

Title of Report: Business Boost Update	Officer presenting: Head of Business Author: Business Development Manager
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

1.1 To provide members' with a progress update on Business Boost

2 Background

2.1 Members will be aware that council has secured funding from Invest NI and ERDF under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme (2014-2020) to deliver the Business Boost Programme. The Business Boost programme will be delivered over a 3 year period and seeks to provide direct mentoring support to enterprises who:

- Employ less than 50 staff
- Can demonstrate the ability to create at least 1 FT equivalent job
- Have an annual turnover less than €10million

2.2 The Business Boost programme aims to:

- Support creation of new sustainable jobs
- Help businesses to become more competitive in both indigenous and export markets
- Promote business growth and innovation (product & process)
- Provide support for priority sectors including: Advanced Manufacturing; Digital and Creative Industries; Life Sciences; Tourism and Culture) that is tailored to business need
- Act as a pipeline to Invest NI Client financial support – R&D funding; Innovation Vouchers; Trade Support

2.3 Business Boost commenced programme delivery in late September 2017 and has made the following progress towards achieving programme targets as per Letter of Offer requirements:

Programme Element	Target	Delivered	Comments
Recruitment No. of Participants	600	20	
Job Creation	400	87 FT; 7 PT	Represents job creation potential of the 20 businesses recruited to date over the next 3-5 years
Mentoring Days	1300	68 allocated or delivered	Emerging Issues: Selling skills; Accessing finance/ funding; Doing business outside NI; Digital
Workshops	20	2	28th September - Boston calling (16 participants) 9th November Love me Tender (20 participants)
Invest NI Referrals	30	1	

3 Key Issues

3.1 The job creation output for the programme re. 400 jobs is very ambitious. This is reflective of Invest NI's target of 1 job created per £1,000 of expenditure. Officers have sought to engage with local business development stakeholders such as North West Regional College, Ulster University, Enterprise North West, Strabane Enterprise Agency, Intertrade Ireland, Labour Relations Agency and Invest NI to support the delivery of Business Boost jobs targets.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR and Other Implications

4.1 The total value of the Business Boost Programme is £503,250 over the next 3 years

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members note content of report