

Communities Committee

Report title:	Update on the Business and Intellectual Property Centre
Date of meeting:	5 September 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe - Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The Business and Intellectual Property Centre supports new businesses to start up successfully and increases their chances of viability and sustainability. Business growth, particularly new business, is vital the prosperity of the Norfolk Economy, not only in terms of attracting inward investment, but also in providing employment for people.	

Executive summary

To advise on progress made with the British Library to develop and deliver a Norfolk based Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) within the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library. The BIPC is part of a national network of similar centres, providing specialist business information and resources for anyone thinking about self-employment, setting up, or growing a business.

While BIPC Norfolk was officially opened in October 2017, it has been in operation since 2014/15. It was the 10th offer of its kind in the UK, and the first in the Eastern Region.

Norfolk Library and Information Services is also working with external partners, such as Google to get more businesses online.

Recommendations:

Members are recommended to note the content of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In 2014/15 the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library entered a partnership relationship with the British Library and 10 other major city libraries to create a Business and Intellectual Property network across England modelled on the British Library's flagship Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC). The BIPC is a business and innovation advice centre which provides support to small businesses, inventors and entrepreneurs. BIPC Norfolk was officially launched in October 2017 at an event funded by the British Library and supported by local businesses.
- 1.2. In 2017 the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library also became a member of the national network of Patent Libraries (PATLIB) offering intellectual property advice and information to support business growth. PATLIB advisers are also available at Great Yarmouth, Thetford and Kings Lynn Libraries.
- 1.3. BIPC Norfolk, based on the second floor of the library, is a dedicated space designed to support entrepreneurs and small businesses from that first spark of inspiration to launching, running and growing in business.
- 1.4. It has resources to enable entrepreneurs to research their initial ideas, reach new

customers, consider and research competitors and suppliers and to check whether their IP (Intellectual Property) is protected including – copyright, trademarks, designs and patents. Expert staff are on hand to guide people to the resources they need and the centre offers space to work and meet with others.

1.5. **Resources and facilities**

The Business & IP Centre is equipped to enable businesses to conduct their own research and offers PCs with office software, free access to the internet and study spaces as well as:

- Trade and company directories listing local, national and international businesses.
- Market Research reports.
- Current and back copies of several of the most popular business periodicals.
- Information on company and business law including Health & Safety at work.
- A comprehensive collection of business books available for reference and loan.

Key service offers include, help to:

- Target customers in specific business sectors.
- Research competitors.
- Research a product or service.
- Source a product.
- Perform statistical analysis on business sectors.
- Research grants available.
- Run financial status reports and credit checks on potential partners, customers and suppliers.
- Identify what protection may be appropriate for products and services and how to go about getting patents, trademarks, designs or copyright. Free patent and trade mark search advice is also available by arrangement.

1.6. Entrepreneurs can also attend workshops, networking events and one-to-one advice sessions in the Centre covering all areas of business – from self-employment and knowing your market to business planning.

More information about the BIPC Norfolk offer can be found at **Appendix 1**.

2. Evidence

2.1. A recent survey by the British Library indicates that using the BIPC gives people a better than average chance of success: on average, of those who had used a BIPC, only one in ten had failed after year three, compared with just under four in ten across the UK.

2.2. BIPC Norfolk makes a contribution to supporting economic growth in Norfolk and sustaining new businesses, offering information and advice and helping people to consider self-employment.

2.3. **In the year from April 2017 – March 2018**

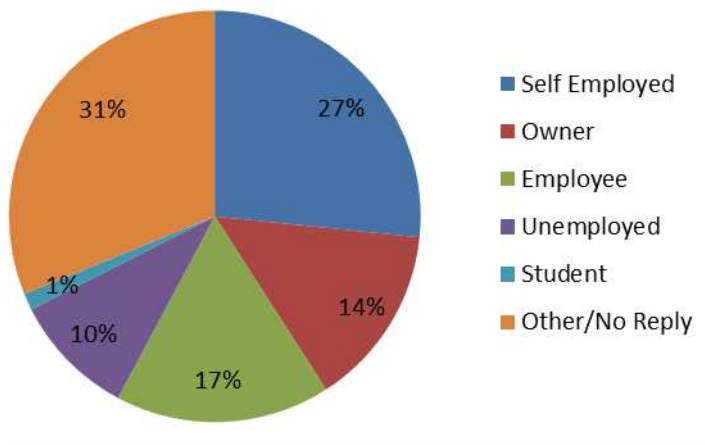
A total of **501** people attended an event or activity at BIPC Norfolk with **147** people receiving one to one advice

58% of clients were female

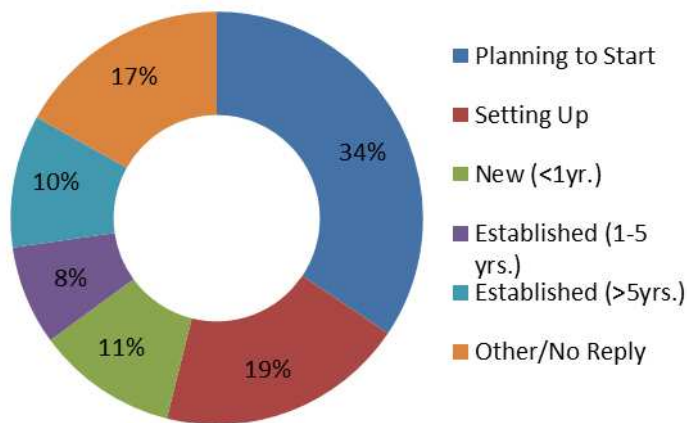
26% were aged between 16 and 34

And **12%** were BAME

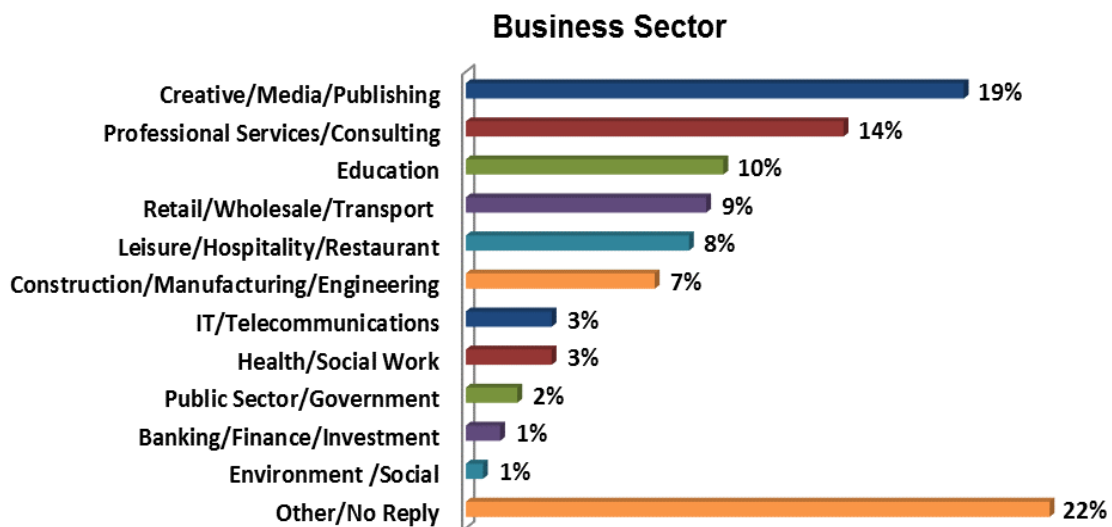
2.4. The employment status of clients was



2.5. Business Lifecycle



2.6.



2.7. In addition, Norfolk Library and Information Service has been working with Google to get more businesses online. There have been sessions in libraries across the county supporting micro businesses to fully understand the potential for growth and success by being more digitally focussed. **48** local businesses have already benefitted and have an increased awareness of online trading, marketing, and customer service, enabling them to remain competitive.

2.8. Over the past year BIPC Norfolk has developed new ways of contacting its audience, a regular e-newsletter is sent out monthly to over 1000 contacts and it has 1313 followers on Twitter.

2.9. BIPC Norfolk is able to deliver a wide ranging programme of activity to support the development of enterprise in Norfolk through the generosity of its partners.

Partners include:

- **ip21:** Intellectual Property Advice
- **New Anglia Growth Hub:** Growth advice.
- **Larking Gowan:** Business finance advice
- **Genix:** Business start-up and growth advice
- **Leathes Prior:** Legal advice
- **NWES:** Business start-up and growth advice
- **Norfolk Knowledge:** (UEA Business School): Spotlight business courses
- **Women into Business:** women start ups
- **Content Connective:** Spotlight business courses

2.10. Feedback from Users:

“(BIPC Norfolk) supported me with ideas and filled me with confidence and enthusiasm to go ahead and expand”

“I regularly make use of the free databases such as Cobra where I research ideas and find out more about marketing trends in the sector I am interested in. It is really invaluable and has given me lots of information to get going”

‘Very helpful and informative, with good suggestions on how to take the idea forward’

“Feeling in a safe place to share my concerns and confusions about my enterprise idea. Very motivating!”

“The awesome content - positive message - amazing women sharing experiences + support. Confidence to take the next step.”

Lorraine Finch – owner of LF Conservation and Preservation based in Great Yarmouth which provides conservation and preservation of archives, film, sound and photography to institutions and individuals said

“I attended a Genix business advice session as I’ve been considering diversifying into providing conservation training courses as well as events encouraging young people to pursue careers in the field. We went over my list of potential courses and it was really useful to have positive feedback and reassurance that I was on the right track.

I’m also booked on to the upcoming ‘Spotlight: Social Media for Business’ course as I’d love to know how to make more of my social media marketing. I’m particularly interested in finding out whether Instagram will be suitable for my business.”

2.11. Evaluation

An evaluation of the economic impact of BIPC Norfolk was undertaken in 2015/16 as part of the British Library partnership process. BIPC Norfolk continues to deliver the same services. Highlights from the evaluation can be found at Appendix 2.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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