

**SCOPING DOCUMENT – SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE –
RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY QUESTIONS – 24th JUNE 2015 MEETING**

9th JULY 2015

Overview:

This paper responds to the questions raised in the Scrutiny Meeting of 24th June.

1. Details of company turnover within the Centre, especially the incubator area as concerns were expressed of a perceived lack of suitable office space in the Town

		Start of year	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Yearly Total
Clients Moved In	Full Time	529	14	5	8	64	91
	Part Time	33	0	0	11	3	14
Clients Moved Out	Full Time		3	7	4	10	24
	Part Time		1	0	0	1	2
Nett Total		562					641

- Tenants (Clients) who have moved out of the btc into larger premises 3
- Tenants (Clients) who have moved to a larger unit at the btc 11
- Businesses within the btc who have merged 0
- Businesses returning to work from home 3

2. Details of the types of business using the Centre

The number of businesses who have been tenants (Clients) at the btc and nature of business

Nature of Business	Number
Accounting / Finance	3
Construction	6

Consulting	3
Education	5
Health / Medical	7
IT / Electrical	12
Manufacturing	4
Other	7
Publishing / Media	15
Research	6
Service Provider	15
Sports / Leisure	12
Unknown	26
Web Based	16
Wholesale	10
Total	147

3. The amount of incubator space within the Centre

4% of allocated floor space

4. Include a comparison with the Stevenage BioScience Catalyst

The following descriptions provide a brief overview of the Stevenage BioScience Catalyst and the BTC:

Stevenage BioScience Catalyst

- Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is a joint venture between the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, GlaxoSmithKline, the Wellcome Trust and Innovate UK.
- It aims to give the next generation of pharma and biotech companies access to a spectrum of translational research and development activities and opportunities.
- This is delivered through a culture of open innovation that will accelerate the discovery of cutting-edge healthcare solutions and place the UK bioscience sector at the forefront of worldwide biomedical innovation.
- Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst offers access to equipment and facilities that would otherwise be beyond the reach of small or medium-sized companies.
- Its campus has been designed to foster cooperation, scientific and commercial dialogue and interaction between entrepreneurs in the Incubator and scientists on the GSK R&D site, while respecting their freedom to interact with any commercial or academic partners.

(sourced from SBC website)

Business Technology Centre

- The btc aims to make a positive impact on the geographical area in which it is based by assisting the start-up and growth of businesses, especially those from

the knowledge-based sector; and to support existing innovative businesses to flourish. It promotes innovation in local schools and colleges and works closely with the University of Hertfordshire.

- The on-site business advisory team at the btc are available to support and offer business advice to businesses of any size. Advisors can discuss business start up ideas and business plan writing and use their experience to bring your ideas together.

(sourced from BTC website)

From the narrative above, there is a clear distinction between the services/facilities of the two centres. The SBC with has a well defined and narrow focus on high growth biotech/pharma businesses, whilst the BTC has a more general focus on a wide range of businesses/sectors. Looking at the tenant/client lists of both centres, the BTC appeals to mostly local business owners i.e. design/PR, legal and accounting companies etc, whilst the SBC has a very diverse range of tenants including educational institutions such as UCL, Cambridge Uni and high tech pharma companies.

5. Review the need for a business accelerator

To take this piece of work forward requires more information on:

- Clarity on what type of accelerator is proposed
- Resources to identify and engage with businesses with high growth potential and would benefit from use of accelerator and/or businesses currently using accelerator programmes
- Offer of accelerator programmes to provide assistance

6. Review the levels and effectiveness of on-line versus on-site business support

Like for like comparison between BTC and online support is unavailable. Please see outputs generated by BTC and online support.

BTC Core Outputs	2014 /2015	
	Contract	Actual
Jobs Created (ERDF, NEA and BTC)	45	169
Number of businesses started (ERDF and NEA)	15	128
businesses and individuals supported by counselling service	125	475
Percentage of business counselling clients from hard to reach groups	15-20%	36 %

businesses assisted to improve performance	110	577
businesses assists to engage with UK knowledge base	5	33
Survival Rate	85%	86%
Business support clients satisfaction levels	95%	99%

MyIncubatorVentures online programme

- 279 visitors
- 29 accounts
- 54 chats
- Average chat time 07:14

(Provided by My Incubator Ventures - 4th quarter 2014/2015 figures – awaiting full year figures)

7. Review the admission / exit criteria for the Centre

Information on admission / exit criteria defined for My Incubator – Stevenage

The Incubator facility was originally set up as a shared environment for pre start-up and start-up businesses. It consists of 14 'hot desks' for incubator clients and a further 11 desks dedicated as 'grow on' space. It is seen as a flexible environment and has people supporting resident start-up businesses (such as graduates, apprentices) and employees of existing businesses working out of the Incubator. Wenta would also like to attract spin outs from locally based businesses like Airbus and MBDA and have plans to allow access to those working with local businesses to the facility or those looking to move to Stevenage and needing temporary space.

Charging Structure per Incubator desk

- Pre start occupancy is free for the first 3 months, then £100 for up to 9 months
- Existing business are charged £100 a month for a maximum stay of 12 months
- Grow on space is available at £200 a month
- A one/two person office start at around £350 per month

(Unless otherwise stated, all information taken from BTC Annual Report, 2014/2015, July 2015 and My Incubator Ventures quarter 4 outputs 2014/2015)