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Theme: *City support services to businesses*
Project title: *New Approach to Enterprise*

City: Glasgow, UK

Target groups: Businesses (SMEs) across the life cycle from pre-start/startup through to growth and maturity



Context, issue(s) to tackle

Glasgow understands that the levels of public sector bureaucracy can be a barrier to business growth and, in response to this, it is committed to establishing a more streamlined approach to ensuring businesses have a one-stop approach to engaging with the city council, acquiring information and support to help realise their aspirations.

Through a £1.8 million (€2.4 million) economic development service reform, dedicated business advisers will be the point of contact for enquiries, navigating the internal channels to ensure information is provided in a more efficient manner by a fluid team and structure that can change, adapt and develop to meet business priorities.

Objectives

This New Approach to Enterprise will deliver a more flexible and responsive resource adaptable to changing economic conditions and political administration priorities. It will draw more on data analytics, which is an opportunity the council believes can drive efficiency and inform policy interventions based on evidence, allowing more focused deployment of support and resources. It will also target companies across the business life cycle, from startup through growth to maturity, ensuring businesses adapt resilient and sustainable practices through the knowledge and skills of business advisers.

Date of achievement - design, development, implementation

The service reform has been underway since October 2014. The service re-design phase was concluded in October 2015.

Key steps and activities

The service re-design phase was a key part of the process, integrating the Business Gateway¹ service, a nationally branded service that contributes to the economic wellbeing by providing access to free business support services and impartial advice to people starting or growing their business. Unlike models in many other local authority areas, this one the council delivers in-house and it forms an integral part of the support infrastructure. This complements a key suite of core funded programmes², including a rent subsidy programme to help businesses enter premises; a training and development programme to support skills development within businesses; and a loan fund to support the transfer of businesses³.

¹ See www.bgateway.com/local-offices/glasgow

² See <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/businesssupport> (the refreshed Business Glasgow website was launched in November 2015)

³ See www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14330



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Budget and its origin

A £1.8 million (€2.4 million) service reform was the catalyst for the service re-design, which will attract £2.66 million (€3.5 million) of national European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution to develop a growth agenda in Glasgow. In addition, Glasgow will also join local authorities in Scotland to form a pan-Scotland Local Authority Loan Fund for SMEs, which will provide £1.8 million (€2.4 million) in loans to businesses in Glasgow. Core programme commitment to support businesses is in excess of £920,000 (€1.2 million) per year and the Business Gateway contract has a budget of £1.1 million (€1.45 million). Moreover, £1 million (€1.3 million) has been provided for the Business Transfer Loan Fund.

Results and impact

As the New Approach to Enterprise has yet to be fully rolled out, no tangible results have been achieved. However, a target of increasing the business base by 2,000 by 2017 has been set, along with a target to account manage 1,000 companies in the next year.

Transferability tips for cities willing to implement a similar scheme

The service reform has been executed during a time of public sector cuts and rationalisation of services, which has proved challenging. This being said, the planning and execution of the reform and subsequent design has been conducted in an open and transparent way, involving staff in the design of services, and communication has been critical to ensure staff buy-in to the vision of the department.

Contact

Graham Smith
Economic development manager
Glasgow City Council
graham.smith@glasgow.gov.uk