

BIG Team Context and Emerging Priorities

1. BIG Team Strategic Priorities

- Service inward investment enquiries from both inward investors and local companies wishing to expand and grow
- Research and disseminate business critical information to local companies and inward investors
- Improve engagement with the key companies in the Borough
- Deliver the BID Programme 2013 – 2017
- Deliver the REECH programme in the BID areas
- Expand the BID Programme to Widnes Waterfront and an additional industrial area in Runcorn
- Deliver the ERDF 4.2 Programme
- Deliver the RGF 3 & 4 Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme for grant between £10,000.00 and £1 million
- Deliver LEP 'New Markets Programme'
- Facilitate IFoB 2014
- Facilitate Halton Business and Tourism Awards 2014
- Deliver Mersey Gateway Visitor Economy Strategy
- Develop project proposals, and potentially deliver, the 'Business' portfolio for the EU Programme 2014-20
- Manage the commercial property database and service enquiries for commercial property
- Manage and improve the company database and develop a user friendly CRM system
- Work with others to maximise the external resources accessed by the Borough Council

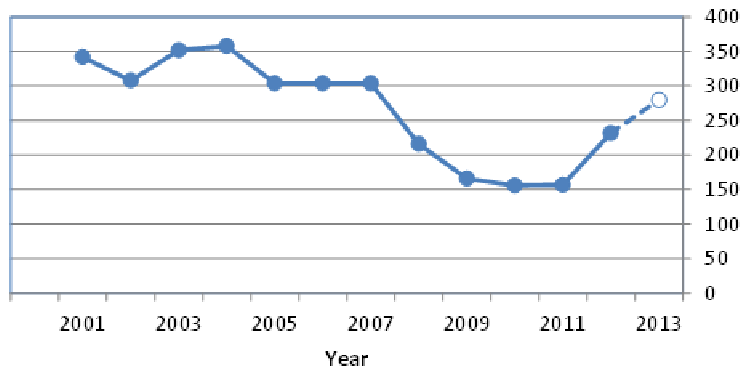
2. Emerging Service Delivery Priorities

Service inward investment enquiries from both inward investors and local companies wishing to expand and grow

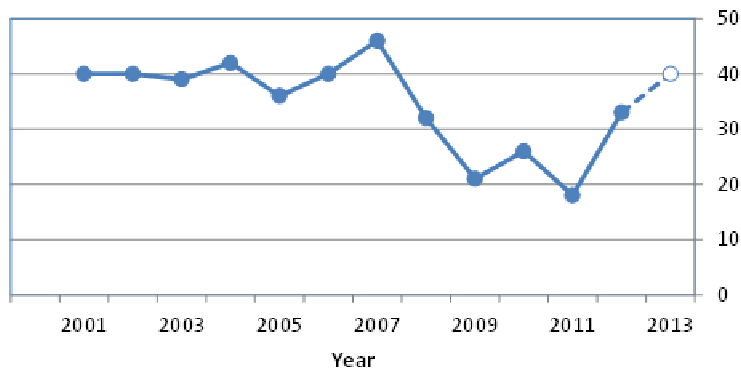
Context

- The number of investment enquiries for the 2013 calendar year (280 to date) has surpassed the average, pre-recession, level. The number of inward investment enquiries is likely to be a nine year high by end of the calendar year.
- Similarly, the upward trend of conversions (40 to date) has continued. The current level of conversions is the highest since the onset of the 2008 global recession

Enquiries / Calendar Year



Conversions / Calendar Year



Rate / Calendar Year



Emerging Priorities

Managing commercial property enquiries and the dissemination of business critical information to the local business community is at the heart of the work of the BIG Team.

Given the paucity of resources within the team there is an acceptance that a universal approach to servicing inward investment enquires is no longer realistic. Increasingly, small scale property enquiries will be managed online while more significant or more complex enquiries will be case

managed on an individual basis. Similarly, a greater degree of 'self-service' will have to be introduced to ensure that individual commercial property agents play a greater role in maintaining information about their specific property portfolios within the Council's database. Such changes will inevitably lead to a reduced service to client companies and a very real risk that the coverage of the commercial property data will suffer.

Increasingly the BIG Team simply signpost local business to other agencies and partners for support. The BIG online resources have, therefore, been greatly enhanced and now include :-

- The inward investment website www.runcorn-widnes.com which provides information about a range of Council and partners services, includes an online commercial property search facility and access to an online 'Business Support Matrix' <http://www.halton.gov.uk/property/businesssupport.pdf>
- Monthly e.shots to the business community
- A presence on Twitter, Facebook, Pintrest, LinkedIn and Google +

The Team are also exploring the use of 'Funding Store' and 'Advice Finder' in partnership with the LCRLEP and other LA's

Delivering and Expanding the BID Programme

Context

A major consultation exercise with the Astmoor and Halebank business community between August 2012 and December 2012 found that 85% of businesses reported that the BID has had a beneficial impact on their business while 80% of businesses reported that Astmoor Industrial Estate has improved as a place to trade/operate since the establishment of the BID in 2008.

In January 2013 a mandate was secured from the business community to continue the BID Programme at Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates for a further five years. 75% of Astmoor businesses and 82% of Halebank businesses voted in favour of continuing the BID Programme

Emerging Priorities

It is an aspiration to extend the BID Programme to further industrial and commercial areas in Halton, for example Widnes Waterfront or Manor Park. However, it is necessary to spend a number of years working more intensively with the business community in a given geography in order to have any realistic expectation of a positive outcome from a BID ballot. There is currently no resource to support this activity.

Delivering Business Support Programme (including grant)

Context

Increasingly the BIG Team are responsible for the delivery of major grant schemes and business support programmes. Typically, the BIG Team manage the programme and delivery is outsourced to a third party. The two key programmes currently delivered by the BIG Team are the Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme and the Merseyside Business Support Programme

Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme

The Council's Executive Board gave approval on October 17 2013 to roll out the Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant in Halton.

The Business Growth Grant scheme can provide grant of between £10,000.00 and £750,000.00 across the LCR based on a private sector leverage ratio of 5:1 and the creation of sustainable jobs. There are currently 27 local companies seeking support for the schemes

Merseyside Business Support Programme

Since November 2012 Merseyside Business Support Programme has received 150 + enquiries. Currently 82 businesses who are receiving assistance via the programme either in the initial diagnostic phase or the subsequent specialist intervention phase. Assuming that all SMEs currently engaged in the programme successfully complete, then the programme has already achieved over 50% of its output target.

The Merseyside Business Support Programme in Halton has had two audits. The project was described as 'a beacon of good practise'

Emerging Priorities

Take up of the Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme has exceeded all expectation and has proved very difficult to resource. Delivery of the Merseyside Business Support Programme has necessitated the recruitment of a dedicated Project Team. However, this has only been possible because the costs associated with the creation of the Team were built into the European funding profile at the onset of the project.

Clearly, the delivery of future programmes will have to form part of a comprehensive business support programme which is adequately resourced. Consideration will also need to be given to the developing pan-Merseyside business support environment and the extent to which Halton can bespoke programmes to meet the needs of the local business community.

The BIG Team have also developed a series of business support project for the new European Programme 2014-20 under the 'Portfolio 2 Business' theme. The table below describes the projected outputs and associated spend for each projects

Project	SME Assists	Jobs Created	Jobs Saved	GVA Uplift ✖	Project Cost
SME Competitiveness	455	490	210	140	£1,393,696
Business Engagement	350	175	175	70	£367,500
Maximising ICT	225	135	60	45	£651,298
Advanced Manufacturing	175	140	140	70	£678,916
Totals	1,205	940	585	325	£3,091,410

✘ Companies with improved GVA performance

International Festival of Business (IFoB) 2014

Context

At the behest of Halton Borough Council and partners Liverpool Vision, the organisers of IFoB 2014, agreed to designate the week commencing June 23 'Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing' week within the festival programme.

The BIG Team have, therefore, facilitated two major events :-

- SciTech Daresbury, UKTI, Liverpool Vision and Halton Borough Council have agreed to hold a national UKTI ICT event at SciTech Daresbury on Tuesday 24 June
- The Heath Business and Technical Park will host an event entitled 'Addressing the Skills Needs of the Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Sector' on Thursday 26 June

Emerging Priorities

The organisation and management of the events listed above will require considerable resource input from the BIG Team in order to ensure that local companies and young people are fully engaged. For example, UKTI event at SciTech Daresbury is a national event, targeting major corporates. The BIG Team are, therefore, working with STFC and UKTI to ensure that local SME's have access to the event.

The event at The Heath Business and Technical Park will target local SME's but also include a number of fringe events designed to enthuse the Borough's young people about science in general and a career in science in particular.

The BIG Team will also seek to directly engage the 210 science, technology and advanced manufacturing businesses based in Halton to firstly, ensure that local businesses take advantage of the opportunities offer by IFoB and secondly, to encourage local businesses to become participate in the events in Halton

Improving Engagement with Key Companies in the Borough

Context

Since the demise of the NWDA funded Business Aftercare and Investor Development Programmes, and as a result of the resource constraint currently placed upon the Local Authority, very few local SME's of significant scale or who make a measurable impact upon the local economy are proactively managed.

Nationally 300 strategic companies are managed by HM Government, either at a ministerial level or by UKTI, though the 'Top 300 Programme'. A further 1,700 companies are deemed important at a

national level and are intensively managed by UKTI (sub-contacted to PA Consulting). Very few Halton companies are picked up by either HM Government, the 'Top 300 Programme' or other UKTI sector initiatives

Experience in Halton, together with research and documentary evidence, indicates that the vast majority of inward investment is in the form of acquisitions, mergers and re-investment in existing branch plants

Emerging Priorities

The BIG Team have explored a number of models for better engagement with the 50 key companies in the Borough. For example, Warrington & Co outsource business engagement to a private sector company whereas in other Boroughs business engagement is the responsibility of the local Chamber of Commerce. Given that neither the BIG Team nor Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise have the human resources to adequately engage with the local business community then the only likely way forward would be a programme funded via the EU 2014-20 programme. However, given the EU programme targets SME businesses it will be necessary to develop a different mechanism to reach the Borough's large and foreign