

Executive Member Response To Inward Investment & Business Support Scrutiny Review

Date Recommendations agreed by Development and Scrutiny Committee:

Economy, Enterprise and Transport Development and Scrutiny Committee, Monday 25 June 2012
(Circulated Tuesday 9 July 2012)

Date responses should be made by:

Executive responses should be received by Tuesday 3 September 2012

Recommendations:

Executive Response:

1. That when Government guidance is issued on the changes to locally determine Business Rates (from April 2013) a meeting be arranged with the Federation of Small Businesses(FSB) to explore ways the Council can be flexible to encourage Small and Medium Sized Enterprises into the area.

(Action – Scott Crudgington / Neil Cuttell)

The regeneration and finance teams are working together to explore and determine the impact that the national policy on business rates will have for Stevenage in the future. The regeneration manager or finance officer will deliver a presentation to the Development & Scrutiny Panel in late 2013 on the potential impacts of business rates for Stevenage. A meeting with the FSB will be arranged if following the above assessment it would be beneficial for Stevenage businesses to attend such a meeting.

2. That the Council build upon the opportunity provided by the New Homes Bonus to provide more apprenticeships and employment opportunities for young people in future years.

(Action – HR Maxine Parker)

<p>3. That the Council investigate ways that it can support more local businesses via its procurement for goods and services (especially under the £75k ceiling). (Action – Paul Smith)</p>	<p>The Council facilitate a ‘meet the buyer’ day annually that aims to promote business to business trading and the availability of public sector contracts locally. The Council can break down expenditure as to where defrayment occurs geographically, and will continue to promote the Supply Hertfordshire website. The Council continues to explore ways of increasing its procurement from local businesses that does not breach UK and EU legislation.</p>
<p>4. That Stevenage Borough Council promote and advertise the ‘Supply Hertfordshire’ website. (Action – Neil Cuttell)</p>	<p>The Regeneration team will continue to promote the Supply Hertfordshire website, and will ensure there is a synergy and effective promotion of this facility through the business directory, inward investment campaign and events.</p>
<p>5. That Officers consider ways, including face to face meetings, to provide more promotion and marketing of the Business Technology Centre ‘My Incubator’ around the neighbourhood shops and indoor market. (Action – Neil Cuttell)</p>	<p>The Regeneration Team will continue to work with the Estates Team to promote the facilities the Btc has to offer through its location and its events and training. Officers will confirm what marketing mechanisms are best to deliver this with the resources and budgets currently available.</p>
<p>6. That a promotional DVD video clip be created as a link from the SBC website and linked from other relevant sites to give a flavour of the diverse businesses based in the town and the opportunities that new companies choosing to base themselves in the town could enjoy. (Action – Neil Cuttell)</p>	<p>The Regeneration Team have completed an inward investment video/dvd that is being uploaded to the ‘invest in stevenage’ website. This was officially launched to over 75 businesses in June 2012. Further inward investment promotional campaigns are underway including at train stations at Luton and Finsbury Park</p>
<p>7. That Officers from Legal and Environmental Health contact the owner of the former Kodak building requesting that efforts be made to tidy the appearance of the site. (Action – Viv Evans to advise)</p>	<p>V Evans will be arranging a meeting between Environment and Legal departments to consider the options and the potential for a notice to be served under section 215.</p>

<p>8. That Officers consider ways in which the Council and its partners could support the locally skilled workforce in Stevenage to take advantage of employment opportunities when they arise.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Action – Neil Cuttell)</p>	<p>The Regeneration Team have facilitated three ‘World of Work’ events in 2011, 2012 and 2013 that have sought to connect employers with potential employees. The Council also works through its inward investment function to connect incoming businesses with the jobs centre and potential employees. Officers will continue to review other options and ways of promoting the skills base of Stevenage, and connecting residents with new employment opportunities.</p>
<p>9. That, where economically viable and with regard to long-term payback of the initial investment, the Council incorporate sustainable building methods into any future building projects.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Action – Viv Evans)</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the preparation for the local plan.</p>

A copy of these recommendations have been sent to the named officers for a response on behalf of the Executive.