

Economic Development Sub-Committee

Item No.....

Report title:	Norfolk Library Information Service (NLIS) support to business
Date of meeting:	24 November 2016
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe - Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The Norfolk Library and Information Service (NLIS) plays an integral part in enhancing and improving the quality of life across all communities in the County, through the wide range of services it offers. The Business Library, which is part of the NLIS, and is based in the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, has expanded its role in the recent past, working in partnership with the Economic Development and Strategy Group and the New Anglia LEP to support Norfolk's business community to grow and succeed.	

Executive summary

In recent years, the Business Library, in partnership with the Economic Development and Strategy Group, has increased the support it offers to pre start up, start-up and established businesses. This includes the provision of workshops, masterclasses, one to one sessions and improved accessibility to intellectual property advice. Working with and complementary to the New Anglia LEP Growth programme, the Business Library aims to help make business support in the County simplified and accessible for all, using its unique place in the community in which to do so.

The Business Library is now looking to implement additional projects, in partnership with the Economic Development and Strategy Group, that would help to develop its current services as well as providing more targeted support.

Recommendation

Members are requested to support the ongoing and additional work by the Business Library in partnership with the Economic Development Team

1.0 Proposal

1.1 Business start-up support

- 1.2 The Business Library, working with the Economic Development team using existing budgetary provision, plans to support the two projects described below:

1.3 The Economic Development team will provide £7,650 in order for the Business Library to continue its current business start-up programme, currently provided by Genix, between April 2017 and March 2018. This will include:

1. Ten business training courses on a range of business subjects. (for up to 16 people per course)
2. Fortnightly one to one business advice days
3. A free to attend seminar on a subject to be decided aimed at attracting approx. 50 businesses.
4. The promotion of other online business courses.
5. The production of promotional literature.

This funding will allow the Business Library to continue a programme of business support from April 2017.

Without Council funding, the Business Library will not be able to provide a full business start-up programme. There is a possibility that one to ones could continue to be provided but not business training courses, the seminar or printed literature.

1.4 There will also be local events aimed at women starting and growing businesses in the area, through the provision of £11,500 which will include:

- A high-profile launch event - to raise awareness and offer women a chance to taste what's on offer before signing up for a more intensive start up course. (50 women attendees)
- 8 x three hour sessions about starting up a business (for up to 16 women)
- 1-1 interviews to help participants to make the most of the programme.
- Specialist advice sessions (for up to 32 women)
- Growth coaching sessions at the end of the course to help delegates move forward with confidence. (for up to 16 woman)
- Online peer-support forum
- Childcare support for 3 women

The programme will be targeted at women who are unemployed, inactive or under-active economically.

1.5 Members are requested to support the ongoing work by the Business Library in partnership with Economic Development.

2.0 Current Activity and Background

2.1 The proposals build on current activity, which is summarised in this section for information and provides evidence to support the case to continue providing business support.

2.2 The Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Business Library has become a key provider of business start-up support over the last few years, using its unique

position as an accessible and trusted resource for information, to offer a range of services aimed at encouraging local economic growth.

- 2.3 Integral to this has been the Enterprising Libraries programme, led by DCLG, Arts Council England and the British Library. The aim of which was to implement business start-up and intellectual property advice based on a successful model developed by the British Library.
- 2.4 In 2013, Norwich, was amongst 10 city libraries to be awarded a share of £450,000 to implement aspects of this model which included free workshops, events and one to one advice delivered by information specialists and business experts. Appendix A shows the economic impact Analysis of the programme
- 2.5 Since then, the Library has built on the success of the Enterprising Libraries programme by working with local partners to continue its offer of business start-up support. This saw the Council provide £5,000, from the economic development budget, to the Library to support business start-up provision between September 2015 and November 2016.
- 2.6 This support was delivered by Genix, part of the Menta group and encompassed 1-2-1 support, workshops, masterclasses and networking.
 - a. Nine business training courses (max 14 people per course) – **to date 93 people have attended**
 - b. Fortnightly one to one business support sessions – **to date 40 people have attended**
 - c. 500 printed copies of the catalogue promoting Genix's online business courses.
 - d. Genix events brochure

Feedback from attendees includes:

- a. *Incredible. Gained so much from the tutor."*
- b. *"Really useful course – re-motivated me/reassured me about our sales process."*
- c. *"Exceeded my expectations – things I hadn't even considered."*
- d. *"Useful practical and proven techniques*
- e. *"Lots of ideas that I hadn't thought of were covered."*

- 2.7 The Library also works in partnership working with the New Anglia Growth Hub, enabling it to double the impact of its one to one advice sessions. To date, over 70 one to ones have been provided.
- 2.8 This has enabled the Business Library to build its reputation and has been able to attract and implement new initiatives. These are shown in Appendix B

- 2.9 Of particular note is the Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC), which when fully operational will build on its existing service to provide a dedicated service for both aspiring and entrepreneurs in the area to take advantage of free intellectual property and business information and expertise.
- 2.10 Becoming a BIPC is a major addition to the Library's business support offer and gives it a unique status within the East of England, as the next nearest centre is the British Library in London. To reflect the strength of this offer, the Business Library now promotes itself as the 'Business and IP Centre, Norfolk'
- 2.11 Further evidence of the success of the BIPC model is shown in appendix B.
- 2.12 Although the Business Library has not previously supported or run women only business support programmes, there is strong evidence of demand for this type of activity and this is also shown in appendix B

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The proposed projects under Section 1 will require £19,150 which is set aside within the Economic Development and Strategy budget for business support activity.

4.0 Conclusion

It is an exciting time for the Business Library; it has grown significantly over the last few years, fuelled by the Enterprising Libraries initiative and subsequent BIPC model roll out to satellite hubs across the UK. This, combined with a complementary programme of business start-up and growth support in partnership with the Council and the New Anglia Growth Hub, has enabled the Library to build up a more comprehensive and innovative offer, helping it to become a 'go to' and trusted place for business advice and support. Members now have the opportunity to help extend and enhance this by supporting further projects that provide targeted support to clients across Norfolk, thus helping to grow the county's economy.

Officer Contact

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

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Economic Impact Analysis of the Enterprising Libraries Programme,

The analysis, conducted in March 2015, shows that:

- 1,692 new businesses were created along with 4,178 jobs
- £38m GVA created - a payback of £4.50 for every £1 of public money spent
- 91% of users were satisfied with the services on offer
- 47% of users were female; 26% were black, Asian or minority ethnic;
- 25% were unemployed or had been made redundant

Specific outputs captured for the Norwich programme show that:

- 56% of users were female; 11% were black, Asian or minority ethnic
- 32% of users were employed, 10% were unemployed
- Users wanted to start businesses from a wide range of sectors with creative/media the highest at 24% followed by education at 15% and professional services at 13%.
- 58% of users were in the earliest stages of business development, either planning or in the process of setting up a business.

Business Library Initiatives

In the Spotlight – a series of talks and workshops delivered at the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library with a wide range of partners from the local business, business advisory and academic communities.

COBRA workshops – (complete business reference advisor) this is an online service that helps users navigate legal, employment, tax and start up issues.

Google Digital Garage - This offers free courses for businesses on everything from search to social media, through the Business Library.

Partnership working – to deliver events, promote compatible services and support other local business initiatives e.g. with UEA Enterprise Centre, Norwich Lanes, Norwich University of the Arts, Global Entrepreneurship Week.

PATLIB (Patent Library) status – The Business Library hopes to confirm this status in November 2016. This means that it will be able to give advice and signposting about protecting Intellectual property by Trade Mark, Registered design, Copyright or Patent, and carry out basic IP searches for the public. (e.g. for a patent number, an applicant's or inventor's name, or the legal status of an application). Explanatory information or comments about the search results may be provided with the search reports.

The Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) model - The model provides business support and IP advice and has proved so successful in other major city centre locations that it is has been rolled out to satellite hubs, including Norwich.

Proven benefits of the Business and IP Centre National Network, as demonstrated by the Enterprising Libraries Case Study published on gov.uk include that they:

- 1) Take advantage of existing assets in central city locations, thereby providing better value for money compared with many other business support programmes.
- 2) Leverage libraries' unique position as trusted and accessible places, which have experience in serving diverse and disadvantaged audiences
- 3) Can act at the front door to business support and help to simplify the complex landscape, playing an important role in 'Growth Hubs'
- 4) Provide economic of scale and makes the most of shared resources and expertise
- 5) Enable the delivery of much greater social and economic impact than any one library could achieve on its own
- 6) Support the government's national and local growth agenda

The Case for Women Only Business Support

The choice of targeted female-focussed business support is important to women. The National Council of Graduate Enterprise (NCGE) reports that 98% of women chose to participate in their Women's Flying Start Programme because it was women-only. The number of women accessing the NCGE's Flying Start programme increased by 800% when a women-only option was introduced. Similarly 98% of women involved in the pioneering Enterprising Women initiative said women specific support was either important or very important to them. (Enterprising Women Evaluation and Research Report 2007).

It is well-established that businesses that receive effective business training and support when they start are more likely to do better. Research on the long-term impact of business support (Business Link) has found that businesses that received intensive assistance had almost twice the annual growth rate of those that had received no assistance. (Drews & Hart, ERC 2015). However as the above research suggests, the mainstream model of transactional expert-led business support connects less well with women. .

Prowess Norfolk ran a women only business support programme in 2014 and 2015 and received high demand. The organisation ran one day start-up boot camps for women looking to start or in the early stage of a new business. The first event attracted over 100 women, the second 90. Similarly Prowess has previously recruited 42 women onto their 'Flourish' programme, designed to help women in early stage businesses which ran after the boot camps.