

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE 19 March

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT Neighbourhood Community Business Pilot

REPORT NUMBER: EPI/13/028

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise members of proposals to utilise any identified spare capacity in City educational establishments to host small business start ups. These start ups would be closely associated with the host educational establishment and which could potentially deliver enhanced educational and vocational experiences. The report seeks the Committee's approval to develop more detailed proposals.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee are recommended to:

- a. give approval for officers in EP&I continue to work with colleagues in Education, Culture & Sport (ECS) to develop a detailed proposal for consideration by the relevant committees.
- b. Give approval that current under spend within the Business Gateway contract be used to part finance this initiative.
- c. That the committee refer this report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee for approval to develop a detailed proposal.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be a cost associated with property modifications to ensure that premises are suitable for business use, in terms of access, Health & Safety, and legislative requirements. Until a more detailed proposal is completed, we are not in a position to give an accurate costing for this. However, should approval be given for this proposal, it is expected that

building works, project marketing and management and initial business start up costs will be covered by existing finance within the Employability, Skills and Community Enterprise (ESCE) budget, and identified under spend within the Business Gateway budget. As this project could potentially deliver a significant community benefit, we are confident that established local businesses and other partners will support this initiative by giving cash and in kind donations.

After the 12 month support period participating establishments could potentially generate income through rental revenue.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Staffing

As community enterprise is part of the current portfolio of work, for the ESCE team, delivering this initiative should have no negative implications for current staffing resources.

General

Use of educational establishments as business premises will require officers involved in this activity to be mindful of restrictions in relation to security, access, H&S, PVG checks etc. Selection of 'competition winners' will fully involve representatives from the nominated educational establishments. This will ensure that the business type is suitable and complementary to the facilities available and the school curriculum. e.g. Catering business, IT repairs, Electronics workshop etc.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

It has been identified that there is spare capacity within some educational establishments. Officers in EP&I and Education, Culture & Sport (ECS) have met to discuss the feasibility and desirability of using this capacity to provide premises for small business start ups.

It is proposed that spare capacity could be utilised to host community based start up businesses. Increased community based businesses would benefit the local area by increasing services, reducing the need for travel to access services and in the longer term create local employment opportunities.

Officers would use the template from the Retail Rocks Project, which utilised Council owned premises in Torry to help business start ups. The basis of this proposal is to run a competition to encourage community based business start ups, which would operate from within educational establishments. Business support would be provided in the form of training workshops, delivered by Enterprise North East Trust

(ENET) and a small grant to help the business purchase start up stock in the first year. It is anticipated that bespoke business start up workshops would be held in the community as part of the promotion of the competition to stimulate early interest.

As part of the conditions any new business that was created from the competition process would be expected to work closely with their host educational establishment to identify opportunities for engagement with pupils and the community. It is expected that businesses would be able to offer vocational training across their area of expertise, and in the longer term be able to offer vocational qualifications which will support and enhance the future employability of pupils and members of the local community.

There are a number potential benefits to this proposal.

- Appropriate utilisation of spare capacity
- New Business start ups
- Potential rental income for schools
- Increased work experience placement options
- Increased attainment of relevant vocational qualifications
- Reduction in need to travel to city centre to access vocational qualifications
- Increased engagement with community
- Potential linkages with school entrepreneurial studies
- Increased recognition of importance of school within the community.
- Promotion of 'can-do' attitude
- Create equality of access to business ownership for those without substantial funds.
- Support the development of business plans for future entrepreneurs
- Improved accessibility, safety and attractiveness of the area
- Increased consumer spend in neighbourhood
- Increase footfall with neighbourhood
- Creating an opportunity for skills and expertise to be shared
- Drive local economy
- Provide local community with improved facilities
- Encourage increased commercial activity within the area

Proposed Pilot Northfield Academy

Preliminary discussions with Education, Culture and Sport have been positive and Northfield Academy has been identified as a possible pilot. A meeting was held at Northfield and the school is supportive of the concept and is keen to see a more detailed proposal.

Initial discussions with Northfield Academy has highlighted that accommodation could be provided if further research supports the development of this proposal and suitable business ventures were identified.

These initial discussions supported further investigation into the feasibility of the following business types, (child-care, catering, electronic repair workshop, graphic design, community café etc). If an appropriate application was received to deliver a catering or community café type business, this would have the additional benefits of potentially offering 'confidence to cook', healthy eating and basic cookery skills within the community.

The proposal also supports the personalised learning aspect of the CfE providing a different context for learning and encouraging partners to become involved in learning that takes place out with a traditional classroom environment.

In terms of the Wider Achievement Agenda, the initiative would further encourage young people to access work based skills which could be accredited via SQA It could also could support the virtual campus in the provision of specialised options for pupils and work experience

6. IMPACT

The project contributes significantly and directly to the achievement of

Single Outcome agreement (SOA) National Outcomes:

1. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
2. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful

Aberdeen the smarter City

1. We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem
2. Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.
3. Again, working with partners, we will create a City of Learning which will empower individuals to fulfill their potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities.
4. We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

Equality and Human Rights implications

A full equality and human rights impact assessment was not required, as this paper only seeks approval to investigate and further consult. A full EHRI will be undertaken once potential solutions are in place.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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