertised on CFM radio as a business start-up group. You have to listen all the time because there is no-one who will take you to the Chamber of Commerce. Messages are there but they are well hidden."

"When we talk about networking we joke about it but take the time to talk to each other and you may not make the same mistakes and have the honesty to ask for help. We have been in business for a long time and there are still things that we don't know the answer to. Everyone else is in a similar situation. Networking is not just about selling yourself – it's also about asking for help."

Apart from networking and other groups has anyone used any professional organisations? National Federation of Hairdressers. National Association of Funeral Directors.

"I have always been in licensing and only met 1 person who was a member of the Licensed Victuallers Association. The British Institute of Innkeepers have events but I have not been to any. They have telephone support helplines. I have also received help from the pub company who have been very helpful as there are a lot of laws. We need to be steered or you fall foul of the law with tax etc."

"When you go through the Chamber of Commerce process you get a lot advice about networking and each event can give something different. Some are social and some professional. I have met a lot of people but networking is fragmented."

Has anyone been involved in awards?

"I accessed information through the University of Cumbria. Being able to take part in the Bright Futures scheme lifted my profile on the website. I found networking events have lots of people who don't talk to each other. It is better to tap into a network that is relevant to your business. I have been to come networking events in the last 3 months and met some nice people who were not specialists and it did not yield anything. If they were more targeted it would be useful but you have to search for them. There should be more availability in the local press."

If you could have business support now where are the gaps? What is not there that you would find helpful? What is the next challenge?

"I went through the Chamber of Commerce route and had 10-12 hours of support. I didn't use all of the hours. As soon as I had signed off the business plan I was signed off and received no further help. I wanted help about social media. It's no surprise businesses fail in the first year. There is no direction about where to get hep – nothing. I had to fly by the seat of my pants – I had no support. I'm lucky – I did a BTEC in Social Media at Carlisle College which was funded through European funding and was free. It was an 8 week course. I read about it in the paper. It was a fluke that I saw it. It was a popular course. Most people here would benefit from it. Social media is massive. The Chamber of Commerce do put on courses about marketing but I work part time and it is difficult to tie them in. This is a massive gap. There is nothing to get you up to the next level."

"Social media is very useful."

"When it came to advertising I didn't know whether to use the phone book or Yell. I learned that once you sign up if the advert is not printed where you want it to be you lose out for whole year until it is printed again."

What can the City Council do to help? (regarding website)

"Is there anything on the Council's website? Could there be links put on? It needs to be dynamic and interactive"

"It's difficult when you're faced with a whole page on links. It would be better to have a list of new businesses that have started this year and everyone go to that page. Some advice could be free."

"It would be better if the page was new businesses then a person could click on hair salon and come through straight to me. It doesn't need 21 links. People need direct support.

"Every business needs to be recognised. It would be great if the page on the City Council website welcomed businesses and wished them luck."

"If the site recognised new businesses people would know we were there.

"It's OK having a page like that but it needs direction to get there. It could be on the Discover Carlisle page."

How many people are members of the City Centre Business Group?

There were only 2

"You don't have to be in the City Centre. Carlisle tried to get a BID – Business Improvement District – and the specification was for the improvement of the City Centre but that failed through lack of support. The City Centre Business Group is an offshoot of that and has 30 independent businesses. There have been a lot of conversations with the Council. Businesses work together and there has been a lot of improvement. The Group is free to join and is not just for businesses within the City Centre."

"We are guilty of not telling people about it. We have occasional meetings. When we started the BID it opened up a line of communication with the Council. Our intent is to improve the City Centre for businesses and we work with the council on putting on events. The BID never happened. There has been stuff in the press with contact details. I have been in the City Centre for 14 years and because of the BID I got involved. A good thing has come from the failure of the BID. I am a citizen of Carlisle and want the City Centre to be busy and better.

"The Edge was an event at Carlisle College about social media. It was a three night course which will not be repeated again. There are a lot of courses available that you can find through contacts here."

What role can the City Council play in terms of business support/growth/advice?

"I wouldn't think to go to the Council for that kind of advice."

"We are enterprising enough – why look to the council for a helping hand. Is that the duty of the Council?"

"It isn't the role of the City Council. it needs to be somebody who can speak to other bodies."

"The role of the City Council is to make Carlisle as best as it can be. Councillors should ensure that happens and be positive about Carlisle to make it happen. It is not the Council's

role to run businesses. They want us to be successful because as small businesses expand they take on more people and those people will need houses. There is a page on the Council's website about new businesses. It should be about what we've got."

"Being self-employed can be isolating and networking can provide a sense of community. I am a consultant for the Chamber of Commerce and it is nice to meet people and share experiences."

"The City Council could organise networking events for new businesses and with other people there who have had similar problems. It would be useful to have people there to solve those problems."

"It would be good to be able to go to a networking meeting and get personal advice eg can I afford to put staff in uniforms? As a small business it is a lot of expense. It would be useful to be able to go somewhere and hive someone to help and have it done before the business is established. It would be useful to be able to go to someone who has run a salon for 20-30 years and ask them about the problems and talk to them."

"No matter where businesses are promoted they are all different – some on the web but they all have a commitment to Carlisle. The Carlisle Ambassadors Group is a number of businesses who get together to bring new ideas and work together and network about how to improve the City. No business has a dominant role – the group is facilitated by the City Council. It is an opportunity for sole traders and the big players to look at what cultural activities are needed, and provides a sense of community. It is a way to get more involved and set the agenda for Carlisle."

Conclusions

The group has evidenced that there is a great deal of advice and support on offer, however this is not presented in a simple way in a single location. It is clear that there is no expectation from local businesses that the Council provides business support, but we could facilitate access to support with smarter signposting. There are examples, from across the North West, were authorities have created webpages or supported the creation of websites dedicated to business support and growth.

The Council role is not to have all the answers; it can help business people find the right answers as easily as possible. To play this role effectively will require further work on mapping out the existing sources and networks offering business support and an ongoing commitment to keeping this mapping current and accurate.

Recommendation 1: Audit of networks

An audit of the business support and business start-up networks, both formal and informal, should be undertaken.

This audit will provide current content for a refresh of the business support pages on the new Carlisle.gov.uk website and act to ensure that the Council plays a key role in signposting those looking for support. The monitoring of the performance of these pages will further aid the understanding of the needs for business support in Carlisle.

The group had initially excluded the Enterprise Centre from the work, mindful of the Enterprise Centre Task & Finish Group (November 2011) and not wanting to cover ground already well trodden. The evidence from the Chamber of Commerce, Carlisle Business Interaction Centre and Dr Hanley (BIS North West) highlighted how business support has changed over the last ten years. Whilst none of the evidence highlighted any issues with the availability or quality of business start-up accommodation and premises, it was apparent that there was confusion surrounding the role the Enterprise Centre plays in this arena, particularly given that it functions today simply as managed workspace and no longer entails any associated or ancillary start-up support services.

Recommendation 2: Rebranding the Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre is renamed and rebranded to represent its current use as managed workspace.

The centre is no longer the epicentre of business support in Carlisle; it does however continue to offer a range of affordable workshops, studio and office units in a City Centre location. To continue to present the space as an Enterprise Centre risks ongoing confusion about its role in the business support offer available in Carlisle.

The national picture for business support is changing with the inclusion of this function in devolution deals. For example the Cornwall Devolution Deal states:

*'Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership and Government will work together to **integrate local and national business support services**, to make it easier for local businesses to find the support they need to grow.'*[1]

The Cumbria LEP funds business support through the Growth Deal, Round 6 opened on 16 June and closes on 30 September 2015. It is important that the panel keeps abreast of these changes in order to continue to play its role in overview and scrutiny. It is critical that Carlisle has a strong voice through key elected roles in any negotiations around a devolution deal and the role of the Cumbria LEP.

Recommendation 3(a)(b): Business support and devolution

(a)The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be influenced by and therefore responsive to Carlisle's needs.

(b) The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be structured in such a way to enable local scrutiny.

Drawing on the conclusions and recommendations from above, it is important that any changes taken forward are effectively communicated. Some simple ideas such as using the Business Rates mailings, especially at start-up, and new webpages and social media are all potential options.

Recommendation 4: Communications and marketing strategy for business support

A communications and marketing strategy should be implemented to support all the recommendations adopted. This strategy needs to include key players such as the Job Centre, BIC, Growth Hub and banks.

[1] Cornwall Devolution Deal (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447419/20150715_Cornwall_Devolution_Deal_-_FINAL_-_reformatted.pdf)

Appendix: BIS North West Presentation

(These slides are available on request as a Powerpoint presentation)

Think Local: BIS in the North West

Dr Ian Hanley
Assistant Director
BIS North West

12th February 2015

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Introduction

- HMG Growth Agenda
- BIS North West
- Business Growth Service
- Growth Hubs
- Conclusion

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Looking back to 2010

- New Government, with a radically different view on how local growth policy should be delivered
- Coalition Agreement called for the creation of **Local Enterprise Partnerships** (LEPs) and abolition of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), as part of a **regional rebalancing** agenda
- **Regional Growth Fund** announced in June 2010 Emergency Budget – also supports regional rebalancing
- Decision also made to close all the **Government Offices**

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

HM Government

The government's objective is to achieve strong and sustainable growth, more evenly balanced across the country and between industries.

This is supported by four overarching ambitions

1. To create the most competitive tax system in the G20
2. To make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business
3. To encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy
4. To create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

BIS North West

- Drive local growth
- Identify and realise economic opportunities
- Use local knowledge to influence policy
- Respond effectively to economic shocks
- Support Ministers
- Work closely with other Government Departments



Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Local Growth Directorate (LG)

- Strengthening **local growth capability**
- Ensuring that **local leaders** have the **levers and resources** they need to drive economic growth
- Supporting local areas develop growth strategies and secure **Growth Deals**
- Helping ensure effective delivery of the **Industrial Strategy** and other growth-related policies

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Local Growth Policy & Delivery

- Policy & support for **Local Enterprise Partnerships** (LEPs)
- Policy on **Growth Deals** and the c.£12bn **Local Growth Fund** announced at Budget 2013
- Policy, negotiation & implementation of **City & Growth Deals**
- Influencing the development and delivery of the **Enterprise Zone** programme
- Helping the **BIS Local** teams work effectively

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- **39 of them** in place – 100% coverage across England
- **Business-led partnerships** with civic leaders
- LEP activities **driven by local economic circumstances** and priorities
- Each LEP is working on a long term strategy, through **multi-year growth plans**



Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Strategic Economic Plans

A Strategic Economic Plan for growth – <u>not</u> just for the Local Growth Fund

- Demonstrating wider commitment to growth across local spending and decision-making
- Creating an environment which enables private investment in growth
- Aligning or pooling local authority capital and revenue spend on growth
- Effective collaboration on economic development activities
- Maximising the synergies with wider local growth programmes including EU funding

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Industrial Strategy

The Government's industrial strategy is about:

- giving business more confidence to invest, hire and grow
- setting out the long-term direction of travel for the economy
- how government supports business and supports those sectors that have the biggest impact

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Scene Setting: Nuclear Industrial Strategy

HM Government

Nuclear Industry Council

UK Nuclear Sector



40,000

40,000 dynamic, highly skilled people directly employed in the UK nuclear sector (2012)



Total commercial turnover of the UK nuclear supply chain for 2010/11 is estimated at £4bn. Five sites are earmarked for development by 2030



Global expansion is forecast to see investment of £930bn in building new reactors



The nuclear sector generated 19% of the UK's electricity in 2012

gov.uk/industrialstrategy #industrialstrategy

Improved Business Support Offer

Policy Background

- **2010** - Closure of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Business Link (face-to-face services)
- **2012** - Closure of Business Link website and launch of GOV.UK supported by the national Business Support Helpline (Tel: 0300 456 3565)
- **2013** - PM launches '**Small Business: GREAT Ambition**' which stated that businesses will:

"be able to access joined-up local support through new Growth Hubs, being rolled out across the country in 2014. These will provide a single port-of-call for local advice and support"

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

BUSINESS GROWTH SERVICE

Visit
www.greatbusiness.gov.uk
Call our national helpline on
0300 456 3565
Follow us on twitter
#businessisGREAT

Helping businesses grow

BUSINESS IS GREAT

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Start Up

- Starting your business – creating a business can seem like a daunting prospect but we are on hand to give you personal business and financial advice.
- Business mentors – get started with real world advice from Mentorsme and the social enterprise mentoring programme.
- Tax relief and incentives for business – could your business qualify for help with tax relief or business rates?
- Help with securing a premises – finding the right building and location for your business allows you to operate more effectively, attract more customers and even reduce costs.

Scale Up

- Accessing finance – find out about different types of finance available, apply for grant schemes and get advice on working with banks.
- Recruiting staff and apprentices – who are you looking for? Get great advice on employing the right people and find out what tax reliefs are available.
- Help to get online – broadband connection vouchers worth up to £3,000 can open your business to new markets.
- Protecting your ideas – learn about how to manage your intellectual property.
- Growth Vouchers to help to pay for your strategic advice – up to £2,000 for professional advice on a range of topics including digital technology, cash flow and recruitment.

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Growth hubs - The "glue" in the system

- Growth Hubs are a new approach to how national and local, public and private business support offers work best together to build a stronger and customer focused market for business advice.
- Growth Hubs will enable businesses to access consistent advice and support no matter where they start their journey – "no wrong door"
- Growth Hubs will:
  - **Provide a one-stop-shop** to support all businesses but target those with an ambition to grow.
  - **Drive business growth** in cities and across local areas by acting as a centre for engagement, bringing coherence to the business support landscape, boosting use of and improving the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of business support in their areas.
  - **Add depth and value to local business support** by taking and using existing national assets, making good use of public investment already made and avoiding duplication.
  - **Design and run their own bespoke schemes** with local private/third sector partners.
  - **Improve the impact/reach of national schemes**, using local funding to amplify/expand the provision of agreed national schemes.

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Model: how should Growth Hubs work?

- Build on existing organisational structures where possible/appropriate
- Create a 'one stop shop' that signposts firms to public and private sector support available at both local and national levels
- Deliver selection of national assets at the local level (e.g. start-up loans and mentoring networks)
- Avoid duplication by 'amplifying' existing national schemes (e.g. Business Growth Service) where appropriate
- Plug gaps by creating tailored business/innovation support that meets needs of SMEs
- Strategic collaboration with national government where appropriate (e.g. BIS)



Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Growth Hubs – a local point of access

What a Growth Hub will do?

- Target all businesses with an ambition to grow.
- Raise awareness and uptake of public and private sector support.
- Provide a light touch diagnostic & triage function.
- Take, use and promote national assets and services.
- Forge strong local/national, public/private sector partnerships for effective governance and co-ordination.

How will SMEs benefit?

- Know where to go for help, support and advice.
- Get consistent, accurate information about compliance and regulations.
- Access generic advice or information about local/national schemes through effective online signposting.
- Be referred to the right schemes through intensive telephone or local face to face assistance.
- Over time, receive recommendations for products and services based on preferences.

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Next Steps

- Through Growth Deal process Government is providing revenue funding in 2015-16 to 38 out of 39 LEP areas for the establishment or development of a growth hub (London did not bid)
- By March 2016, we will complete a network of operational growth hubs across England. Businesses will be able to access the support they need to establish, sustain or grow their business, from a single local access point.

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Conclusion



Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Think Local: BIS in the North West

Dr. Ian Hanley
Ian.Hanley@bis.gsi.gov.uk

BIS North West
@bisnorthwest

12th February 2015

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills