

Executive Member Response to
BTC Scrutiny Review

Date Recommendations agreed by Scrutiny Select Committee:

Environment & Economy Select Committee, Tuesday 12 January 2016,
amended and circulated final recommendations and report on Friday 15 January 2016

**Date responses should be made by
(Executive responses should legally be received within two months of publishing):**

An Executive response on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport should
be received
by Monday 14 March 2016

**All actions have been directed to Peter Bandy who will delegate internal responsibility regarding responses
on behalf of the Portfolio Holder.**

Recommendations:	Executive Response:
<p>1. That Officers in Regeneration and Economic Development carry out a feasibility study to identify the business case for a new town centre based workspace perhaps targeted at Stevenage's Bio-Science support service businesses. The feasibility study should look at what could be achieved in Stevenage regarding stimulating business incubation in the town centre and explore suitable locations, perhaps at the regenerated transport hub</p>	<p>This work could not be carried out with existing staff resources and would require specialist expertise. The work is not a current priority – resources are very much focussed on delivering Stevenage Central regeneration which is the Council's top priority.</p> <p>Any work on a business case and, certainly, any choice of location would be best considered as part of the refining of the Stevenage Central Framework into more detailed masterplans for the area.</p>
<p>2. That Officers establish what external funding streams are available (European ERDF, LEP, HCC, SBC, Princes Trust, etc.) to support any new ventures such as business workspace/incubation in the town centre</p>	<p>See above. However, if a viable business case emerges for a workspace or incubation facility in the town centre every avenue for external funding will be pursued.</p>
<p>3. That Officers investigate Impact Hub and other similar social enterprise, Community Interest Companies, to find out what interest there could be to work together to establish a social enterprise workspace in Stevenage</p>	<p>Not a priority at present and insufficient capacity to deliver the work needed</p>
<p>4. That Officers and Members engaged in promoting Economic Development, work with local education providers, including</p>	<p>We are already working with North Herts College and, through the Wenta contract, with the wider education sector. However, we need to do more promotion in this area. There may also be a role here for a re-focussed</p>

<p>secondary schools, SET, North Herts College and the University of Hertfordshire, working closely with Wenta/BTC, to encourage more collaborative working and stimulation of entrepreneurial ventures for young people.</p>	<p>Economy Task Force</p>
<p>5. That Officers in preparing any contract extension or new contract for the management of the BTC ensure that, as a requirement of the contract, adequate and meaningful collection of equalities and diversity data for incubation and workspace clients at the BTC be recorded in order that a profile of business supported at the BTC can be monitored.</p>	<p>Agreed monitoring arrangements will be updated</p>
<p>6. That a breakdown of how long companies have been based at the BTC since Wenta took on the contract to manage the Centre and the Chells Industrial Workshops, be provided to Members.</p>	<p>This information will be provided to Members. In interpreting the data, however, Members should bear in mind that occupation of the BTC will always be a mixture of start-ups, move-ons and more established lettings It is a very difficult judgement when to actively terminate a company's tenancy – it could lead to failure of the enterprise – and a 'one size fits all' cap on the length of stay is not desirable</p>
<p>7. That the Executive Portfolio Holder be challenged to increase the amount of incubation space made available and being actively used at the BTC.</p>	<p>This will be reviewed with Wenta to establish whether there is sufficient demand to warrant setting aside more space for incubation and sufficient capacity and expertise to service additional space</p>