



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	BITES (Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions) Programme
Date:	9 June 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

Relevant Background Information

The BITES (Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions) Programme was piloted in 2007 by Economic Development Unit in conjunction with Waste Management Unit. It was designed to promote business sustainability and competitiveness by helping participating companies introduce environmental management policies, reduce environmental liabilities and enhance compliance with environmental regulations. Cost savings were identified for the participant businesses of an average of 1% of their turnover to a maximum of £22,000 for one of the participating organisations.

Key Issues

Economic Initiatives and Waste Management have partnered again to develop and manage the second phase of BITES. This was approved by the Development Committee in May 2009. Following a competitive tendering process, Mabbett & Associates Environmental Consultants were commissioned to deliver the programme. Twelve local businesses were recruited – a combination of small and larger businesses, none of which were active Invest NI clients.

The participants are currently completing the workshop phase of the programme. This comprises a series of workshop-based training, supported by site visits to appropriate locations, on issues such as:

- Solid waste management
- Water management
- Energy management
- Purchasing and transport management
- Environmental management systems.

Participants will also receive 1-2-1 mentoring support to help them address these

specific challenges in their own locations. On completion of the programme, they will become IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) accredited. This is a useful tool in that it not only helps them look at ways of improving their environmental performance but also their economic performance by reducing their overheads. It also gives them the edge in public sector tendering where good environmental practice is encouraged and promoted.

The tender awarded to Mabbetts was for the delivery of one programme, with the option for an additional two phases, subject to satisfactory performance. While the programme is still in the delivery phase, initial feedback from the participants has been extremely positive. They have confirmed that they have seen significant benefit in their environmental performance and have identified cost savings which they are in the process of implementing. The mentoring phase of the programme will conclude in August 2010 and final reports on the immediate and longer-term outcome targets for each company will be presented.

There have already been a number of enquiries regarding a future phase of the programme. It is proposed that, following a complete evaluation and subject to satisfactory performance, approval is given to undertake another wave of the BITES programme. All appropriate approvals will be sought from Legal Services Department and Procurement Unit.

It is proposed that some amendments to the programme may be negotiated in order to increase its effectiveness and to gain additional fee income from participants.

Resource Implications

The cost per phase of delivery of the programme is £40,000. The Waste Management Unit provides a contribution towards these costs of £10,000 per phase while participant contributions in the last phase amounted to around £3,000. We have also made an application to the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's European Programmes branch to receive up to 50% match funding for the programme.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to a resource allocation of up to £27,000 towards another BITES programme for 12 businesses, subject to maximising resources from other public and private income.

Decision Tracking

If recommendation is accepted, an update will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

Time frame: May 2011

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key Abbreviations

BITES – Business Improvements through Environmental Solutions