

REPORT TO:	Employment Learning & Skills Community Policy & Performance Board
DATE	28th June 2021
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Economic Development
SUBJECT:	Update Business Improvement & Growth Team
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to update Members on key activities being undertaken and / or overseen by the Council's Business Improvement and Growth Team during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 Members will appreciate that since March 2020, most of the team has been working on supporting local businesses during the pandemic and activities have been changed to reflect this. Some generic business support has continued, and this is summarised below.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 2.1 Members note the activities and performance of the Business Improvement and Growth Team and how this aligns with wider national and city region strategies.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 1. Liverpool City Region Hospitality and Leisure Grants (HLG)

The impact of the Coronavirus is being felt in our communities in many different ways, and Halton's businesses have been severely affected with many losing several months of trade and many are still not fully operational giving the ongoing restrictions.

A presentation was provided to PPB on 16 November 2020 reporting on HLG round 1, setting out how HLG provided by the LCR, and administered by the six Local Authorities was being rolled out. A further presentation was provided to PPB on 8 February 2021 reporting on how HLG round 1 & 2 had gone some way to support local businesses.

A presentation to the PPB will update on:

- The outturn figures for HLG rounds 1 & 2
- The top up grants for HLG rounds 1 & 2
- Taxi grants
- The outturn figures for HLG round 3
- The anticipated top up grants for HLG rounds 1,2 &

2. Growth Platform

During the past year the Growth Platform has concentrated on working with businesses and designing solutions to meet business needs, especially important during the pandemic. They have been providing support to ease business progress through the pandemic and help emerging from Covid-19 for businesses into post-Covid-19 Support:

Covid-19 Support

Covid-19 Business Advice

Covid-19 Legal and professional services advice

Growth Hub Enquiry management

Business Growth Programme

Post-Covid-19 Support

Covid-19 Recovery Grants

New Markets Support

Officers within the business support team have been liaising with colleagues in the Combined Authority (CA) and the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that activities are complementary and do not duplicate existing provision.

3. One Front Door

Mid-way through this financial year there was a change of staffing in the delivery structure of One Front Door providing the Board and management with the opportunity to review the way in which the service operates. This also provided the opportunity to challenge operating practices and review activity. The investment context of the last 12 months is the pandemic and curtailment of business travel opportunities. The revised headline targets are to contribute to increasing the Liverpool City Region's share of UK investment projects from 1.5% to 2% within 3 years and create a target to generate 400 leads per annum for investment.

A new marketing plan for inward investment is now in place with the aim of targeting resources for activities to increase investments in the Liverpool City Region.

The Growth Board have developed a number of value propositions to focus on specific sectors and these are in the final stages of consultation with partners.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The above is aligned to the Local and National Policy.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An increased burden has been placed on the team during the pandemic, particularly in regards to administering the Covid Grants. A burdens fund is being paid to the Council and the Service has requested a nominal recompense for this activity.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and 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 and 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

No implications.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No implications.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

No risk implications.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act'