

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 11 th March 2020
Report Subject	Flintshire in Business Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the work of the business development team and provides an update on the Flintshire in Business programme for 2019. The report also sets out how the service will focus its work in 2020 and beyond in response to changes to the economy and to corporate priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the progress made in delivering business support in Flintshire and the refreshed priorities for the future.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE APPROACH TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
	<u>Background</u>
1.01	The business development service comprises six full time equivalent staff plus four officers in the markets team. The service operates with a revenue budget of £338k which includes £212k of staff costs and £126k for business development initiatives and tourism marketing. The Social Enterprise Development Officer is funded by Welsh Government and the markets team are funded from their income. The structure of the service is set out below.

	<div data-bbox="359 190 1343 436" data-label="Diagram"> <pre> graph TD BDM[Business Development Manager] --> MT[Markets team] BDM --> SED[Social Enterprise Development Officer] BDM --> BDO[Business Development Officer (x2)] BDM --> BDC[Business Development Co-ordinator] BDM --> TO[Tourism Officer] </pre> </div> <p data-bbox="319 477 1390 546">This report focusses on the work to support businesses and therefore does not discuss the markets team.</p>
1.02	<p data-bbox="319 589 1390 952">The main functions of the service are set out below. The main function of the service is business engagement which acts as a platform on which other activities are built both by the service and other providers. This is a unique role which is not provided elsewhere. It acts as a two-way conduit both enabling businesses to access the ever-changing range of public sector support and enabling the public sector to engage effectively with local businesses. An average of 780 businesses contact the service for support each year. The service has increasingly developed business networks as a way to engage larger numbers of businesses at the same time, helping to make best use of staff resources.</p> <p data-bbox="319 992 1193 1025">Business engagement / single point of contact for businesses</p> <ol data-bbox="319 1030 1193 1355" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signpost to wider support services 2. One to one business review / mentoring and coaching 3. Support workforce development and recruitment 4. Act as conduit for other Council services 5. Rapid response to actual and potential redundancy 6. Provide networking and learning opportunities 7. Supply chain development 8. Facilitate finding land and premises 9. Support investment proposals <p data-bbox="319 1395 957 1429">Creating the conditions for business success</p> <ol data-bbox="319 1433 957 1534" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support business clusters 2. Promote and manage the area 3. Advocate for the business community
1.03	<p data-bbox="319 1581 1390 1798">The feedback from stakeholders and business customers is overwhelmingly positive in regard to the services they receive from the team. The team has built up excellent relationships with the business community and many businesses value this and use the team as a trusted source of advice and information. Business also use the service for signposting to wider support or links into other Council functions.</p>
	<p data-bbox="319 1839 625 1872"><u>Flintshire in Business</u></p>
1.04	<p data-bbox="319 1910 1390 2047">One of the flagship programmes delivered by the service is Flintshire in Business (formerly Flintshire Business Week). This has operated for 13 years and has evolved continuously across the period. The events have cost almost £750k to deliver in that time and have been fully funded through</p>

	<p>sponsorship from the business community. Over 32,000 business delegates have attended events in the last seven years.</p>				
1.05	<p>In 2019 the decision was taken to cease to operate the programme as a week-long-series of events. It was felt that this made it harder for businesses to attend all of the events that they might wish to and it created a spike in the workload of the service. Instead, events were proposed to be spread throughout the year and the name of the programme was changed from Flintshire Business Week to Flintshire in Business.</p>				
1.06	<p>The programme in 2019 included events on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management • Negotiation • Health and safety • Finance and economics • Social media • Digital connectivity • Project management • Managing change • Cash flow and book-keeping for small businesses <p>There were also themed events specifically for social enterprises and regular networking events for businesses in different areas.</p> <p>The team also supported the organisation of events led by other organisations including the Mersey Dee Alliance business breakfasts, North Wales Tourism annual conference and the Federation of Small Business networking event.</p> <p>The service also hosted a number of “Meet the Buyer” events to enable companies in Flintshire to find out more about forthcoming business opportunities and how best to make the most of them.</p>				
1.07	<p>In total 57 events were supported through the Flintshire in Business programme with 3,180 delegates attending.</p>				
	<p><u>Strategic direction</u></p>				
1.08	<p>The service will be refocussing its work in 2020/2021 to reflect the changing world for businesses in the County. These influences are set out below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="319 1668 1385 2051"> <thead> <tr> <th>Influence</th> <th>Response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Economic uncertainty</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain dialogue with identified vulnerable sectors to understand performance and concerns. • Increase range of business resilience support measures delivered and integrate consideration into individual business reviews. • Liaise with Business Wales, Welsh Government and North Wales Economic Ambition Board to </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Influence	Response	Economic uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain dialogue with identified vulnerable sectors to understand performance and concerns. • Increase range of business resilience support measures delivered and integrate consideration into individual business reviews. • Liaise with Business Wales, Welsh Government and North Wales Economic Ambition Board to
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		develop new bespoke programmes of support as new needs identified.
Increased WG support for foundational economy	Local supplier development programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new programme of work for supply chain development between businesses and with the public sector. • Bespoke support to help businesses to form consortia to access public sector procurement. Create the conditions for successful business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing and management for the tourism sector. • Support for local food producer networks. • Contribute to development of regional of energy cluster. • Support development of supplier consortia 	
Regional growth programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect Flintshire businesses into opportunities arising from regional Growth Deal projects. 	
Need for digital connectivity growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help businesses to identify the right package of support including for higher quality connectivity infrastructure. • Work with Business Wales / WG to increase business awareness and adoption of new technologies. 	
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local supplier development programme as above. • Signpost businesses to specialist environmental advice where available. 	
Council priority on social value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local supplier development programme as above. • Develop new work programmes to encourage corporate social responsibility and to maximise community impacts. • Integrate consideration into business reviews. 	
Council priority on town centres	Develop new work programme to support smaller retail businesses to adapt to changing and challenging economic climate. Support the development of business-led initiatives such as Business Improvement Districts.	
1.09	The North Wales Economic Ambition Board is developing a work stream to improve the coherence and co-ordination of business support activity across the region between the wide range of organisations involved. A further report will be brought on this once more detail is available later in 2020.	

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None arising from this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	None for this report.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	The service has conducted a review of its work with principal stakeholders and undertakes regular satisfaction surveys with business customers.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Niall Waller (Enterprise and Regeneration Manager) Telephone: 01352 702137 E-mail: niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>Mersey Dee Alliance - cross-border partnership of local authorities education providers and Government to promote the economic vitality of the region.</p> <p>North Wales Tourism - membership organisation for tourism businesses in the region.</p> <p>Federation of Small Business – membership organisation for small businesses.</p>