

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting Wednesday, 30th November, 2016
Time 6.30 pm
Venue Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG
Contact Jayne Briscoe 2250



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 2AG

Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in this agenda
- 2 MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 3 - 6)
To agree as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting(s)
- 3 Presentation on the markets website**
- 4 Discussion with the BID Manager - Borough Market**
- 5 Business Helpline - penultimate report** (Pages 7 - 10)
- 6 Update from the Chair on scrutiny work carried out to date**
- 7 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
Any member of the public wishing to submit a question must serve two clear days' notice, in writing, of any such question to the Borough Council.
- 8 URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972
- 9 Date of next meeting – 15 March 2017**

Members: Councillors Bailey, Dymond, Gardner (Chair), Holland, Loades, Matthews, Northcott, Proctor, Snell, Wilkes and G Williams (Vice-Chair)

PLEASE NOTE: The Council Chamber and Committee Room 1 are fitted with a loop system. In addition, there is a volume button on the base of the microphones. A portable loop system is available for all other rooms. Should you require this service, please contact Member Services during the afternoon prior to the meeting.

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

FIELD_TITLE

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 15th September, 2016

Time of Commencement 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Allison Gardner – in the Chair

Councillors Bailey, Dymond, T Hambleton, Holland,
Loades, Matthews, Northcott and
G Williams

Officers Jayne Briscoe (Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies Councillor(s) Proctor and Wilkes

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

3. REPORT ON THE BUSINESS HELPLINE

This report was introduced by the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager and had been compiled in response to a request from the members for a performance report on the use of the Business Support Helpline. The Helpline is the gateway for local businesses to access free expert business advice and support.

In addition to this the Chair also submitted a report of a meeting with the Growth Hub Business Helpline Advisor which included comparative data on the use of the Helpline from across the Staffordshire Region together with recommendations for future actions to develop awareness of the service both within the Borough Council and externally.

Members agreed with the recommendations in the reports and asked that work be carried out to ensure that:-

- Business Helpline information be optimised on google search.
- Information relating to the business area of the Borough Councils web site diagnostics be examined and included within the final report.
- Pop ups to be placed in the Civic Office reception area and in the libraries and vacant shops owned by the Borough.
- LAPs be engaged to ensure that Business Helpline pop ups were included in events.

- Work to be carried out to collect data on the skills base of the Newcastle area.
- A copy of the job description for the Growth Hub Business Helpline Advisor to be included in the next report to this Committee.
- The Borough Business Development Officer to link with the recently appointed Business Development Officer at Kidsgrove Town Council.
- That awareness of the Business Helpline be promoted within customer services and Councillors.

Agreed - That the Executive Director of Regeneration and Economic Development be requested to carry out work on the suggestions made by members and that the outcomes be included in the penultimate report on this scrutiny topic at the November meeting of the committee.

4. SCRUTINY BRIEF FOR THE BOROUGH MARKET

The Chair and Vice Chair submitted a scrutiny brief relating to Newcastle market. Members recommended that the following be included within the study: -

- That the role of the Bid team Manager be included and invited to be a part of the scrutiny process.
- That contact be made with nearby successful partnerships such as Alsager.
- That alternatives to a Local Authority run market be examined eg Market Drayton
- How the role of the markets team could be developed.
- Ways that the market offering could need the shopping needs of the growing nearby town centre student population.

5. WORK PLAN

Councillor Loades reported that, with regard to the issue of the impact on highways of planning developments across the Borough and the A34 traffic policy developed by the Staffordshire County Council, he had requested a forward report which would include the A34, A53 and A500 and that this report would be available for the next meeting.

The November meeting would examine the use of the Business Helpline and receive a presentation of markets website. Growth Deal 3 would be examined at an appropriate future meeting date.

Scrutiny was also requested on plans to grow local business within the Borough.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

7. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR ALLISON GARDNER
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.15 pm

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Report to the *Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

30th November 2016

Stoke and Staffordshire Business Helpline



Report Author: *Kim Graham*
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Introduction

A request was made by the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a performance report relating to use of the Business Helpline by Newcastle businesses.

Background

The Stoke and Staffordshire Business Helpline 0300 111 8002 growthhub@staffordshirechambers.co.uk is the first point of contact for business support across Staffordshire. The helpline provides a central point of contact for a range of free business support which includes Start Up, Growth, Finance, Regulation, People and Contacts.

The helpline is part of the Business Growth Hub, which is funded through Regional Growth Fund to help drive strong, sustainable business growth across Staffordshire.

Questions to be addressed

How can we encourage Newcastle Businesses to access the Business Helpline to help them strengthen and grow their business?

Outcomes

After a meeting with the Business Helpline Advisor 14 September 2016 it is clear there are number of ways that we can help our local businesses to access the helpline. Improvement areas to consider:

- A more prominent position within the business pages on the Council website

- Distribution of the Business Helpline newsletter to all Cllrs, link on business pages and BID website
- Pop up banners at the Civic Offices and Guildhall
- Leaflets for all Councillors, Locality Action Partnerships, Business Centres and Industrial Parks
- Information on the digital screens at the Guildhall
- Include a feature in The Reporter
- Use our social media to help raise the profile
- Ensure our Customer Services have the Business Helpline number
- Promote through Business Boost
- One off events with partners to raise the profile of the helpline
- Invite to the BID Business Connects events
- Develop a database of our Newcastle businesses including those in rural areas
- Send out Business Helpline leaflet with business rates bills
- Small business Saturday event
- Greater focus on business development

Supporting Information

52 Newcastle Businesses have contacted the Business Helpline since March 2016.

This compares with the following over the same period:

- Stafford 145
- East Staffs 58
- Staffordshire Moorlands 51
- Cannock 46
- South Staffs 42
- Lichfield 39
- Tamworth 21

Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents

A meeting took place with the Business Helpline Advisor 14 September 2016 to discuss options to increase Newcastle business contact with the Business Helpline.

Constraints

There is no financial cost to the Council as the Business Helpline is funded through external finance (Regional Growth Deal) for the whole of Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire. However, more officer time will be required to implement the range of improvement areas suggested earlier in this report.

Conclusions

In response to a request made by the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a performance report relating to use of the Business Helpline by Newcastle businesses, a meeting was arranged with the Business Helpline Advisor to discuss current uptake of the service and explore options for improvement.

The performance reports show that more 52 Newcastle businesses accessed the Business Helpline, which is more than 5 other Staffordshire authorities and less than two Staffordshire authorities, which indicates room for improvement.

It is clear there are number of ways that we can help our local businesses to access the helpline as detailed earlier in this report.

There is no financial cost to the Council but more officer time will be required to implement the suggested improvements areas.

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Cllr John Williams, Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Property and Business

Local Ward Member (if applicable)

Background Materials

Business Helpline Newsletter and Leaflets

Appendices

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