

# BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**North Area Council:  
Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016**

**Agenda Item: 7**

**Report of the  
North Area Council  
Manager**

## **Priority: NAC Economic Regeneration** **Project Development: Small Business Surgery and Peer Support** **Proposal**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to prompt a discussion about the possibility of a larger scale project based upon the finding of the small business survey pilot.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 **That the Area Council agree to the small business surgeries, peer support and networking project to be delivered in partnership with Barnsley Business and Innovation Centre (BBIC). Please refer to appendix 1.**

### **3.0 Introduction**

- 3.1 The North Area Council agreed the Economic Regeneration priority in 2014. To date a project has not been delivered to address this priority.
- 3.2 Vibrant economies engender healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life. They contribute to economic security through access to living-wage jobs, stable employment and help to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community as well as the prosperity of the local economy.
- 3.3 The North Area Council agreed to the business case presented at the April Area Council Meeting. Subsequently the Area Manager and Area Chair Cllr Leech met with Adrian Waite and Kevin Steele from BBIC to discuss a survey to establish local business development needs. This was agreed at the Area Council meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> July.
- 3.4 BBIC conducted a small business survey during August 2016 funded by the North Area Council. They presented their finding to the Area Council in September 2016. 44 businesses were visited and the survey focussed on business planning, marketing and business goals. 64% of the businesses had never received any business support and didn't know that there was any available. This showed that only 23% of business surveyed had current business plans. It also showed that word of mouth and social media were the most popular marketing methods.
- 3.5 The report contained recommendations for advice surgeries and peer support groups.

- 3.6 On the 9<sup>th</sup> November the Area Manager and priority working group representatives attended a meeting at BBIC to discuss how the project could be tailored to meet the needs of the local community and be successfully promoted throughout the North Area.

#### **4.0 Item for Decision**

Members are requested to refer to appendix 1 and indicate if they wish the Area Council to proceed with this partnership project.

#### **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 If the Area Council agree to proceed with the project the working group will need to define the project timeline in partnership with BBIC.
- 5.2 The marketing plan would need to be designed and agreed by the working group.
- 5.3 The working group will continue to work with BBIC during the 6 month pilot project.
- 5.4 Part of the marketing plan will required the service to be promoted to local high street business. Councillor support is requested with this process. Please indicate if you are averse to participating in this process.

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2016 2016

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Date:  
9<sup>th</sup> November

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Priority: Economic Regeneration Project: Business Surgeries at BBIC and Networking Small Business Support**

#### **Specification of Requirements**

##### **1. Brief Summary of the Service**

A collaborative working arrangement between the North Area Council and Barnsley Business and Innovation Centre (hereafter referred to as BBIC) to provide fortnightly Business Advice Surgeries for small independent business in the Barnsley North Area within a 6 month trial period. To increase sustainability and foster greater independence a peer support group will also be introduced.

##### **2. Background and Context**

The North Area Council agreed the Economic Regeneration priority in 2014. Vibrant economies engender healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life. Small independent businesses are a key sector of our communities, aiming to provide stable employment which helps to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community as well as the prosperity of the local economy.

BBIC conducted a small business survey during August 2016 funded by the North Area Council. They presented their finding to the Area Council in September 2016. 44 businesses were visited and the survey focussed on business planning, marketing and business goals. 64% of the businesses had never received any business support and didn't know that there was any available. This showed that only 23% of business surveyed had current business plans. For those that did have a business plan this is a key area of development and real opportunity to stimulate business growth. Business owner did not seem interested in general workshops but would prefer tailored support in key areas, particularly in sales and marketing. The survey also showed that word of mouth and social media were the most popular marketing methods, however some businesses had limited experience of proactive marketing.

##### **3. Strategic Aims and Priorities**

- ❖ Create more and better jobs and good business growth
- ❖ Create vibrant retail hubs within the North Area

##### **4. Aims and Objectives**

- ❖ Enable smaller independent businesses in North Barnsley to grow and flourish
- ❖ Increase Gross Value Added (GVA) of business accessing provision
- ❖ Increase the number of jobs
- ❖ Improve the confidence and capability of small business owners
- ❖ Increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities by educating business owners about the practicalities

## **5. Service to be delivered**

### Surgeries –

Provision of Business Support Clinics or Business Surgeries at BBIC (offering an initial free 30-45 minute consultation).

The surgeries will take place between 17:00 and 20:00 on a fortnightly basis. Appointments will need to be pre-booked.

### Networking Workshops –

Businesses would also be signposted towards a variety of monthly networking workshops being held at the BBIC. These will include the following:-

- Marketing Group – self-help peer group established, to discuss effective marketing strategies in small businesses including actual case studies of successful projects. This would need to include some support for starting to use social media;
- IT Group – self-help peer group established to discuss the effective implementation and use of IT within a small business;
- First Friday Breakfast Networking – a general networking group for residents of the BBIC, associated partners and invited guests;
- Crafty Biz Network – currently based at the BBIC and offering support primarily to part time businesses, many of whom are craft-based. This includes a monthly evening workshop and networking group.

## **6. Target Group and Accessibility**

The target audience will be small business based within the North Area who have not previously received Enterprising Barnsley support and that have been trading for less than 2 years. If attendees can be referred to an Enterprising Barnsley Programme this will happen as a matter of course. If it is more appropriate for the business to be supported via Launch Pad the business will be signposted.

## **7. Location and Area**

The surgeries and peer support groups will be delivered at BBIC's premises: Innovation Way, Barnsley S75 1JL. Unless otherwise stipulated.

## **8. Performance Measures – Outputs (not exhaustive at the time of writing)**

- Number of surgeries appointments booked
- Number of surgery appointments attended
- Number of businesses to make contact with the service
- Number of businesses currently accessing support
- Number of additional people attending the peer support groups as a result of accessing the service.
- Number of referrals to partner services

### **9. Barnsley Business and Innovation Centre's Commitment**

To deliver the services defined in point 5 to small business based in the North Area, free of charge.

To work with the North Area Council to design and develop

To work with the North Area Council to agree and deliver marketing plan.

All business data collected from business would be made available to the Area Council.

A comprehensive evaluation report providing information included in the performance measures above, qualitative client feedback and case studies to help evidence the benefit to individual business owners.

### **10. North Area Council's Commitment**

To work with BBIC to design and develop a landing page and web based booking system for booking surgery time which will link to BBIC's own website and can be accessed by both BBIC nominated personnel and the North Area Team.

To lead on the marketing plan which will be required to promote the service to be delivered during the initial 6 month pilot. This will require utilising a diverse range of media.

### **11. Financial Commitment**

The North Area Council will commit £5,000 to the web booking and delivery of the marketing plan during the 6 month pilot phase. This will need to fund design work, domain name, web page development, leaflet design, production and distribution costs.

Many of these costs are one off implementation costs. Therefore if the project is extended beyond the 6 months pilot term the ongoing financial commitment would be reduced. The maintenance of the landing page will be ultimately be BBIC's responsibility to maintain. The longer the Area Council continues to invest in marketing and promotion should mean that North Area business will benefit from the business grown and development opportunities.

### **12. Start Date & Length of the Commitment**

It is proposed to commence delivery of the pilot in early 2017 (approximately March).

The demand for the service will need to be assessed after the first six months. It is anticipated that for the service to be used to its full capacity may take up to three years. It is recommended that the Area Council commit to supporting the service provision for up to two years however the cost of the commitment would be reduced after the initial outlay, due to one-off start-up costs.

### **13. Monitoring and Recording**

It is recommended that the working group remain involved in the design and development of the project prior to the start date and that a steering group takes place on a bi-monthly/quarterly basis.

BBIC will be requested to produce a report at the end of the 6 month pilot period which will help the Area Council to determine if funding will continue to be made available to fund the marketing and promotion of the project. The Area Council would be particularly interested to know how the surgeries and peer support groups have helped the businesses to grow. This would require all businesses to be mapped against key metric inc. qualitative and quantitative data. It is acknowledged that this growth may not be apparent in the first six months which is where client feedback and case studies can help to evidence impact.

### **14. Risks**

The service will not be well utilised. To negate this risk there is a requirement for surgery appointments to be booked.

It is anticipated that initial engagement with the service may be slow. The demand for service will need to be continually monitored, however it is anticipated that the promotional and marketing funding may need to be made available for several years. Many people are unclear as to where the ward boundaries are and this may result in businesses that are based outside the North Area requesting support. It is felt that business should not be turned away. Details of all service users will be recorded and this can be shared with other area councils to help identify if there is a wider appetite for this kind of provision. The North Area Council would expect at least 80% of attendees to represent businesses based within the North Area.

### **15. Terms and Conditions**

This is collaborative venture between the North area Council and the BBIC requiring a Service Level Agreement to ensure that all outputs are defined and both parties are in agreement.

### **16. Sustainability**

As with all the Area Council funded projects the services are time limited. The funding has not been designed to implement services that the public or partners become dependent on. The Area Council appreciated that this business development offer may take several years to gain the momentum it requires to be self-sustaining.

### **17. Opportunities to expand and roll out to other Area Councils**

The provision that is due to be piloted could be the different between a small business merely existing and it being able to thrive and grow. Therefore if the pilot is successful it may lead to other Area Councils wishing be involved. This has been touched upon in the planning stages.

Rosie Adams, North Area Council Manager, November 2016