

Agenda Item 6



Policy and Scrutiny

Open Report on behalf of Executive Director for Environment and Economy

Report to:	Economic Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 July 2015
Subject:	Influencing Government Funding for Business Support

Summary:

This report provides information on the work plan for the Commissioning Strategy - Sustaining and growing business and the economy, and includes an update on some of the activities undertaken to date.

Actions Required:

It is recommended that members:

- i) Comment on the role Lincolnshire County Council should play in the implementation of the Strategy, particularly with reference to our role in influencing nationally funded schemes;
- ii) Note the actions taken to date;
- iii) Consider how we use our influence to stimulate providers to deliver activity that meets the needs of the local business community.

1. Background

'Enhancing the performance of business' is one of the commissioning strategies that has been devised under the overarching Enterprise Commissioning Strategy.

The purpose of this Strategy is to describe how the council will help businesses to be the main contributors to economic growth in the county.

This will be delivered through commissioning schemes that offer support to businesses to develop and grow; doing this through influencing government provision or commissioning our own schemes.

These are the national business support programmes which the government fund that we have the opportunity to influence:-

- Growth Accelerator
- Manufacturing Advisory Service
- UKTI – Trade
- UKTI – Investment
- Growth Hub

There are a variety of ways that we can influence the national portfolio:-

- Membership on national steering groups
- Working with the local delivery agents to ascertain client needs that aren't currently being met and provide feedback
- Utilising the new European Structural Investment Funding (ESIF) to enhance the current offers through creating tailored delivery specifications that meet our business community's requirements and monitoring their subsequent delivery
- Bidding for national funding to deliver services that have been designed locally eg Growth Hub

This is how LCC could continue to understand and review national partner activity:-

- Monitoring delivery provision inputs, outputs and outcomes on a quarterly basis
- Sign Memorandum of Understanding to outline responsibilities eg UKTI Trade
- Develop partner Service Level Agreements including data sharing arrangements
- Assessment of impact in terms of targeting, geographical reach, business size and growth ambition
- Membership of their governance board
- Assess whether the programmes directly meet client needs, and undertake a gap analysis
- Evaluate delivery and impact as part of the LRO Quarterly Business Survey or bi annual GLLEP employer survey

Do the members of the Economic Scrutiny Committee support the direction of travel? Are there any gaps in the list above?

Current business support provision – the need to localise the offer

Over the last 6 years there have been a number of national business support programmes that have been rolled out across the UK; UKTI Trade and Investment, Growth Accelerator and Manufacturing Advisory Service etc. Whilst this provision has been available to our business community through accessing advisory support it is safe to say that Lincolnshire has not benefited proportionally with its neighbouring counties. This has resulted in our businesses not accessing their fair share of the national provision in terms of budget allocation, physical presence of advisers and delivery of programmes/events. We recognise that the national providers are targeted to deliver significant outputs in terms of jobs created/increases in GVA and that has influenced them to work in high density areas within

the East Midlands eg Nottingham, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Therefore it is imperative that we use of our influence to ensure that the national programmes are tailored towards meeting our business needs and assist them to increase their capability and capacity to make a step change and embrace growth.

Influencing through the service enhancement

Consequently in response to documented business growth requirements, local research and intermediary feedback we are in a position to shape and enhance national programmes to meet the needs of the Lincolnshire business community through utilising the European Strategic Investment Funds (ESIF). We have been able to utilise the national business support programme funding allocations for Lincolnshire to satisfy the ESIF match funding requirements and build a tailored programme of business support.

Please see Appendix A for examples of how LCC has influenced government funding for business support.

2. Conclusion

It is imperative that we focus the 'Enhancing the performance of business' Commissioning Strategy on ensuring that we fully utilise the national business support assets and that we fully understand their focus, achievement and impact within Lincolnshire. Our role is to make sure that they meet our business community's needs and that they are responsive to the nature of our economy.

Growing our local businesses will in turn impact on economic growth. Members' comments on the role Lincolnshire County Council might play in this Commissioning Strategy are welcomed.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Examples of how LCC has influenced government funding for business support

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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