



REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, CORPORATE STRATEGY

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform members of the progress and development of the Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group (NBEG) and to outline to Committee the business engagement activities currently being undertaken for the Council by its economic development team including the pilot initiative to develop a Key Account Management (KAM) approach with businesses within the county.

Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group

2. The Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group (NBEG) was established on 12th July 2010. The group was set up in response to an agreed need for a more cohesive mechanism for engaging with businesses around the county. The primary target group for NBEG was the micro and small to medium businesses around the county which account for over 95% of businesses. The initial role of the group was primarily that of an information and consultation mechanism for the County Council and other partner organisations such as the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.
3. Since 2010 this role has evolved in response to emerging local business needs and the fruition of the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. In May 2013 Mr Trevor Fletcher, a leading local business man and D2N2 Board Member was elected chair of NBEG, forming an effective link between smaller business concerns and the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. NBEG membership has also flourished to include;
 - Bingham Business Club
 - British Indian Business Forum
 - Collingham Business Club
 - East Leake Business Club
 - Gedling Business Partnership
 - Newark Business Club
 - No Nonsense Just Networking (Mansfield and Ashfield)
 - Nottingham City Business Club
 - North Notts Business Connections:
 - Mansfield 2020 Business Club
 - Retford B4B Business Club
 - Ruddington Business Club

- Rushcliffe Business Partnership
 - Southwell Business Club
 - Worksop Business Club
4. Agencies and organisations that attend NBEG include the; Confederation Of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce, Institute Of Directors, United Kingdom Trade and Investment, Invest Nottingham, First Enterprise, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council.
5. In response to a survey in May 2013 regarding the future role and structure of NBEG, its members requested a more proactive role for the group. Whilst happy to retain their role as a consultation and information conduit for the council and other agencies, they expressed a wish to undertake some practical solutions and tangible steps toward tackling the issues being raised by businesses around the county. A revised 'role of NBEG' paper was taken to the NBEG meeting on 20th February 2014. It describes the role as follows:
- To undertake projects and events that address issues and needs raised by NBEG on behalf of their clubs, forums and networks
 - To cascade information provided by the Council/D2N2 and other NBEG members to their wider membership clubs and networks.
 - To provide strategic advice to Nottinghamshire County Council and other partner organisations on issues that affect the business community and to assist in developing solutions to those issues.
 - To provide an effective means of communication and enhanced working relationships between the Nottinghamshire business community, the Council and partner organisations
 - To inform, consult and work together to, innovate, share and replicate opportunities and good practice and grow business confidence.
 - To provide an advocacy role in association with the Council and other partner organisations and enable effective lobbying of Government on matters affecting the sustainable economic prosperity of Nottinghamshire and its businesses.
6. In response to local business needs a number of business engagement projects are being undertaken by partners from NBEG and facilitated by the County Council. These include:

Routes to Growth

Subsequent to the growing interest in export generally and to our business community representatives at the Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group specifically, we have joined forces with other NBEG partners (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and UKTI) and East Midlands Airport to design and implement an export

event. Aimed at small business on the brink of export, the event will take place at 7.30 am on the 7th April at the Radisson Blu Hotel at East Midlands Airport.

Business Development and Skills Mapping Project

In response to a request from NBEG members, a business development and skills mapping project has been undertaken across Nottinghamshire. This mapping will obtain a clearer picture of what provision exists currently and the whereabouts of any duplication and gaps in provision. This information will be used to inform future strategy development and funding decisions.

Promotion of Social Enterprise Funding

Following a presentation from Social Enterprise East Midlands, NBEG emphasised that businesses in Nottinghamshire should not forego the opportunity of £2.6 billion of funding available for social and environmental enterprises and businesses. To this end NBEG has agreed to raise awareness of the funding streams, help find accommodation for social enterprise and social business advisors and to promote social enterprise events taking place locally.

D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Plan and Infrastructure Projects

Following a presentation at the February 2014 NBEG meeting, it was felt that NBEG members have both an interest and role to play in disseminating information and supporting and lobbying for the D2N2 Growth Plan which include proposals for:

- Harworth and Bircotes Employment/Housing Growth Zone
- Newark Growth Point
- Gedling Access Road
- Mansfield and Ashfield Regeneration
- Hucknall Rolls Royce site

Key Account Management

7. When reviewing the options to engage individual businesses within the local economy, it was identified that current best practice is to adopt a 'key account' (KAM) approach. To this end, a pilot was launched in October 2013 with 86 companies being allocated to officers across the economic development team.
8. The companies have been selected from known contacts, business award winners, growth enquiries etc. in order to give the best representation in key sectors, growth and innovation businesses and to capture new/emerging businesses across the County. Some companies have opted to join the key account model after approaching the County for specific support or have been engaged through networking events and groups such as NBEG.
9. Of the 86 companies, one to one visits to 23 of the companies have taken place, thereby seeing the KAMs "activated". These have all taken place within the first 12 weeks of the pilot commencing and the focus has been on how the County Council can assist or facilitate on-going or emerging business needs through direct or co-ordinated action or advice and/or policy influence or consideration. By the end of Quarter 2 2014/15, the target is to have built a formal, productive relationship with each company. Where a

company declines the opportunity, reserves have been identified to replace the allocation.

10. The benefits of developing a KAM approach include:

- Awareness-raising for the Council's services that can assist the company in day to day operations as well as in taking strategic decisions and to inform their knowledge of the wider economy and operating context in the County (this could drill down to procurement/supply chain opportunities etc.)
- Providing a named manager for the relationship and presenting themselves as the "go to person" within the Council to streamline access to information, support or to lead approaches to partners and providers on behalf of the company
- Opportunity to learn more about individual business drivers and sector needs and gather emerging economic intelligence
- Opportunity to help focus, inform and improve the delivery of the Notts Growth Plan and other strategic activity and
- Opportunities to build partnerships and to deliver customer focused services

11. Although the KAM approach is in its infancy, there have potentially been significant benefits in some of the interactions with the key focuses being to date:

- Efforts to streamline resolutions to outstanding statutory issues
- Generation of pipeline interest to NCC Capital Fund
- Referrals to grant funding sources
- Contributions to inform future Inward Investment protocol for joint County/City enquiries
- Liaising with District colleagues on key accounts to ensure a joined-up approach
- Close joint working with District colleagues to further funding/planning matters
- Political/Senior Leadership business engagement with key businesses
- Access to business plans and aspirations for growth
- Increased understanding of HS2 commercial impacts
- Shared understanding and support to the Corporate social responsibility (CSR) aspirations of businesses and
- Intelligence to support policy making e.g. Assisted Areas

12. As part of the pilot, monitoring will continue with on-going shaping of the work/process to ensure that we can establish the best approach possible to meet the emerging needs of businesses balanced with available skills/resources/roles etc.

Other Options Considered

13. None. The report is for noting.

Reason for Recommendation/s

14. To ensure that Committee Members are aware of the ongoing development of Business Engagement projects and processes being delivered through the Council's Economic Development team.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

16. Economic Development Committee has previously approved budget allocation of £10,000 to support business engagement activity, including the hosting of the Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group and sponsoring a number of business awards. Staff time is also incurred outside of this £10,000 financial allocation.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:

- (a) Members note the content of this report;
- (b) Committee receives a further report on progress with key account relationships in the autumn

Report of the Group Manager, Corporate Strategy, Celia Morris

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Fiona Anderson, Economic Development, 72688

Constitutional Comments [SLB 19/03/2014]

Economic Development Committee is the appropriate body to consider the matters set out in this report.

Financial Comments [SEM 21.03.2014]

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers

NA

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All