



Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday, 23 January 2020

REPORT TITLE:	BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE
REPORT OF:	LEAD COMMISSIONER: PLACE & INVESTMENT ECONOMIC & HOUSING GROWTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Council's Business Support Service contract with Wirral Chamber and a flavour of activities delivered by the organisation outside of the Council's contract to support Members in advance of a presentation to Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members of the Committee are requested to:

Note the background information to the Business Support Services contract in relation to the services provided in preparation for a presentation from supplier Wirral Chamber.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

To support knowledge and effectiveness of scrutiny.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not Applicable

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Following review of the Quarter Two Wirral Growth Plan Performance Report, Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee (17.09.19) requested that Wirral Chamber attend a meeting of the Committee to give a presentation on their work. As the supplier of the Council's Business Support Service, Wirral Chamber directly contribute to performance of the Wirral Growth Plan, alongside their wider commercial role as a Chamber of Commerce.

3.1 Council Commissioned Business Support Service

Delivery of effective business growth support is vital in supporting Wirral's economic growth outcome ambitions. In October 2016 Cabinet agreed to outsource the in-house provision of frontline support for local businesses via a 3-year commission (01.06.17 to 31.05.20). The contract, awarded to Wirral Chamber following a competitive tender process, includes a 5% annual price reduction and an option to extend for a further year (to 31.05.21) subject to satisfactory performance. The total value of the contract from 01.06.17 to 31.05.20 is £1,294,535.

- 3.1.1 Frontline business support services procured through this contract are obligated to be open for free universal access; however, suppliers are entitled to commercialise specific elements of activity (eg: through a charging policy, sponsorship, or membership fees) to enable management of the annual contract price reduction requirement. The activities covered by the contract are as follows:

Contracted Activities with Free Universal Access:

- Core business growth support
- Entrepreneurship/business start-up support
- Inward investor 'soft landing' offer

Contracted Activities in Scope for Commercialisation:

- Sector networks
- Workforce development
- Place shaping: Love Liscard

- 3.1.2 Performance of the contract is measured against key performance indicators. Performance to date is outlined in the table below; note that contractual targets were reviewed and revised at Year 2 end to maintain stretch in areas of overperformance.

Ref	Output	Definition	Original Contract Target	Revised Target at end of Yr2	Cumulative Total Achieved to Date
1	Enterprises Engaged	Businesses newly registered to the service through any activity	1,302	1,434	1,330
2a	Businesses Supported <12 hrs	Enterprises Engaged in receipt of less than 12 hours but more than 2 hours active support within a contract year through any activity	600	784	695
2b	Businesses Assisted >12hrs	Enterprises Engaged in receipt of 12 or more hours active support within a contract year through any activity	90	108	94
3a	Potential Entrepreneurs supported to be enterprise ready	Individuals (16+) in receipt of less than 12 hours but more than 2 hours active support through Activity: Entrepreneurship Offer	252	352	380
3b	Potential Entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	Individuals (16+) in receipt of 12 or more hours active support through Activity: Entrepreneurship Offer	51	156	168
3c	New Enterprises Created: Direct	New enterprises created (new defined as enterprises trading less than 12 months prior to registration with the service) as a result of Activity: Entrepreneurship Offer	150	182	210
3d	New Enterprises Sustained	New enterprises registered as trading for more than 12 months	105	127	112
3e	New Enterprises Created: Indirect	New enterprises created/relocated in Wirral as result of the service through any activity other than Entrepreneurship Offer	45	50	64
4a	Jobs Created (FTE): Direct	New permanent, paid, full time equivalent jobs created as a direct result of support from Activity: Entrepreneurship Offer	102	102	74
4b	Jobs Created/Safeguarded (FTE): Indirect	Jobs created/safeguarded as a result of the service through any activity other than Entrepreneurship Offer	2,001	2,258	1,925
5	Business Sector Intelligence Reports	Business insight reports which provide headline trends by sector, size and location of business	12	12	9

6	Local Centre Improvements	Liscard Shopping Centre Footfall. Improvement Trend (Range 1-2%)	Improvement Trend	Improvement Trend	-1%
7	Income Targets	As per Commercialisation Plan	£105,400	£105,400	£83,519

3.2 Non-Contracted Wirral Chamber Business Growth Activity

As one of Wirral's anchor institutions, the Chamber also feedback on their wider activity delivered outside of the contract as part of their commitment as a partner in achievement of the 2020 Wirral Plan. This additional work contributes updates on the Growth Plan Performance Reports and collation of the overall Wirral Plan Key Performance Indicator: Jobs Created and Safeguarded figures.

3.2.1 Headline Activities:

- Growth Hub/Scale Up Programme: the Chamber is the Growth Hub for Wirral; the first point of contact for SMEs to establish their business requirements to either then support directly or signpost to other agencies who can.
- Birkenhead Improvement District (BID): BID is an initiative run by Wirral Chamber to improve and breathe life in to the CH41 area of Birkenhead. Running from 2016 through to 2021, a team of people work to make a difference in the following areas: Clean and attractive, Safe and secure, Marketing and promotion, Supporting Business.
- Business premises and conferencing: Wirral Chamber run three business centres – Egerton House, Pacific Road and The Lauries. Investment has ensured quality office space for SMEs of varying sizes and fledgling companies begin their business journey from either a desk or shed at Pacific Road and then moving through to larger office space as their company grows.
- Young Chamber and Young Chamber Cadets - Young Chamber has been working with the 22 secondary schools on Wirral for 4 years. We support in a number of ways: Entrepreneurship seminars, talks and events, CV writing and interviewing techniques, 'Meet the CEO' events and Behind the Scenes visits to major companies in Wirral.

4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not Applicable

5.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not Applicable

6.0 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

Not Applicable

7.0 **RELEVANT RISKS**

Not Applicable

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Not Applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The potential impact of the commissioned service has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Wirral Chamber has fully embraced the Council's Climate Emergency Programme; the Energy and Environment Sector Network, delivered as part of the Wirral Business Support Services contract, is key to facilitating the exchange of best practice, information and knowledge transfer of this across the business community.

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APPENDICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date