

Report to Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.2

Meeting Date: 21st October 2014
Portfolio: Economy and Enterprise
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: BUSINESS SUPPORT - BACKGROUND PAPER
Report of: Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 43 14

Purpose / Summary:

To brief Members of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on business support, background, how it was delivered in the past and the changes introduced by the Government following the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies with a specific focus on Carlisle.

Recommendation Areas for Investigation:

- If the focus of Business Support is SME – What is their experience?
- Do Businesses understand what support experience is available?

Groups to be invited to give evidence to the Task & Finish Group

- Business Support Co-ordination Group - LEP
- Chamber of Commerce – Growth Hub
- Federation of Small Businesses
- University of Cumbria

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

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

The type and nature of business support can vary depending on the size and nature 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).

1.2 Review of Business Support

Following the change in Government in 2010 and the abolition of RDA's 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 (LEP's)

1.3 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 UKTI and the University of Cumbria.

In September 2012 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:-

- (a) Courses e.g. MBA, HR and IT short courses and FdAs in professional practices for Business
- (b) Information and access to events and networks
- (c) Access to consultancy and research
- (d) 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' and store '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

2. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- We will support the growth of more high quality and sustainable business and employment opportunities
- We will work with partners to develop a skilled and prosperous workforce fit for the future

Contact Officer: Jane Meek

Ext: 7190

**Appendices
attached to 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:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -