

Cabinet 12 April 2012

386 COMMITTEE REFERRAL – BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Cabinet considered Minute No. 51 – Business Support (and the corresponding report) which was referred to it by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting held on 8 March 2012 as follows:

The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which set out proposals to expand Invest Wirral's services to compliment the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) and to expand current business support to pre-start businesses. The matter would be referred to Cabinet for consideration / approval.

The NEA scheme and Enterprise Clubs provided essential help to unemployed people in becoming self employed however, it did not include certain individuals and mentoring support was not provided past the early stages of trading. The current eligibility criterion excluded people who had not been claiming JSA for a minimum of 6 months. This could include individuals in the following circumstances:

- Out of work less than 6 months
- Part-time workers
- Individuals in temporary jobs
- Unemployed people not claiming JSA
- Individuals in full time employment with a potential business idea

Individuals with a robust business idea that fell into any of the above categories could not currently access business start support. Invest Wirral provided a range of business support services which currently included the Micro Business Support programme. This programme supported companies with less than 3 staff and/or a turnover less than £100,000. It was suggested that this programme could be expanded to include help for pre start businesses that were not eligible for NEA support. In such cases, Invest Wirral Micro Business Support Managers would work with individuals to develop a sustainable business plan and guide them through the stages of business start up.

Members, in expressing support for the proposal, commented that the best time to get people back into work was when they had been just been made redundant.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee supports the expansion of the current Invest Wirral services, to include access to business support for pre start businesses that are not eligible for NEA.
- (2) That the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

The Interim Head of Strategic Development and Regeneration highlighted the issues raised and comments received concerning the range of support. A review had been carried out to make sure there was support available for those who wanted to start a business. It was noted that there was a quality service available to anyone who needed it.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of Minute and report be noted; and**
- (2) the Interim Head of Strategic Development and Regeneration be thanked for presenting this item of business and for work he is going to do to ensure quality business support is available for those who require it.**