



Subject:	Belfast City Council Entrepreneurship Provision - Enterprising Britain Award
Date:	12 October 2016
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
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Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of the report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Update Members on the announcement of an Enterprising Britain Award for the Council’s Belfast Enterprise Academy which is a student entrepreneurship programme; and– Inform Members of current and planned initiatives aimed at supporting enterprise and entrepreneurship across the city, as part of the wider Belfast Agenda which sets an ambition to grow the number and quality of new business starts.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Note the various strands of work being delivered to support enterprise and entrepreneurship across the city;– Note that the Belfast Enterprise Academy has been highly commended in the Building Enterprise category of the Enterprising Britain Awards 2016;– Agree attendance by the Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (or nominee) and one officer at the awards ceremony which takes place in London in late October (date to be confirmed).
3.0	Main report

3.1	<p>Officers have been planning future programmes so to ensure a continuum of support to contribute to the Council’s goals under the <i>Growing the Economy</i> strand of the Belfast Agenda. Although still in formation, the draft targets within the Belfast Agenda set an aspiration to create 50,000 jobs and to support 5,000 new businesses over 15 years. Further definition of the targets is being undertaken regarding the type and quality of jobs to contribute to a longer-term sustainable local economy. Naturally, there will be a proportion of the target met by Foreign Direct Investment and key investment developments across the city. However, to ensure that we meet the Council’s objectives of a socially inclusive city, working to the anti-poverty agenda, it is important that equal priority is given to growing indigenous talent and new businesses. These ‘home-grown’ businesses will act as a catalyst for jobs within local communities and will contribute to the inclusive growth agenda.</p>
3.2	<p>In addition, the Council’s Employability and Skills Framework highlights key issues that enterprise and entrepreneurship activity can help address such as a generational culture of worklessness, poor career planning and low levels of confidence and innovation.</p>
3.3	<p>Currently, start-up rates in Belfast are significantly below regional and UK average. Council activity in this field has increased over the last two years, in line with the transfer of economic development functions from DETI/Invest NI to Councils through Local Government Reform in April 2015.</p>
3.4	<p>The Council delivers support to businesses across a range of stages of development.</p> <p>These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting Your Business • Growing Your Business • Investing in Belfast
3.5	<p>Under the “Starting a Business” strand of work, the Council delivers a range of programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-enterprise support initiatives to encourage persons to consider self-employment;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship as a career choice;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity to target under-represented groups (e.g. through partnership with Women in Business); - Graduate Entrepreneurship Programmes such as Belfast Enterprise Academy (referred to below); - Enterprise networking events via the very successful Belfast Entrepreneurs' Network; - Support to entrepreneurs starting their own business via the Council's Regional Start Initiative Programme (Go for It) and Go Social Programme (for social and co-operative enterprises); - Council Economic Development staff volunteer for Young Enterprise, attending schools and careers events to promote careers advice along with profiling the services of the Council.
3.6	<p>As we advance these programmes under the Belfast Agenda we are looking to further incentivise start up businesses and create more pop-up opportunities for entrepreneurs to test trade in vacant space or St George's Market.</p>
3.7	<p>One of the priority areas of work in recent years has been a focus on student enterprise. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report – widely acknowledged as the key benchmark for entrepreneurial activity – highlighted the potential of working with universities and colleges to encourage more high-level business starts to address the challenges with the City's productivity levels and low business birth rates.</p>
3.8	<p>The Belfast Enterprise Academy (BEA) is the primary support intervention in place to stimulate student entrepreneurship levels. The Academy has been successfully delivered over the last 7 years, working in partnership with Queen's University, Ulster University and Belfast Metropolitan College. The programme is open to any student living in the city, who is working towards a 3rd level qualification, with a viable business idea and a commitment to starting a business.</p>
3.9	<p>Through BEA, participants have access to pre-enterprise and start-up support to help them explore their business idea in more detail or generate new business ideas; gain best practice from existing innovative businesses and develop business skills by engaging with existing entrepreneurs and business networks.</p>
3.10	<p>The programme is made up of a series of enterprise workshops, tailored one to one</p>

	<p>support and best practice visits. To add value to the programme, each of the educational institutions provides complementary support for students to help fast-track their business ideas. This might include access to workspace or additional mentor support.</p>
3.11	<p>To date the key achievements of BEA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 165 students have been engaged through the programme – 60 new businesses have been created – 54 students have completed an optional accreditation resulting in an Open College Network Level 3 award in Business Development (a recent innovation to the programme) – 80 jobs are expected to be created.
3.12	<p>Given the success of the previous programmes, the Belfast Enterprise Academy is to be expanded this year, working with 50 would-be student businesses to help them bring forward their ideas into viable business concepts or indeed functioning businesses. This year's programme will get under way in the coming weeks.</p>
3.13	<p>The success of BEA has already been externally recognised through a number of awards and accolades. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A European Training Foundation (ETF) 3 star rating (the highest possible score) for International Best Practice - High Commendation in the Innovation in Education, Employment and Training for young people category at the MJ Local Government Awards earlier this year.
3.14	<p>Most recently, the BEA was entered under the "Building Enterprise" category of the Enterprising Britain Awards 2016. These are one of the prestigious awards schemes operating across the UK to honour and celebrate the best public or public/private sector partnership work to support business start and business growth. The awards are part of the UK Government's drive to increase entrepreneurial activity and they are managed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in conjunction with a range of public sector partners.</p>

3.15	The "Building Enterprise" award is one of only five award categories. It recognises the
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	<p>positive impact on a target audience of activities to support and promote entrepreneurship. Following submission of the entry in recent months, officers have recently been advised that the application for the BEA project has been awarded a high commendation. Each category identifies one overall winner and one highly commended. Therefore this achievement effectively places BEA as second in the UK for building enterprise.</p>
3.16	<p>Enterprising Britain is currently finalising arrangements for an awards ceremony to be held in late October in central London. It is proposed that the Council would be represented at the awards ceremony by the Chair of Committee or their nominee and one officer.</p>
3.17	<p><u>Finance & Implications</u></p> <p>Travel and accommodation costs associated with member and officer attendance at the Enterprise Britain Awards Ceremony will be met from existing Economic Development Unit budgets.</p>
3.18	<p><u>Equality & good relations implications</u></p> <p>Programmes have been designed to help remove barriers to participation and promote equality of opportunity.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	None