

14 April 2010

Minutes



	<p>Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Peter Kemp, Carol Melvin, Robin Sansarpuri and Michael White.</p> <p>Apologies: Councillors Sid Garg and Liz Kemp (Peter Kemp substituting).</p> <p>Officers: Mark Braddock (Senior Democratic Services Manager), Helena Webster (Economic Development Manager – Deputy Chief Executive’s Office), Lloyd White (Head of Democratic Services) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p> <p>Witnesses: Rob Grover (Partnership Manager – Business Link for London) and Neil Impiazzi (Partnership Development Manager - SEGRO).</p>		
63.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None.</p>		
64.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2010</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record.</p>		
65.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>		
66.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="295 1545 1228 2047"> <p>Second Major Review - Impact of Public Funded Business Support and the Success of New Business Start up Within Hillingdon and to Review How the Council could Improve Business to Business Support within the Borough's Industrial Estates</p> <p>Rob Grover – Partnership Manager, Business Link for London</p> <p>The review was provided with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Link offers free, impartial advice and support service for London’s small and medium sized </td> <td data-bbox="1228 1545 1453 2047"> <p>Action By:</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Second Major Review - Impact of Public Funded Business Support and the Success of New Business Start up Within Hillingdon and to Review How the Council could Improve Business to Business Support within the Borough's Industrial Estates</p> <p>Rob Grover – Partnership Manager, Business Link for London</p> <p>The review was provided with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Link offers free, impartial advice and support service for London’s small and medium sized 	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<p>businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Link received its funding from the London Development Agency and was delivered by Serco plc • The role of Business Link was to help business start ups and established businesses survive, prosper and grow. This was achieved through the provision of high quality and practical advice and information as well as providing businesses with access to other sources of business support • In the 12 month period from January 2009 to December 2009, over 3,600 Hillingdon based businesses were helped by Business Link. Support ranged from registering for the newsletter, making use of the on-line support tools, attending an information and networking event, through to receiving intensive personal assistance through a full Business Review • 70% of businesses the organisation had worked with were micro-businesses but in the present economic climate, Business Link would be pushing to help more SME's, those employing 5+ staff which could grow, employ more staff etc • Business Link provided introductory start up and business planning workshops. Once these had been attended and a business plan had been prepared they would be referred to the Business London Programme for further workshops and then if appropriate, intensive start up support • Business Link actively filtered businesses to assess how serious businesses were. This would bring a higher success rate <p>The relationship with Chambers of Commerce was discussed and reference was made to a number of towns within the Borough that did not have a Chamber. The possibility of Business Link involvement in helping setting Chambers of Commerce up was discussed but Members were informed this would need investment</p> <p>Discussion took place on the work that the London Development Agency commissioned and whether there were any opportunities for local authorities to influence or shape the nature of this work. An option could be for the Council to lobby the London Development Agency and Members agreed that this could be a recommendation of the review.</p> <p>Members referred to Business Clubs which would facilitate business to business support, business discounts, collective purchasing of service and goods and possibly mentoring and support from larger businesses to smaller businesses. The Business Link representative explained that the organisation only worked with businesses with a maximum of 249</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<p>employees, but the concept of business clubs and mentoring and support could be explored.</p> <p>Members were reminded that a second facet of the review was looking at Industrial Estates and looking at how the Council and its partners could improve links with businesses. Particular interest was in relation to forming business clubs, business to business support and improving the profile of businesses on industrial estates. For the purpose of the review, focus would be on North Uxbridge Industrial Area which had 47 units and an employment number of over 2,000.</p> <p>Neil Impiazzi – Partnership Development Manager of SEGRO</p> <p>The review was provided with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEGRO was Europe’s leading provider of flexible business space and operated from a network of 16 offices in 10 countries, serving businesses from start ups to global corporations• On Slough Estate work had taken place with clusters of businesses and SEGRO were building effective relationships with businesses in these difficult economic times and keeping close to their customers• SERGO had around 80 customers within Hillingdon, with premises ranging from sizes of 500 sq feet to 250,000 sq feet• Customers in Hillingdon ranged from freight forwarders to aviation, manufacturing to wholesalers and IT to utilities• Major challenges which faced customers included rent payments not being competitive in the current market, customers requiring less space to manage their liabilities, keeping down overhead costs and a lack of understanding of what support was available• Engagement with customers was the focus at present, which was important as 40-50% of SERGO’s business was repeat business• Marketing was an issue for businesses and SERGO was looking at working in partnership with customers to provide this• Building relationships with customers involved customer engagement programmes, a named contact for different issues, credit control, leasing and operations. The emphasis of the message was to change the dynamic from “tenant” to “customer”• Work was currently taking place with 75 customers who had rent payment plans to help ease their cash flow problems and support the future survival of their businesses	<p>Action By:</p>
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- The cluster working which had taken place resulted in a renegotiating of building insurance premiums which had resulted in a 20% saving for customers. In Slough, 30-40 businesses working in a cluster had produced savings from jointly purchasing stationery
- Work had taken place with Business Link to engage with industrial estate occupiers but they tended not to be the most interactive businesses
- 6 weekly business to business meetings took place with advisers who gave practical advice
- Events took place in which SERGO participated to help businesses
- Reference was made to the “Slough Aspire” initiative which was a joint venture with Slough Council and was one of the UK’s most innovative skills, training and recruitment initiatives which would bridge the gap between employers on the Slough Trading Estate and training and education providers
- “Slough Aspire” would be developed alongside the Slough Estate wide development plan called “Vision for Slough”, which would support the estate’s regeneration
- SERGO would like to work in partnership with LBH with their businesses in the Borough
- SERGO would continue to drive down occupier cost and improve efficiency by providing the option of leasing office furniture, IT equipment etc. Also further cluster buying initiatives would be undertaken and there would be approved lists of electricians, plumbers. Reference was made to the possible creating of a Hillingdon First for Business card which could be created within Hillingdon.

Members noted the changing dynamic of SERGO from a landlord to a supplier and this approach was supported and seen as the way forward to support businesses.

Reference was made to the possibility of piloting North Uxbridge Industrial Estate with some of the initiatives which SERGO had already undertaken in Slough, particularly those relating to the formation of business clubs. It was agreed that a recommendation of the review would be to ask officers to explore a partnership with SEGRO on the North Uxbridge Industrial Estate to help businesses on this site. This would include using some of the initiatives used in Slough as well as the development of an estate web site for Business to Business marketing and for SEGRO to advertise rental opportunities.

Members expressed particular interest at the possible use of a Hillingdon First Business to Business card which could be used by businesses on Industrial Estates in the Borough. This would enable businesses to source goods and services locally as well

