

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills & Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 18 November 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Business Growth Programme

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report and presentation will inform Members about the current and future performance of the Business Growth Programme. The report reflects on the changes from Phase 1 of the LCRIBS programme through to Phase 2, now named as the Business Growth Programme, and the nature of support across the Liverpool City Region.

1.2 The report will also inform members of a proposal to extend the current programme by a further 18 months.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

1) Members note the activities and performance of the Business Growth Programme which will seek to align with the local delivery and with emerging City Region business support delivery; and

2) Members note that further engagement with the Combined Authority and MHCLG will be required to consider the implications of an 18 month programme extension – Phase 3 of the Business Programme.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background Information

3.1.1 A number of Liverpool City Region (LCR) public sector partners, specifically Local Authorities Knowsley, Wirral, St Helens, Sefton and Halton, the Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool and Sefton and Wirral, LCR Local Enterprise Partnerships and Liverpool.

3.1.2 Vision came together in December 2015 to deliver the Liverpool City Region Integrated Business Support Programme (LCRIBS) and

promoted under its new title – Business Growth Programme (BGP). Following a change control by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) the project has been extended until 31 December 2021 - Phase 2 is currently in progress.

3.1.3 A further extension has been applied for and if successful, Phase 3 will commence January 2021 until June 2023. The project meets a distinct gap in current city region business support delivery, positioned between pre start / start up / post start up delivered by others within the LCR.

3.2 Performance Against Output Targets:

3.2.1 Business Growth Programme Phase 1. 1st January 2016 – 31st December 2018.

Business Growth Programme Phase 1	Target Outputs	Actual Output
Business's Assisted (12 hr)	123	141
Jobs Created	107	53 to date

Business Growth Programme Phase 2. 1st January 2019 – 31st December 2021

Business Growth Programme Phase 2	Target Outputs
Business's Assisted (12 hr)	95
Jobs Created	95

3.3 Performance Against Output Targets To Date:

Enquiries to date: 31

Support Completed and Claimed: 3

Diagnostics Completed and referred for Specialist Support: 7

Diagnostics in process: 3

Following up: 18

Not Eligible: 3

Withdrawn: 3

3.4 One major change to the support process in phase 2 has been the diagnostic process. This has changed from being completed by an external provider, to being completed in house.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Supporting Phase 3 of the Business Growth Programme will align

with the Council's priorities in improving the economic growth. The programme will do this by aiding SMEs within the Halton area to grow, develop, become more sustainable and increase jobs.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Business Growth Programme is currently aided by the ERDF. The cost to the Council for Phase 3 of the programme will be £89,722.66 – 50% of the funds required for the length of the programme from the period of 1st January 2022 until June 2023 with a comparable sum drawn down from ERDF.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Growth in the LCR business base will result in greater employment opportunities for the Borough's young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Growth in the LCR business base will result in greater employment opportunities for the community of Halton.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Access to sustainable employment will impact positively upon the health of the Borough.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Halton is home to 3,430 active businesses and several global companies. The Business Growth Programme aims to support 95 SMEs to ensure growth and sustainability. The current business survival rates are currently less than the regional and national average. Not supporting the programme will put at risk the development and vision of developing the vision for Economic Regeneration in the area.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 None.