

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee – 22 August 2012****BUSINESS INITIATIVES UPDATE****Report by the Executive Director (Environment)****ABSTRACT**

This report updates the committee on the Business Initiatives being undertaken along with the outcome from our first ever Business Week in June 2012, and seeks approval to run a similar event in 2013.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the success of the recent Perth & Kinross Business Week
- ii) agree that the Business Growth Team in collaboration with our partners, plan and deliver a similar programme in 2013

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The core activity of the Business Growth Team is to provide high quality business advice to companies with growth potential in Perth and Kinross, making a contribution to sustainable economic growth.
- 2.2 The team has developed a number of new initiatives during 2012 including the creation of a Perth & Kinross Business and Enterprise Group of support agencies (comprising PKC, Perthshire Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Business Gateway/Enterprise North East Trust (ENET), and Perth College Centre for Enterprise) to enhance communication and ensure coordination of activities. The group was fundamental in developing our first ever local Business Week. It is also currently working on the development of a joint Business Events on-line diary which will detail all business related events in Perth & Kinross in one place.
- 2.3 During 2012 we have piloted Business Advisor surgeries in our rural towns; and the development of Business Collaboration Workshops to encourage greater joint working between local businesses. There are 550 co-operative business partnerships in Scotland employing 28,000 people bringing in more than £4 billion to the Scottish Economy. Encouraging more collaborative partnerships in Perth and Kinross is key to business growth in the area.
- 2.4 In addition we have established The Angel's Share, which is a matchmaking service between investors and entrepreneurs. This brings together local business angels and companies looking for investment. 'The Angel's share' is the quantity of the alcoholic liquor, usually whisky, lost to evaporation during the distilling process. We have taken the distilling term and transferred it to a business context referring to the share (or equity) that a business angel will

seek in return for investment. This reflects the heritage of distilling and associated processes in Perth and Kinross.

2.5 Business Growth Initiatives

2.5.1 The Committee received an update on the activities of the Council's Business Growth Team on 25 January 2012. The provision of business advice to companies remains the core activity of the Business Advisors. However in January we highlighted that we were planning to develop a number of initiatives to widen the reach of our services in terms of the numbers of companies supported to grow.

2.5.2 Partnership working is fundamental to our work in supporting local businesses. The Business Growth Team has now developed much closer links with key partner agencies (including Scottish Enterprise, the Business Gateway, the Perthshire Chamber of Commerce and the Growbiz project) in an attempt to clearly delineate where we can add value and support local companies. We have also increased our profile with local intermediaries (financial and other advisors) who have directed potential clients to us. We have also been actively piloting a Business Growth Facebook page to modernise our interaction with our client base. This has proved to be a very effective communication tool for the team. We currently have 124 companies interacting with us on Facebook.

2.6 Perth & Kinross Business Week 11 – 15 June 2012

2.6.1 The Perth and Kinross Business Week ran from the 11-15 June 2012 in the Dewar's Centre, Perth. The objectives of the Business Week were as follows:

- To encourage and support growth within local businesses proactively
- To provide businesses with a week of high quality speakers and workshops, to inspire them, and to improve their knowledge and skills.
- To provide an opportunity for businesses to network and potentially promote themselves through the exhibition and sponsorship opportunities afforded by Business Week
- To encourage collaboration both within the Council area and externally amongst our businesses and partner agencies
- To raise awareness of the Council's Business Growth Team and to highlight what support they can directly provide, and also access, via partners for local businesses

2.6.2 Overall the response to the week from participants and partners was extremely positive. Over a 1000 "session" bookings were made, and 550 individuals booked to attend at least one day over the whole week. It was free to attend, and there was inevitably an element of "no shows" on each day. Overall 344 individuals, representing 150 businesses, attended the various sessions over the week. The breakdown is provided below.

2.6.3 The overall theme of the Week was "Business Growth" with each day having a separate theme:-

- Day one – Planning for Growth (73 attended)
- Day two – Financing Growth (56 attended)
- Day three – Employment, Training and People (80 attended)
- Day four – Collaborating for a Stronger Economy (43 attended)
- Day five – Strategies and Opportunities for Growth (92 attended)

2.6.4 We surveyed both attendees and exhibitors/sponsors to gauge feedback on the event. 80 attendees (23%) responded to our survey and the overall response was extremely positive:-

- 98% were Satisfied/Very Satisfied with the Speakers
- 96% were satisfied with the Workshops
- 98% agreed the content of sessions was appropriate and informative
- 100% agreed the Business week was well organised
- We received some excellent feedback on what sessions they'd like see in the future if it was run again
- We also received some specific feedback on what they liked most/least & on suggested improvements
- 89% would attend next year if it is held again and 95% would recommend to others
- 72% rated the event Better or Much Better than similar events they'd attended.
- Some attendees felt it may have been beneficial to spread the events over a month and vary the timing of the events, rather than to pack everything into a week

2.6.5 To assist in funding the event we attracted seven main sponsors (Fairways, Castlecroft Securities, FSB, Johnston Carmichael, The Best of Perth & Kinross, FreeAgent, and Concept Group) and 30 exhibitors over the course of the week. The majority of sponsors and exhibitors were happy with the outcomes from the week. However, they did indicate they would have wished for additional attendees throughout the week, and have provided helpful suggestions on how we can improve future similar events.

2.6.6 In terms of marketing, a campaign was targeted through a variety of marketing channels; direct mail shots through our Business Directory, an extensive local press campaign in the run up to the event, a dedicated website www.perthandkinrossbusinessweek.co.uk, the Business Growth Facebook page, Banners in key locations, local marketing via Perthshire Online TV, The Best of Perth & Kinross web directory, a Radio Tay campaign and publicity via our partners (Business Gateway, Scottish Enterprise, Perthshire Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, and Perth College).

2.6.7 In terms of the cost of the Business Week, a breakdown and outline of expenditure and income is highlighted below.

Business Week cost breakdown			
Expenditure	£	Income	£
Hire of Venue	2700	Sponsorship	4200
Catering	4362	Exhibitors	2375
AV equipment hire	2200	Total income	6575
Speakers	3803		
Marketing	3211		
Total (excl. VAT)	16276		
Net Cost (ex. VAT)	9701		

- 2.6.8 On reviewing whether the original objectives have been achieved, overall we feel that these have been met. This was our first ever attempt at running such an event and from the feedback we received we were satisfied with the outcomes.
- 2.6.9 The feedback from both attendees and partner organisations suggests that there is a real need within the local business community, for business owners and key employees to get a chance to take time out to absorb new ideas, review their business objectives, and meet with like-minded people. It is recommended that the committee agree that the Business Growth Team in collaboration with our partners, plan and deliver a similar programme in 2013. To be as effective as possible the planning for such an event requires us to begin as soon as possible.
- 2.6.10 The Angel's Share initiative was launched with a Live Event during Business Week, which coincided with the launch of a dedicated website www.theangelshare.org.uk. During this event, four local businesses pitched to an audience of investors, business angels and agents. There has been some success with one business being invited to make a further pitch and hopefully secure additional investment. Another of the businesses has been approached by a solo angel as a result of the event. We are supporting these businesses going forward along with other businesses looking to become involved in the programme.
- 2.6.11 A second live event is planned for 26 September 2012 with a pitching event, combined with an investor fair (speed dating for investors), and workshops and information sharing sessions. A number of interested partners will be in attendance including the Scottish Investment Bank, LINC, along with a number of Investor groupings and individual investors.
- 2.6.12 Business Week also saw the launch of our new Business Collaboration initiative. Essentially we are facilitating the establishment of Business Collaboration groups, initially in the rural areas. We hope to bring together local business owners to investigate the potential for sharing skills, resources and contacts, which can ultimately benefit their business. We have already had a number of successes in supporting our existing clients to work together to generate additional business and/or savings. One group of three

companies in the Strathearn area have increased sales by almost 250% as a result of working together. Another example is the new pilot 'Ring of Breadalbane Explorer' hop on /hop off bus which links local businesses and tourist attractions in the Aberfeldy, Kenmore, and Comrie/Crieff area. This initiative was developed by the Breadalbane Tourism co-operative.

- 2.6.13 In early July the first three workshops were held in Birnam, Blairgowrie, and Crieff; and further monthly sessions have been programmed on the first Wednesday of the month.

CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Head of Legal Services, the Head of Democratic Services and the Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed measures at an indicative cost of £20,000 will be funded from the Environment Service budget in 2013/14.

5. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

- 5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report impacts on the following:-

- A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

- 6.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

7. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

- 7.2 The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is

required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The first ever Perth and Kinross Business Week successfully allowed us to reach significantly more businesses than we can through our mainstream one-to-one business advice activity. We received excellent feedback from the businesses community, and it is hoped that support can be secured to hold a similar event in 2013.

**JIM VALENTINE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENT)**

NOTE

No background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

Contact Officer:	Alison Seggie, Ext. No. 75767 alseggie@pkc.gov.uk
Address of Service:	Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth, PH1 5GD
Date of Report	10 August 2012

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (On occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting
the Customer Service Centre
on
01738 475000



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573