
**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee – 14 November 2012

Subject: Update on recommendations of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group

Report of: Angela Harrington, Head of Regeneration

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on progress against recommendations of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group, which met four times between December 2011 and February 2012, and which looked into:

- The challenges that residents face when trying to start a business;
- The services and resources available to support them;
- The role of MCC in linking the two.

The recommendations of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group relate to three types of action that MCC can take:

- Increasing the awareness that residents have of enterprise and business start up support that MCC does not directly control;
- Influencing partner organisations in the way that they deliver and target mainstream and discretionary services to meet the needs of Manchester residents;
- Direct interventions in areas where MCC can add value.

Recommendations were made for each of the main areas that the Group focused on:

1. Business Start Up Support: overview, research and developments
2. Barriers that may prevent residents (particularly from under represented groups) from starting a business
3. Innovation and good practice
4. What networks exist that residents can use to start and expand their business
5. Awareness of and access to appropriate finance
6. What threats and opportunities are provided by the internet

This paper also summarises developments in business start up provision in Manchester since the last report to Economy Scrutiny Committee on 23rd May 2012.

Paul Mooney, Director at Blue Orchid, has been invited to attend this Economy Scrutiny meeting and will be available to respond to questions relating to the GM Business Start-Up Programme.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The papers and minutes of the meetings of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group.

1. Introduction

1.1 Manchester has a strong history of enterprise and innovation and in recent years has undergone a period of economic success not seen since the industrial revolution. However, although the proportion of residents who are self-employed and business survival rates in Manchester have increased, they still remain below national and regional averages.

1.2 A key challenge has been to ensure that people from all parts of society are able to benefit from a growing economy and that they do not face additional barriers as a result of their social situation, race or gender. Although this has always been important, it is increasingly crucial given the current economic climate.

1.3 There are many benefits to starting a business. On a personal level starting a business can be a way of becoming employed, potentially creating the type of employment that suits the individual, increasing independence and raising self-esteem. On an economic level, small businesses are responsible for creating a significant proportion of new jobs and have a vital role in creating a healthy local economy and reducing the burden on the welfare system. However, the transition from benefits to drawing a living wage from a business can be lengthy and is not always feasible, even with intensive support. The importance of providing quality business advice to residents who may not have role models, finance or support networks cannot be understated.

1.4 At the time that the Business Start-Up Task and Finish Group met in late 2011, the provision available for people who wish to start a business was undergoing significant changes. In recent years, one of the main sources of start up support was the Intensive Start-Up Support (ISUS) programme. This programme was funded by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and delivered in Manchester by Blue Orchid from June 2007 – December 2011 and by Economic Solutions in East Manchester from June 2007 – March 2009. The ISUS programme was targeted at regional priority groups (women, disabled people, BME groups, residents of deprived areas and social enterprises) and local priority groups (white males and those recently made redundant or threatened with redundancy).

1.5 The ISUS programme was extensive and successful, but drew to a close in December 2011 as a result of the closure of Regional Development Agencies and Business Links, along with the further rationalisation of Government funded business support. This meant that there was significantly less funding for the programmes that replaced ISUS and there was a more fragmented offer of national programmes.

1.6 If Manchester is to ensure that these changes do not have a disproportionate effect on people who already face disadvantages in starting businesses, the onus is on sub-regional and local partners to secure significant amounts of competitive funding to put into place a comprehensive business start up programme that can meet the demand and needs of all Manchester residents.

1.7 In July 2011, the Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which gave a brief overview of the above developments. The Committee felt that this was a subject which merited further investigation, with a

particular focus on the barriers that some groups face in starting businesses and the ways in which MCC can support people who face challenges to overcome them. The Task and Finish Group met four times between December 2011 and February 2012.

2. Recent Developments in Business Start Up Support

2.1 Since the Business Start-Up Task and Finish Group paper to the Economy Scrutiny Committee in May 2012, the Department for Communities and Local Government has awarded ERDF funding for a Greater Manchester Business Start-Up Support (BSUS) Programme to a partnership bid led by Blue Orchid. This bid had GM LEP endorsement and will be delivered between May 2012 – June 2015. Manchester City Council and the other nine GM authorities also endorsed the bid and have match funded the programme which will allow them to play a role in determining the local targeting of provision and monitoring of delivery.

2.2 Blue Orchid leads a partnership in Manchester which includes The Prince's Trust, Franchising Works, and Bolton Business Ventures. Blue Orchid offers a universal start-up support service available to any Manchester resident. This has been made possible because MCC has provided extra funding outside of the ERDF programme to allow Blue Orchid to support white males in non-ERDF eligible wards. Blue Orchid also deliver the 'Be The Boss' programme which supports ex- armed forces personnel to start a business and which has been used as match funding for the programme. Blue Orchid's delivery partners each have a specialist focus; The Prince's Trust offers disadvantaged young people aged 18-30 business support and loans; Franchising Works specifically offer support to those wishing to start a franchise; Bolton Business Ventures run the ERDF funded Small Loans for Business scheme and the Barclays Get Ready for Business scheme which aims to get small businesses investment ready to be considered for a loan from Barclays.

2.3 The GM BSUS programme has also been match funded by DWP through its New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) Programme. NEA is now available to any Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant from day one of their claim until they enter the Work Programme. It offers a weekly allowance, a package of start up support, and a loan of up to £1,000 for start up costs. The match funding of the ERDF programme has meant that the support available through NEA has been strengthened, and allows greater linkages with other business support provision.

2.4 The GM BSUS programme is demand-led so MCC are working closely with Blue Orchid to guide and monitor delivery in Manchester. A Marketing and Engagement Plan is in place which includes target groups and outreach venues in SRF areas, which Blue Orchid and its partners have been requested to prioritise. JSA claimants are automatically supported through the NEA programme, which means that the MCC funded element can focus on claimants of other benefits including Employment Support Allowance and Lone Parent Income Support, as well as those recently made redundant or at threat of redundancy, and employed people.

2.5 Forecast outputs for the MCC and NEA match funded elements of the programme delivered by Blue Orchid until June 2015 are shown below. MCC will request that NEA outputs are made available for information for future updates.

	MCC	MCC (ERDF ineligible)	NEA	Total
Pre-Start Assists (12 hours of support)	409	n/a	410	819
Trading Starts	319	54	376	749
Post-Start Assists (businesses less than 3 years old)	94	n/a	80	174
One Year Survivals	255	43	TBC	
Jobs Created	409	70	TBC	

These figures do not yet include outputs to be achieved by Blue Orchid's delivery partners. Further detail on these elements of the programme will be available once delivery agreements are in place. The outputs funded by MCC for ERDF ineligible clients (white males in ineligible wards) strictly sit outside of the ERDF programme and its output requirements, however Blue Orchid will monitor and report on progress in the same way.

2.6 It is difficult to directly compare the GM BSUS Programme with its predecessor ISUS, since we do not have forecasted outputs for some of the delivery partners for the former. However ISUS was delivered from April 2009 – December 2011, and achieved 1,235 applications onto the programme and 271 business starts in Manchester. It is important to note that applications onto programme are different to pre-start assists. The former is defined as an individual enrolled onto programme, the latter as an individual who receives 12 hours of support. Blue Orchid anticipate a proportion of individuals leaving the programme prior to reaching 12 hours of support. Survival rates to one year for the ISUS programme were 87% of all trading starts. The target rate for the GM BSUS programme is 80%.

2.7 MCC will be a member of the GM BSUS Steering Group which will oversee delivery and monitor progress of the programme at a GM level. The first meeting of the Steering Group is to be set.

2.8 There are a number of start-up loan schemes available to Manchester residents which business support providers work closely with and refer into. These include:

- Business Finance Solutions, who offer NEA loans, Start Up Loans scheme for 18-24 year olds, the Small Business Loan Scheme and Business Angels
- NW Access to Finance service
- Co-operative Hub loan scheme
- The Prince's Trust loans for 18-30 year olds
- Franchising Works start-up loans

Access to Finance is covered in detail in the separate paper being delivered to the Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14th November.

3. Business Start Up Task and Finish Group – Progress on recommendations

3.1 The Economy Scrutiny Paper of 23rd May 2012 - Final Report of the Business Start Up Support Task and Finish Group is attached as Appendix A. This paper provides information on membership of the group; organisations and individuals invited to contribute to the investigation; detail on the lines of enquiry and research undertaken; outcome of discussions and the final recommendations.

3.2 Below is a table of all the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group, and progress against them.

	Recommendation	Progress
1	That the Council discusses with Job Centre Plus how variations in referrals to the New Enterprise Allowance scheme from different Job Centres could be addressed, with the aim of promoting the service fully across the city.	JCP had agreed to provide NEA data by Jobcentre but this has not yet been received. However NEA has been used as match funding for the GM BSUS programme and we will receive data on referrals and take up via regular Blue Orchid monitoring arrangements. The eligibility for NEA has very recently been extended to claimants of JSA from day one. Blue Orchid and JCP are discussing how this will be managed. Blue Orchid are delivering 1-1 and group advice sessions from various venues across the city to NEA clients.
2	To use the Council web site to increase awareness of available start up support services.	The business landing page has been updated with all business support information and is kept up to date on an ongoing basis. This will include information on business support providers' upcoming events and workshops.
3	That the Council influences start up providers to deliver support that meets the needs of specific community groups, particularly those that are under represented in business start ups, and addressed the personal circumstances of residents.	The GM BSUS programme is being delivered by a partnership led by Blue Orchid and includes the Prince's Trust, Bolton Business Ventures and Franchising Works. MCC are awaiting further detail on delivery plans of the other partners, which Blue Orchid will feed back as part of their regular updates. Match funding has also been made available from DWP NEA, meaning the

		offer to NEA clients will be strengthened. MCC has control over its match funded element and has agreed a Marketing and Engagement Plan which will guide local delivery and enable targeted support at under represented groups e.g. areas of highest worklessness. MCC has also provided extra funding for white males in ERDF ineligible wards who could otherwise not be supported through the programme.
4	To support networks for people wishing to start businesses, with particular focus on ensuring that people from disadvantaged groups have access to mentoring from people who have faced similar challenges and barriers that they have and overcome them. This is particularly important where rates of entrepreneurship are lowest in the city, for example Woodhouse Park and Moston and for under represented groups such as women and disabled residents.	<p>Following discussions with JCP it has been agreed to roll out Enterprise Clubs which will link with Work Clubs and provide start up support, workshops, networking opportunities and mentoring to both NEA and non-NEA clients, and existing businesses. These will have their bases in 6 Business Information Points across the City. Blue Orchid will be delivering awareness sessions to Work Club leaders to enable them to signpost and support Work Club attendees who are considering self-employment. In addition Blue Orchid and partners will deliver outreach support to NEA and non-NEA clients at venues across the city. Through the Marketing and Engagement Plan and via the Neighbourhood Regeneration Teams (NRTs), outreach will be made available to disadvantaged and under represented groups where needed</p> <p>Blue Orchid are approaching the Deaf Society to discuss delivery opportunities and provision of signers for deaf clients. They also have a meeting with Breakthrough UK in early November to discuss delivery of workshops with their clients</p>
5	To brief frontline staff about available start up support services so that they can promote it as a positive option, particularly for under represented groups. This should include the support available to social housing tenants via registered providers of social housing.	A paper outlining business and start-up support available has been circulated to the NRTs, with a view to this being shared with their network of economic partners. This will be updated on a regular basis. Blue Orchid will attend local SRF economic forums to ensure links with partners.

		Information is also being shared with Frontline Workers and in direct mail-outs to residents affected by housing benefit changes as part of a wider campaign to support residents affected by welfare reform who need to find (self-) employment to cover their housing costs.
6	To hold workshops and briefings to promote procurement opportunities and the Chest Procurement Portal.	Blue Orchid have confirmed that they actively promote the Chest to businesses they support. Promotion to other organisations to be undertaken.
7	To raise awareness among residents of start up support for people who want to set up co-operatives	Blue Orchid have a referral mechanism in place with the Cooperative Enterprise Hub. Links with other deliverers of business support to be confirmed.
8	That the Council raises awareness of registered providers of start up support available for tenants.	See recommendation 11
9	To request that Willow Park Housing Trust shares information about its enterprise support project with other registered providers via the Strategic Housing Partnership and offers support as appropriate for other registered housing providers to invest in start up support services.	Willow Park Enterprise Club attended the Strategic Housing Partnership (SHP) and provided information on the project and how Willow Park Housing supports the work. Blue Orchid to attend SHP Economy and Employment group meeting to facilitate joint work on start up support for their tenants. (See recommendation 11)
10	Blue Orchid to find out how Willow Park Enterprise Centre is delivering its Enterprise Club and discuss with MCC if/how this could be replicated in Library Business Information Points (BIPs) and Work Clubs in areas where BIPs do not exist.	Enterprise Clubs will be rolled out across the BIPs in November 2012. The plan is for a 6 weekly rolling programme in 6 BIPs which will include workshops and speakers, networking opportunities and info sharing to businesses and pre-starts. Blue Orchid have submitted a proposal to organise and facilitate the events. Enterprise Clubs will also have involvement from other business support organisations through the provision of workshops and speakers. Two successful events have now been held at Chorlton BIP. Links will be made with work clubs through awareness raising and workshops as required and support will be actively promoted in other libraries. Blue Orchid working with Willow Park to deliver joint activities.
11	To broker links between registered	Blue Orchid are delivering outreach in

	providers of housing and providers of support for business start ups to arrange outreach provision in each strategic regeneration framework area, where appropriate.	City South, Southways and Adactus housing offices. MCC has brokered links with the other main housing providers across the city and Blue Orchid are discussing outreach opportunities with them.
12	To also work with Sure Start Centres to investigate the feasibility of providing access points in the centres for advice about setting up a business. To also, when working with registered housing providers, broker links between registered housing providers and Sure Start Centres to encourage the linking of services, sharing resources and to ensure that the services are complementary.	EDU recently met with Children's Services /Transformation about use of Sure Start centres for outreach and info sharing. A forward strategy for Children's Centres is being developed. One consideration will be the sustainability of centres as community access centres that provide a range of co-located services. The following was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's Services to send information about the Children's Centres to EDU to match against current Work Clubs, Community Learning Centres, Enterprise Clubs and Careers Centres; - Children's Services to inform EDU about Children's Centres that wish to set up as (social) enterprises. EDU to refer to an appropriate start up provider. - Should Children's Centres collectively need a programme of enterprise support then EDU and the Third Sector Team to explore if this can be accommodated under existing contracts.
13	To encourage start up providers to promote premises and work space in enterprise and community centres to their clients	Detail on premises and workspace available in the SRF areas has been included in the Marketing and Engagement Plan and will be promoted by Blue Orchid. Once delivery has been finalised with the other providers, this will be promoted to them.
14	MCC to inform Blue Orchid of business premises in enterprise and community centres.	See recommendation 13
15	Blue Orchid to inform start up / post start clients of Business Rate incentives.	EDU to confirm business rates incentive offer and referral route with Business Rates/ City Policy teams and inform Blue Orchid
16	MCC to involve Blue Orchid in the High Street Innovation Fund pilot for start up / post starts seeking premises in Levenshulme, Longsight and	Blue Orchid have confirmed that they are keen to be involved in the project and can help identify potential clients to take up leases on empty units and

	Cheetham.	provide post-start support to eligible clients. There is a possible gap here in that Blue Orchid are not able to support purely retail businesses due to ERDF rules, and EDU/ NRTs are exploring other options to support retailers. Federation of Small Businesses have also confirmed that they will promote the High Street Innovation Fund to their members and help identify referrals. Franchising Works and Prince's Trust to be approached. EDU and City Centre Regeneration Team met with MMU to discuss opportunities to support fashion and design graduates to take on empty units.
17	To maximise the benefits of library resources for residents considering starting a business.	See recommendation 10 Blue Orchid have a regular programme of events in a number of libraries across the city. The BIPs are promoted to clients as a resource.
18	Use case studies to promote good practice on the Council's website	Case studies to be requested from Blue Orchid
19	To request that the Head of Regeneration and the Director of Children's Services explore possible benefits for Manchester of the 'Are You Ready' youth enterprise scheme in Rotherham.	EDU met with Rotherham Council, feedback is that 'Are You Ready' is a charged service for schools. MCC is therefore not in a position to promote this above any other charged service. MCC needs to understand the offer available through One Manchester, as this may offer a similar service (see below)
20	MCC to consider youth enterprise services (to be) delivered by One Education and the youth enterprise scheme funded/delivered by Tameside Council.	Children's Services to report back
21	That the Council makes community groups aware of start up support and networking opportunities.	NRTs to promote offer via Ward Coordination meetings, Provider Forums etc. Blue Orchid will send representatives to these meetings. Libraries actively promote the start-up support offer.
22	That the Council asks organisations who provide support for business start ups to promote and deliver networking opportunities to their clients, particularly strong existing networks within the city such as Wai Yin and	Local business support networks will be targeted through Blue Orchid's Marketing and Engagement Plan, including Wai Yin in the city centre. Blue Orchid's local engagement officers will be meeting with these groups to

	similar organisations which are well established with the city's minority communities.	discuss joint working and delivery opportunities.
23	To use the network of local libraries to set up Enterprise Clubs.	See recommendations 10 and 17
24	To improve pathways to enterprise when commissioning new capacity building support for voluntary and community organisations.	Commissioning of Capacity Building Support will take place in 2014, managed by the MCC Third Sector team. Blue Orchid have agreed to attend MACC team meetings to promote and update on their offer. MACC will refer VCS organisations who are interested in becoming social enterprises to Blue Orchid. Blue Orchid and MACC are planning to deliver a joint marketplace event for VCS who have the desire/ potential of becoming a social enterprise.
25	That the Council ensures residents are aware of sources of start up finance.	The various sources of finance are well promoted amongst providers of business support. The NEA offer is promoted by JCP advisors and other providers of employment support
26	That the Council investigates how links between organisations who provide support and those that provide finance can be strengthened to increase the number of business propositions that are ready for investment.	Blue Orchid and partners have referral mechanisms in place for the various finance providers. A meeting has been held between EDU, Manchester Credit Union (MCU) and Blue Orchid. MCU is developing a plan on business lending activity, which will be taken to the MCU Board. This will explore the current gaps in finance availability for start-ups and the viability of MCU plugging these gaps.
27	That the Council approach the Royal Bank of Scotland to investigate whether RBS would consider introducing ways to support people into enterprise and self-employment who do not qualify for public funding. To ask RBS to consider setting up a dedicated fund for this purpose.	Blue Orchid have had discussions with the Business Development Director at RBS regarding joint working on workshop delivery, client support and client referral. There are good relationships with local RBS Small Business units (as well as other banks). Regular meetings are held by Blue Orchid advisors with RBS small business managers and clients are referred between them on an informal basis where appropriate.
28	That the Council promotes links between providers of support for business start ups, new businesses and the Growth Hub	Blue Orchid and its partners have an agreed referral process in place with the Growth Hub. Other links are being made locally - such as between Blue

		Orchid, and Willow Park Enterprise Club and Bubble Enterprises
29	That the Council investigates what funding, including loans, for business start ups will be available from credit unions in future and promote its availability, particularly through the organisations that provide support for start up business.	See recommendation 26
30	That the Council raises awareness of the impact and opportunities of the internet to start up providers and clients.	Web marketing and social media will be a key topic for the Enterprise Clubs - the first event at Chorlton library included a workshop on website optimisation. MDDA attended the launch in Chorlton and will be offering a programme of support via Enterprise Clubs and BIPs for start-ups. MDDA are also working with Manchester Digital to explore support for digital start-ups, likely to start Autumn 2012. Blue Orchid are involved in the Go On Manchester campaign which will promote digital access to businesses.
31	That the Council continues to support Manchester Digital in working with schools, colleges and universities in developing the future digital workforce.	A Digital Skills Summit is being planned for early 2013 which will be a network of public and private sector organisations and will promote apprenticeships and link talent from schools with the digital sector. Work is ongoing as part of the Manchester Digital Strategy to promote IT in schools and support voluntary organisations that support digital skills.
32	That the Council continues to support newly started businesses to trade on line via MDDA.	See recommendation 30

4. Conclusion

The Business Start Up Task and Finish Group met during a time of uncertainty and fragmentation for business support both locally and nationally. Its aims were to investigate how MCC and its partners could both deliver and influence business support to ensure that all residents were able to access support to start a business and also to increase Manchester's enterprise figures. The introduction of the GM BSUS Programme means that there is now a mechanism to ensure that many of the recommendations of the group can be delivered and monitored in a coherent way across the city. Good progress has been made on delivering the recommendations to date. However, the scale of delivery of the programme in Manchester until June 2015 and MCC's ability to influence it in the city will depend on MCC budget availability to offer match funding to Blue Orchid beyond March 2013.

Appendix A

Final Report of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group Economy Scrutiny Committee, 23rd May 2012

Purpose of Report

This report presents the findings of the investigation undertaken by the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group into:

- The challenges that residents face when trying to start a business;
- The services and resources available to support them;
- The role of the Council in linking the two.

It also summarises some developments that have taken place in start up provision in Manchester since the Task and Finish Group last met.

The recommendations of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group relate to three types of action that the Council can take:

- Increasing the awareness that residents have of enterprise and business start up support that the Council does not directly control;
- Influencing partner organisations in the way that they deliver and target mainstream and discretionary services to meet the needs of Manchester residents;
- Direct interventions in areas where the Council can add value.

Recommendations are made for each of the main areas that the Group focused on:

7. Business Start Up Support: overview, research and developments
8. Barriers that may prevent residents (particularly from under represented groups) from starting a business
9. Innovation and good practice
10. What networks exist that residents can use to start and expand their business
11. Awareness of and access to appropriate finance
12. What threats and opportunities are provided by the internet

Recommendations

1. Business Start Up Support: overview, research and developments

Influencing partners	That the Council discusses with Job Centre Plus how variations in referrals to the New Enterprise Allowance scheme from different Job Centres could be addressed, with the aim of promoting the service fully across the city.
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2. Barriers that may prevent people (particularly from under-represented groups) from starting a business

Increasing awareness	To use the Council website to increase awareness of available start up support services.
Influencing partners	That the Council influences start up providers to deliver support that meets the needs of specific community groups, particularly those that are under represented in business start ups, and addresses the personal circumstances of residents.
Direct intervention	<p>To support networks for people wishing to start businesses, with particular focus on ensuring that people from disadvantaged groups have access to mentoring from people who have faced similar challenges and barriers that they have and overcome them. This is particularly important where rates of entrepreneurship are lowest in the city, for example Woodhouse Park and Moston and for under represented groups such as women and disabled residents.</p> <p>To brief frontline staff about available start up support services so that they can promote it as a positive option, particularly for under represented groups. This should include the support available to social housing tenants via registered providers of social housing.</p> <p>To hold workshops and briefings to promote procurement opportunities and the Chest Procurement Portal.</p>

3. Innovation and good practice

Increasing awareness	<p>To raise awareness among residents of start up support for people who want to set up co-operatives.</p> <p>That the Council raises awareness of registered providers of start up support available for tenants.</p>
Influencing partners	To request that Willow Park Housing Trust shares information about its enterprise support project with other registered providers via the Strategic Housing Partnership and offers support as appropriate for other registered housing providers to invest in start up support

	<p>services.</p> <p>To broker links between registered providers of housing and providers of support for business start ups to arrange outreach provision in each strategic regeneration framework area, where appropriate.</p> <p>To work with Sure Start Centres to investigate the feasibility of providing access points in the centres for advice about setting up a business. To also, when working with registered housing providers, broker links between registered housing providers and Sure Start Centres to encourage the linking of services, sharing resources and to ensure that the services are complementary. In considering setting up the advice points, to ensure that all potential safeguarding issues are considered and resolved.</p> <p>To encourage start up providers to promote premises and work space in enterprise and community centres to their clients.</p> <p>To encourage academies to introduce their pupils to enterprise and support them to access advice and information about starting a business.</p>
Direct intervention	<p>To maximise the benefits of library resources for residents considering starting a business.</p> <p>Use case studies to promote good practice on the Council's website.</p> <p>To request that the Head of Regeneration and the Director of Children's Services explore possible benefits for Manchester of the 'Are You Ready' youth enterprise scheme in Rotherham.</p>

4. What networks exist that residents can use to start and expand their businesses?

Increasing awareness	<p>That the Council makes community groups aware of start up support and networking opportunities.</p> <p>That the Council develops understanding of the informal and formal networks that people use when starting a business. To work to increase understanding and knowledge of the importance of this aspect of starting a business among organisations that support business start ups.</p>
Influencing partners	<p>That the Council asks organisations who provide support for business start ups to promote and deliver networking opportunities to their clients, particularly strong existing networks within the city for such as Wai Yin and similar organisations which are well established with the city's minority communities.</p>

Direct intervention	<p>To use the network of local libraries to set up Enterprise Clubs.</p> <p>To improve pathways to enterprise when commissioning new capacity building support for voluntary and community organisations.</p>
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5. Awareness of and access to appropriate finance

Increasing awareness	That the Council ensures residents are aware of sources of start up finance.
Influencing partners	<p>That the Council investigates how links between organisations who provide support and those that provide finance can be strengthened to increase the number of business propositions that are ready for investment.</p> <p>That the Council approach financial institutions operating in the city to investigate whether they would consider introducing ways to support people who do not have access to publicly funded business start up and support services, for example those who are not eligible for the New Enterprise Allowance or Manchester residents currently in paid employment who have the ability to set up their own business. To ask these institutions to consider setting up a dedicated fund for this purpose.</p> <p>That the Council promotes links between providers of support for business start ups, new businesses and the Growth Hub.</p>
Direct intervention	That the Council investigates what funding, including loans, for business start ups will be available from credit unions in future and promote its availability, particularly through the organisations that provide support for start up business.

6. Threats and opportunities are provided by the internet

Increasing awareness	That the Council raises awareness of the impact and opportunities of the internet to start up providers and clients.
Influencing partners	That the Council continues to support Manchester Digital in working with schools, colleges and universities in developing the future digital workforce.
Direct intervention	That the Council continues to support newly businesses to trade online via the Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA).

7. Conclusions

That the existing and emerging business start up services and resources address the priorities identified in the report by the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group.

That the Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitor how the recommendations made by the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group are taken forward.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The papers and minutes of the meetings of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group.

1. Introduction

1.1 Manchester has a strong history of enterprise and innovation and in recent years has undergone a period of economic success not seen since the industrial revolution. Although the proportion of residents who are self-employment and business survival rates in Manchester have increased, they still remain below national and regional averages.

1.2 A key challenge has been to ensure that people from all parts of society are able to benefit from a growing economy and that they do not face additional barriers as a result of their social situation, race or gender. Although this has always been important, it is increasingly crucial given the current economic climate.

1.3 There are many benefits to starting a business. On a personal level starting a business can be a way of becoming employed, potentially creating the type of employment that suits the individual, increasing independence and raising self-esteem. On an economic level, small businesses are responsible for creating a significant proportion of new jobs and have a vital role in creating a healthy local economy and reducing the burden on the welfare system. However, the transition from benefits to drawing a living wage from a business can be lengthy and is not always feasible, even with intensive support. The importance of providing quality business advice to residents who may not have role models, finance or support networks cannot be understated.

1.4 The provision available for people who wish to start a business is undergoing significant changes. In recent years, one of the main sources of start up support was the Intensive Start-up Support (ISUS) programme. This programme was funded by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and delivered in Manchester by Blue Orchid from June 2007 – December 2011 and by Economic Solutions in East Manchester from June 2007 – March 2009. The ISUS programme was targeted at regional priority groups (women, disabled people, BME groups, residents of deprived areas and social enterprises) and local priority groups (white males and those recently made redundant or threatened with redundancy).

1.5 The ISUS programme was extensive and successful, but drew to a close in December 2011 as a result of the closure of Regional Development Agencies and Business Links, along with the further rationalisation of Government funded business support. This means that there is significantly less funding for the programmes that replace ISUS and there is now a more fragmented offer of national programmes. These include:

- New Enterprise Allowance (NEA), for those who have been claiming Job Seekers Allowance between six and twelve months;
- Be the Boss, for former Armed Service personnel;
- Level 2 enterprise qualification funded by the Skills Funding Agency;
- A small scale generic National Start Up programme.

1.6 If Manchester is to ensure that these changes do not have a disproportionate effect on people who already face disadvantages in starting businesses, the onus is on sub-regional and local partners to secure significant amounts of competitive

funding to put into place a comprehensive business start up programme that can meet the demand and needs of all Manchester residents.

1.7 In July 2011, the Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which gave a brief overview of the above developments. The Committee felt that this was a subject which merited further investigation, with a particular focus on the barriers that some groups face in starting businesses and the ways in which the Council can support people who face challenges to overcome them. The Task and Finish Group met four times between December 2011 and February 2012.

1.8 Since the last meeting of the Group on 1 February 2012, a bidding round was announced for business start up support measures under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a deadline of the 2 March 2012. ERDF is only available at an intervention rate of up to 50% of total costs, therefore bidders had to secure match funding and were required to demonstrate Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) endorsement. The LEP has endorsed a partnership bid for (ERDF) funding led by Blue Orchid. Manchester City Council and the other nine Greater Manchester authorities have also endorsed the bid and are named delivery partners which will allow them to provide match funding, play a role in determining the targeting of provision and monitor delivery. If successful, this could result in a regional funding package worth between £14 and £18 million over three years. For Manchester this could lead to 540 additional new start ups over three years compared to the 720 under ISUS.

1.9 Manchester City Council has also offered support to a Greater Manchester-wide proposal for women developed by The Women's Organisation, subject to endorsement by the Greater Manchester LEP. If successful, this project would deliver up to 200 new businesses over a three year period.

1.10 Discussions have taken place between Manchester Solutions and Blue Orchid about the establishment of a formal partnership arrangement so that referrals can be made between the ERDF funded service, should it be approved, and the Greater Manchester Growth Hub. This is important in terms of ensuring that the right support is in place to "fast track" business start ups with growth potential.

2. Membership

2.1 The following Councillors were members of the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group:

- Councillor Kate Chappell
- Councillor Mark Clayton
- Councillor Mark Hackett
- Councillor Suzanne Richards (Chair)
- Councillor Matthew Strong

3. Objectives

3.1 In a difficult economic climate with fewer employment opportunities, more people will consider setting up their own business. We believe that it is therefore

crucial to ensure that nobody is unnecessarily prevented from setting up in self-employment, especially when new businesses are key to economic recovery. Our aim was to investigate the impact of current and future business start up support and related resources on Manchester residents, specifically those under-represented in self-employment.

3.2 The objectives that we identified at the outset of our investigation were as follows:

- To analyse research and management information identifying the barriers faced by different groups of people in starting up a business and to work with those groups to agree actions to address these barriers.
- To understand, influence and shape new and emerging start up delivery arrangements in Manchester, including integration with Council services, to increase take up by Manchester residents.
- To ensure that the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group do not incur expenditure by the City Council above the cost of time spent by staff in existing posts.

4. Key Lines of Enquiry

4.1 Lines of enquiry:

- What is the impact of changes in funding for business start ups in Manchester and how can the Council and its partners counter any negative effects?
- What support will there be for people who are not eligible for the New Enterprise Allowance Scheme (NEA) (e.g. if they have not been unemployed for 6 months)?
- What are the barriers which prevent people from starting businesses, and how can the Council and its partners work to assist people to overcome them?
- What start up provision and good practice is delivered by the voluntary and community sector and other organisations and how can the Council maximise the benefits for Manchester residents including by establishing links with national and sub-regional provision?
- What examples of good practices are there in other parts of the UK including Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) areas?
- How can the Council and its partners support people to use informal networks effectively, and to realise the opportunity to expand their businesses through overseas contacts?
- Are small loans available for new businesses on appropriate conditions, and is knowledge of the availability sufficiently widespread?

- What role will the Internet play in the future of small businesses and how can the Council and its partners support small businesses to make the most of opportunities available through the Internet.

4.2 The Task and Finish Group held four meetings to undertake investigations into these lines of enquiry:

Meeting Date	Focus
1 December 2011	Overview, research and developments
20 December 2011	Barriers
4 January 2012	Innovation and Good Practice Networks
1 February 2012	Access to Finance Access to the Internet

5. Overview, Research and Developments

Relevant key lines of enquiry

- **What is the impact of changes in funding for business starts in Manchester?**
- **How can the Council and its partners counter any negative effects?**
- **What support will there be for people who are not eligible for the New Enterprise Allowance Scheme (NEA)?**

5.1 At our first meeting the Interim Head of Regeneration provided an update on the current situation for supporting business start ups, including new programmes being introduced nationally and sub-regional proposals. The full impact of changes to funding and national provision still has to be ascertained. The outcome of bids for Regional Growth Funding and European Union funds have yet to be announced, so it remains unclear exactly what the provision in the future will be.

5.2 Blue Orchid presented information about the delivery of the Intensive Start Up Service (ISUS) in the Northwest and Manchester, including the clients, outputs and lessons learnt. Blue Orchid also announced plans to develop a partnership bid for ERDF funding to put into place a comprehensive start up offer with delivery likely to start in May or June 2012. With ISUS coming to an end in December 2011 this meant that there would be a gap in intensive support for some client groups between January and May 2012, particularly employed people, those at risk of redundancy and the short term unemployed. Since our last meeting, we have been informed that the Economic Development Unit commissioned Blue Orchid to deliver a limited start up service from January to March 2012 for those not eligible for other programmes.

5.3 Blue Orchid also provided us with an overview of the national New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) scheme, delivered by Blue Orchid in Greater Manchester. The NEA is aimed at residents who have been on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) for between six and twelve months. In addition to advice, training and mentoring support, clients

are entitled to a weekly allowance, which is equivalent to 100% JSA for the first thirteen weeks and 50% JSA for the second thirteen weeks. Clients are also entitled to a £1,000 loan under the NEA Loan Scheme, which is administered by Manchester Finance Solutions. Referrals are made to the scheme by Job Centre Plus and we were concerned to hear that there was significant variation in the number of referrals from different parts of the city.

5.4 The Centre for Enterprise, Manchester Metropolitan University, presented some key findings of research into the role of enterprise in regeneration and promoting social mobility. This was a relatively small scale piece of research into the New Entrepreneur Scholarship Scheme. Dr Julia Rouse emphasised that barriers and risks involved in starting businesses were more significant for disadvantaged groups but that differences between ethnic groups, gender and age may not be present in disadvantaged areas. She said that unless people were able to mobilise sufficient resources (financial and physical; knowledge and skills; social networks), medium term business survival rates and income were not good.

5.5 Three policy options were suggested by Dr Rouse to consider:

- Focus start up support on those with the most resources and lowest risk of failure.
- Promote better quality start ups by disadvantaged groups through more intensive support pre and post start including better preparedness for and access to procurement opportunities.
- Allow the market to sort out success and failure and provide support to manage the risk of business failure.

Given the reductions in public funding available to enhance the market offer, these options were key areas for us to consider.

Recommendation

That the Council discusses with Job Centre Plus how variations in referrals to the New Enterprise Allowance scheme from different Job Centres could be addressed, with the aim of promoting the service fully across the city.

6. Barriers

Relevant lines of enquiry:

- **What are the barriers which prevent people from starting businesses, and how can the Council and its partners work to assist people to overcome them?**

6.1 To investigate this line of enquiry, representatives from the following groups were invited to the meeting:

- BME community groups
- Women
- Disabled people
- Unemployed people and deprived communities

- Young people

6.2 We received a report of the Interim Head of Regeneration that outlined the barriers that different resident groups face when starting a business. The representatives of these resident groups added their views and experiences and offered suggestions for how some of the barriers could be overcome.

6.3 Some of the key barriers that groups face are:

- Lack of widespread knowledge among disadvantaged groups about available support.
- Isolation, a lack of confidence and low aspiration prevents some residents from considering self-employment and accessing support.
- Insufficient recognition of diversity within identified priority groups and a lack of understanding that different people within the groups face different barriers.
- Advice and support is not focused enough on the personal circumstances of individuals, for example the effect on benefits or information about additional support such as health and housing.
- Lack of access to peer mentoring and networking
- Low access to capital and other resource

6.4 There were two common themes in the discussions with representatives:

- Services delivering start up support should be designed in a way that breaks down the barriers identified, designed around the needs of individual groups.
- Networks were crucial in supporting people to overcome barriers. In particular, contact with other people who had experienced and overcome similar barriers was identified as extremely important.

6.5 One idea that we investigated further was how to make it easier for small and new businesses to apply for Council contracts. Lack of awareness of procurement opportunities and readiness in applying are key barriers to most start up businesses. We heard from the Council's Corporate Procurement department about the ways in which the Council makes its procurement processes more accessible to small businesses. These include relaxing qualification requirements for smaller contracts, workshops to explain how the Council makes its procurement decisions and a regional procurement portal called The Chest. This portal is used by most Northwest public authorities and has been developed for the publication of tender opportunities. Businesses can register on the portal for free to receive tender alerts and to procure online.

Recommendation

To use the Council website to increase awareness of available start up support services.

Recommendation

That the Council influences start up providers to deliver support that meets the needs of specific community groups, particularly those that are under represented in business start ups, and addressed the personal circumstances of residents.

Recommendations

To support networks for people wishing to start businesses, with particular focus on ensuring that people from disadvantaged groups have access to mentoring from people who have faced similar challenges and barriers that they have and overcome them. This is particularly important where rates of entrepreneurship are lowest in the city, for example Woodhouse Park and Moston and for under represented groups such as women and disabled residents.

To brief frontline staff about available start up support services so that they can promote it as a positive option, particularly for under-represented groups. This should include the support available to social housing tenants via Registered Providers.

That the Council maximises awareness of procurement opportunities and the Chest Procurement Portal, through holding workshops and briefings.

7. Innovation and Good Practice

Relevant lines of enquiry:

- **What start up provision and good practice is delivered by the voluntary and community sector and other organisations?**
- **How can the Council maximise the benefits for Manchester residents, such as by establishing links with national and sub-regional provision?**
- **What examples of good practice are there in other parts of the UK including Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) areas?**

7.1 We held a wide ranging discussion with different organisations about good business start up practices taking place in the city and across the country.

Inspire Centre and Bubble Enterprises

7.2 We held this meeting in the Levenshulme Inspire Centre, which is home to a business centre run by Bubble Enterprises. The centre provides access to desks, offices and meeting rooms as well as advice and support. Its location and link with the local community is encouraging people to get involved and learn more about enterprise and the services on offer.

Willow Park Housing Trust

7.3 Willow Park Housing Trust funds and delivers an enterprise support service for its tenants, including access to small grants and loans for basic equipment and, through the recently opened Enterprise Centre to managed office and work space. The representatives from Willow Park Housing Trust said the start up service was not expensive to run but had far reaching benefits. They stressed that that registered housing providers are well placed to run such schemes because their relationships

with tenants are built on mutual trust. Other large registered housing providers might wish to run or promote similar advice and support schemes but not necessarily to create a dedicated centre.

The Co-operative

7.4 The Co-operative Enterprise Hub is a nationwide scheme to encourage people to set up co-operatives. The scheme provides advice and training about starting a business, legal advice on the governance of co-operatives and financial support. The Co-operative Enterprise Hub aims to promote co-operatives as a viable alternative to the traditional business model and work with schools to encourage young people to consider this early in life. The Co-operative also offers tenancy of their unused buildings for co-operatives to use as business spaces for £1 a year.

The Enterprise Lab

7.5 The Enterprise Lab works nationally with young people to encourage them to set up businesses and develop the skills that will enable them to set up enterprises.

7.6 Good practice identified in this area was the 'Are You Ready' project, run and partly funded by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, which works with schools and colleges to promote youth enterprise. Manchester may be able to benefit from a similar project.

The Library Business Information Service

7.7 The Business Information Service, run by Manchester Library and Information Service, is the only start up information service that is directly delivered by the Council. Its resources include start up ideas and business planning tools, business directories, access to industry information. The service also hosts start up providers to deliver awareness, training and one-to-one sessions. Most resources are free and available online or from City Library and local libraries which makes it a valuable resource for people from disadvantaged groups.

7.8 We would like the feasibility of locating points at which people could access advice on starting businesses in Sure Start Centres to be investigated. This would reach a significant number of mothers who might not otherwise be able to access advice. If access to advice was introduced to Sure Start Centres, the advice available should be tailored to the kind of self-employment women with young children could do, with a focus on flexibility of working hours and location. In considering the feasibility of this, it should be ensured that any safeguarding issues are identified and resolved. This could be linked to the work with registered providers of social housing on enterprise projects. For example, through sharing locations and resources, or sharing information so that people are directed to the service that is most suited to their needs.

Recommendations

To raise awareness among residents of start up support for people who want to set up co-operatives.

That the Council raises awareness of registered providers of start up support available for tenants.

Recommendations

To request that Willow Park Housing Trust shares information about its enterprise support project with other registered providers via the Strategic Housing Partnership and offers support as appropriate for other registered housing providers to invest in start up support services.

To broker links between registered housing providers and start up providers to arrange outreach provision in each strategic regeneration framework area, where appropriate.

To work with Sure Start Centres to investigate the feasibility of providing access points in the centres for advice about setting up a business. To also, when working with registered housing providers, broker links between registered housing providers and Sure Start Centres to encourage the linking of services, sharing resources and to ensure that the services are complementary. In considering setting up the advice points, to ensure that all potential safeguarding issues are considered and resolved.

To encourage start up providers to promote premises and work space in enterprise and community centres to their clients.

To encourage academies to introduce their pupils to enterprise and support them to access advice and information about starting a business.

Recommendations

To maximise the benefits of library resources for residents considering starting a business.

Use case studies to promote good practice on the Council's website.

To request that the Head of Regeneration and the Director of Children's Services explore possible benefits for Manchester of the 'Are You Ready' youth enterprise scheme in Rotherham.

8. Networks

Relevant lines of enquiry:

- **How can the Council and its partners support people to use information networks effectively and to realise the opportunity to expand their businesses through overseas contacts?**

8.1 We received a report that outlined the importance of networks in helping disadvantaged groups to overcome barriers in starting up and growing their businesses.

8.2 The report highlighted that the Council funds a service called Manchester Community Central that builds capacity and procurement readiness of voluntary and community organisations, in effect a pathway to them setting up (social) businesses.

8.3 We heard about the role the Wai Yin Chinese Women Society plays in supporting links between businesses in Manchester and China. It fosters links between Chinese owned businesses and works closely with the Federation of Chinese Associations of Manchester and the Manchester Chinatown Business Association. The society also maintains strong links with businesses and government in China, particularly in Wuhan, which is twinned with Manchester. The centre also provides start up support to the Chinese community.

8.4 Similar networking organisations and opportunities exist for other communities in Manchester. One way of strengthening networks would be to set up Enterprise Clubs through Manchester Libraries. These could be based in local communities and be ways to for people interesting in setting up a business to meet each other and share expertise and information.

8.5 The importance of networks was repeatedly made clear to us throughout the investigation. Informal networks are particularly key to starting a business but difficult to quantify. The Council should develop its understanding of informal networks and the role they play and enhance the knowledge of this aspect of starting a business among organisations and formal networks that support business start ups.

Recommendation

That the Council makes community groups aware of start up support and networking opportunities.

That the Council develops understanding of the informal and formal networks that people use when starting a business. To work to increase understanding and knowledge of the importance of this aspect of starting a business among organisations that support business start ups.

Recommendation

That the Council asks start up providers to promote and deliver networking opportunities to start up clients, particularly making use of strong existing networks within the city for such as those of Wai Yin and similar organisations which are well established with minority communities.

Recommendations

To use the network of local libraries to set up Enterprise Clubs.

To improve pathways to enterprise when commissioning new capacity building

support for voluntary and community organisations.

9. Access to Finance

Relevant lines of enquiry:

- **Are small loans available for new businesses on appropriate conditions and is knowledge of the availability sufficiently widespread?**

9.1 We received a report on access to finance. The report and investigations identified having appropriate finance as the single most important aspect of starting and growing a successful business. We heard representations from a number of groups who are involved in this aspect of support for starting businesses.

Manchester Solutions – Access to finance

9.2 Manchester Solutions gave an overview of the Northwest Access to Finance Service it delivers after it transferred from Business Link Northwest in Autumn 2011. The service provides a range of direct finance solutions of which the New Enterprise Allowance Loan Scheme and the Small Business Loan Scheme are relevant to start up businesses. The A2F service also has in place well established referral arrangements with other finance providers including high street banks who will refer loan applicants they had to refuse.

Royal Bank of Scotland

9.3 The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) said that it and other banks were willing and able to provide business start up loans but that decisions about lending were based on the financial viability of the proposition. The RBS said that an increase in redundancies and shortage of paid employment has led to a rise in start up loan applications but that many lacked quality and viability, the exception being clients referred by start up providers such as Blue Orchid with whom referral arrangements exist.

South Manchester Credit Union

9.4 Traditionally credit unions were only able to lend to individuals with a 'common bond' with the union, which were usually geographical or occupational. From January 2012 the legal framework allows credit unions to lend to organisations such as community groups, companies, social enterprises, religious groups and local authorities. South Manchester Credit Union is exploring this opportunity with a view to provide an attractive alternative to traditional high street business loan funding.

Manchester Solutions – Business Growth Hub

9.5 The Business Growth Hub is a new regional service operational since November 2011, developed and funded by Manchester Solutions. It is aimed at businesses and start ups with the potential and ambition to grow. The model revolves around a central hub that provides a diagnostic and brokerage service and web based tools. Private and public sector Hub partners provide referrals and deliver a

range of advisory, consultancy and training services free of charge, subsidised or at commercial rates.

9.6 We welcome how keen the financial institutions we talked to are to support enterprise and lend money to suitable start-up ventures. We felt that some financial institutions operating in the city would be receptive to the idea of working with the Council and providers of start up support to address the funding gaps for people who are not eligible for funding from a particular start up support under the new criteria, for example those in employment who are at threat of redundancy or the very recently unemployed. We would like these institutions to consider setting up a fund dedicated to targeting these particular gaps.

Recommendation

That the Council ensures residents are aware of sources of start up finance.

Recommendations

That the Council investigates how links between organisations who provide support and those that provide finance can be strengthened to increase the number of business propositions that are ready for investment.

That the Council approach the financial institutions operating in the city to investigate whether they would consider introducing ways to support people into enterprise and self-employment who do not qualify for public funding. To ask these institutions to consider setting up a dedicated fund for this purpose.

That the Council promotes links between start up providers, new businesses and the Growth Hub.

Recommendations

That the Council investigates what start up and business loan funding will be available from credit unions in future and promote its availability, particularly via start up providers.

10. Access to the Internet

Relevant lines of enquiry:

- **What role will the internet play in the future of small businesses and how can the Council and its partners support small businesses to make the most of opportunities available through the internet?**

10.1 We heard from the Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA) about the changing impact and opportunities of the internet. The MDDA provides advice and training to help people and businesses trade online and exploit business opportunities that the internet provides for digital and other start ups. The MDDA manages Manchester Digital, the trading organisation for digital businesses and is

also responsible for developing and implementing the Digital Strategy for Greater Manchester.

10.2 The MDDA and Digital Manchester highlighted the importance of having a workforce with the creative and technical skills needed to continue to develop and grow leading edge digital businesses in Manchester. This is why Manchester Digital is working with schools, colleges and universities through the annual Digital Skills Summit and promoting technological creativity and code writing skills.

Recommendation

That the Council raises awareness of the impact and opportunities of the internet to start up providers and clients.

Recommendation

That the Council continues to support Manchester Digital in working with schools, colleges and universities in developing the future digital workforce.

Recommendations

That the Council continues to support newly businesses to trade on line via the Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA).

11. Conclusions

11.1 One of our key aims was to understand, influence and shape new and emerging business start up delivery arrangements in Manchester.

11.2 Our investigations have shown that there is a wide range of support and resources for residents starting their own business, including for residents who face barriers to accessing and benefitting fully from this support.

11.3 We have also found that that future business start up support in Manchester is likely to be more fragmented, at the same time there is a growing need to create new businesses and jobs.

11.4 The impact that this has on Manchester residents largely relies on the ability of Councils and partners in providing public investment, securing competitive funding and maximising benefits through efficiencies and economies of scale.

11.5 We recommend that these changes are implemented over the forthcoming months in a way which addresses the priorities identified through this investigation.

Recommendation

That the existing and emerging business start up services and resources address the priorities identified in the report by the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group.

Recommendation

That the Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitor how the recommendations made by the Business Start Up Task and Finish Group are taken forward.

12. Acknowledgements

The Business Start Up Task and Finish Group set out to gather information from a wide range of sources to form our recommendations, and would like to thank the following people for supporting our investigation:

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