

PRIORITY 6

WE WILL ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Lead Member / Lead Officer – Cllr Jackson & Alan Cavill

In **Priority 6** we say that we will **encourage responsible entrepreneurship for the benefit of our communities.**

Challenges 2014/15

Our focus this year will be to:

- Continue to provide high quality advice and guidance to new start businesses;
- Focus on post-start mentoring and intensive support to improve survival and growth chances of businesses in first 3 years of trading;
- Deliver a new young enterprise challenge for residents aged 16-24;
- Develop town centre studio space for aspiring artists and creatives; and
- Continue to encourage Council suppliers to utilise the Social Value Toolkit.

Current Activity

Continue to provide high quality advice and guidance to new start businesses:

The Get Started service aims to assist a generation of new entrepreneurs to establish viable successful new businesses in Blackpool, capable of creating wealth and job opportunities for the local community. The scheme offers a professional and friendly service to entrepreneurs hoping to set up a new business in Blackpool, including:

- Quality business advice, training and mentoring in key areas such as financial planning, marketing and small business regulations;
- Support to unlock start up loans and other financial assistance on the back of credible business plans;
- Post-start support and mentoring to improve chances of survival and growth; and
- Options for low cost, flexible business space.

Get Started has helped hundreds of local residents set up their own business since 2007. In the last 6 months alone 42 individuals have been assisted to start their own business with our support. In May 2014, a new Small Business Advisor was appointed. This appointment has provided the team with the capacity needed to continue the quality and volume of start up support, plus the introduction of post-start support.

Post-start mentoring and intensive support for businesses in the first 3 years of trading:

In order to ensure that new businesses in Blackpool are able to grow and be successful, it is essential that they are aware of and can continue to access relevant business growth support services.

The new Small Business Adviser facilitated the implementation of a post-start service in July 2014, which provides business support for young businesses in the crucial first few months and years of trading. This includes diagnostic reviews, group general learning workshops and selling workshops. So far 39 young businesses have received support from the service.

In the final quarter of 2014/15, we will be introducing two new services – a quarterly business review service and a series of inspirational ‘How I Did It’ seminars provided by local businesses. Unfortunately, due to prohibitive set up costs, the mentoring service has not yet been introduced. Opportunities to deliver this through the Get Started Alumni are being investigated.

Get Started also provides assistance for clients to secure funding particularly through the Government’s various start-up loan schemes. These include the X-Forces scheme, the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) as well as the general Start-Up Loan facility. The schemes provide start up support in the form of a repayable loan together with a business mentor for entrepreneurs looking to start their own business. Coaching is given to help clients to produce business plans and applications which lead to clients securing the loans. This activity has been highly successful, with £219,000 worth of business finance approved in the first 6 months of 2014/15.

A key role for the Get Started Team is to ensure eligible Blackpool businesses are aware of and take up publicly funded business support services. Many of these services are available via Boost Business Lancashire and also through organisations such as Regenerate Pennine Lancashire and the universities. Some of this support is targeted at start-ups and young businesses (up to 3 years old) and relationships have been developed with these partners to ensure referrals can be made to relevant support. As a result business start-ups and young businesses in Blackpool are participating in:

- **LEAP** – the Boost high growth start up service offering a wide range of specialised support including coaching, financial, international trade, HR and mentoring support.
- **The ‘more programme’** – UCLAN’s digital and creative industry start up support service offering expert coaching, mentoring, business advice, problem solving via action learning, networking and events.
- **Support from the FUSE Fund** – Regenerate Pennine Lancashire’s grant fund for growing young business.

Deliver a new young enterprise challenge for residents aged 16-24:

A new Young Enterprise Challenge will be launched in January 2015.

It is planned that the challenge will compliment the new Blackpool Young Enterprise Solutions project which is being funded by RBS. The aim of the Young Enterprise Solutions project is to provide young people with alternative career options by providing training and interactive experiences to help them learn all they need to know about setting up their own business or social enterprise. The young people are then supported to develop ideas for their own perfect career, working through their learning to form a business plan and set up their own businesses with practical support from experienced mentors.

The Get Started Alumni will be contributing to the Young Enterprise Challenge by providing valuable support to the participants.

Develop town centre studio space for aspiring artists and creatives:

The Council has made available office space above Abingdon Street market which is to be used as studio space for local artists and creatives as well as a public engagement space. This will not only bring back into use over 2,300sq.ft. of vacant former office space but will also contribute to the development of a creative cluster in Blackpool town centre, alongside the Grand Theatre, Grundy Art Gallery, the Winter Gardens, the Museum for Blackpool development, 81 Central and the Old Rock Factory.

A low cost lease has been negotiated on a 2 year trial basis and the studio space is planned to be open by December 2014 at the latest. Early promotion of the first floor artist studios has resulted in an offer to 5 self-employed artists, plus 2 students sharing a studio on a rotational basis, sponsored by Blackpool & the Fylde College. The second floor space will initially be used as a project space with the potential to add extra studios. The project is supported by the Economic Development and Arts services as well as LeftCoast, who are financing a part time studio coordinator.

Continue to encourage Council suppliers to utilise the Social Value Toolkit:

The Social Value Act 2012 places a requirement on public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental wellbeing in connection with public services contracts. In response to this, the Council has implemented a number of measures to ensure that social value is embedded through our commissioning and procurement activities, as well as those of our contractors.

All tender opportunities are advertised on the Council's e-tendering portal The Chest, which is used by 46 North West councils. Prior to engaging with the market place the Corporate Procurement & Projects Team support service managers to explore opportunities to deliver social value through contracting. Specific method statement questions are included in tenders and allow bidders to confirm in their bid response how they intend to deliver on the Duty of Social Value. These responses are then scored as part of the evaluation process. The successful bidder's response is included as a schedule in the contract and therefore becomes a contractual obligation. Further work is required however to ensure that robust contract management is undertaken and that the successful service provider delivers on its promises throughout the full contract period. Establishing specific measures and KPIs is an essential part of the contract management process. The Council is also continuing to work with AGMA to develop a series of generic social value questions which can be used in the tendering process.

A number of new public sector procurement reforms will come into force in early 2015, affecting the way the public sector procures goods and services. The changes aim to ensure that small businesses have better access to public sector contracts. The three key changes are:

- To reduce bureaucracy and excessive or irrelevant requirements, the use of Pre-Qualification Questionnaires will be prohibited for procurements under the EU threshold for supplies and services. For procurement over this threshold (£173,000), a single standardised Pre-Qualification Questionnaire will be used.
- A new, improved Contracts Finder will be launched where all public sector contract opportunities will be easily accessible to suppliers. Contracting authorities will need to ensure that any opportunity is published on the Contracts Finder and, once a contract is in place, they will also need to publish details of who has won the contract including whether the winning supplier is a small business or voluntary sector organisation.

- Prompt payment is critical to the cash flow of many smaller suppliers and failure to pay on time can lead to serious problems. Therefore, all contracting authorities will be required to pay valid invoices within 30 days (a practice which the Council has already adopted) and to ensure that these terms are replicated down the supply chain via a contract condition.

These changes are a great opportunity for local authorities to achieve increased quality and value for money in the procurement of goods and services from small businesses.

Strategic Risks Related to this Priority

The following risks are being monitored through the Strategic Risk Register to ensure that the necessary controls are put in place to effectively manage each risk.

Strategic Risk	Type	Risk Level
Economic recession	National	High
Change in political priorities	National	High




Details of the specific actions being taken to mitigate these risks can be found in the Strategic Risk Register.




Key Actions & Performance Indicators for this Priority

Details of the key actions and performance indicators for this priority can be found below.

Priority 6 Key Actions

Key – Overall Progress:

	On track		Not on track but being managed by the department to bring back on track		Not on track and needs support from outside the department to bring back on track
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Objective	Key Action	Milestones	Deadline	Dept	Team	Overall Progress	
Pre and post-start support for new businesses	Maintain support for new businesses with quality advice, training and brokered financial assistance via the Get Started service and promote enterprise activities and facilities for new businesses via a variety of methods	Assist 90 new businesses to start-up	Mar 2015	PL	Economic Development		
		Recruit second Small Business Adviser to meet contractual targets for Start-Up Lancashire and allow development of enhanced post-start service	Apr 2014				
		Maximise funding from SUL and seek other relevant opportunities to sustain and enhance the Get Started service when current ERDF programme ends	Mar 2015				
		Work with Libraries Team to introduce enhanced 'Enterprising Libraries' service for start-ups	Sept 2015				
	Establish and develop a business information service to support local businesses	Identify need and available resources	Jul 2014	PL	Libraries		
		Produce and implement project action plan	Mar 2015				
	Promote access to further business support for small companies in the first 36 months of trading		Assist 50 young businesses in first 36 months of trading	Mar 2015	PL		Economic Development
			Develop and introduce new post-start service with significant input from young businesses	May 2014			
			Develop effective referral mechanisms with partners providing relevant business support for young businesses	Mar 2015			
			Hold joint business engagement events with partners	Mar 2015			
Young enterprise	Deliver a new young enterprise challenge	Run and promote a Youth Enterprise Challenge to help encourage young people to consider and take up self-employment and enterprise	Mar 2015	PL	Economic Development		
Town centre space for artists and creatives	Establish a new creative cluster for Blackpool	Identify models of good practice and establish best practice for Blackpool	Mar 2015	PL	Arts		
		Work with Economic Development to develop a plan for artist studios and a creative industries hub	Dec 2014				
Social Value Act	Respond to the requirements of the Social	Implement EU changes when adopted into UK Law	Mar 2015	RES	Procurement		

Objective	Key Action	Milestones	Deadline	Dept	Team	Overall Progress
	Value Act and embed the changes to the EU Procurement Directives into Contract Procedure Rules and working procedures	Monitor Social Value outcomes from tendering and contracting				

Priority 6 Performance Indicators

Key – Performance Trend:

- ✓ Performance is improving
- ✗ Performance is getting worse
- Performance is staying the same
- Data not due to be reported this quarter

Indicator	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2014/15		2013/14 Total	2012/13 Total	Trend	Comments
					Total	Target				
No. of new business start ups		42				90	81	72	✓	Businesses supported by the Get Started service
No. of young businesses receiving post-start support		39				50	New PI	New PI	✓	Businesses supported by the Get Started service
Value of small business finance approved with direct assistance from Get Started service		£219k				£200k	£361K	£37K	✓	Loans approved on the back of credible business plan e.g. StartUp Loans, X Forces, NEA, banks.
% of new start businesses surviving 12 months		76%				n/a	New PI	New PI		Businesses assisted by Get Started service from Jan 2013
% of third party expenditure which is directed towards local suppliers and companies	41%	43%				45%	38%	New PI	✓	Local suppliers and companies with an FY postcode.
% of contracts over OJEU awarded to SMEs	91%	80%				60%	58%	New PI	✓	
% of undisputed invoices for goods and services paid within 30 days	93.55%	92.53%				93%	92.04%	84.97%	✓	