

Title of Report: Business Innovation and Growth Programme	Officer Presenting: Head of Business Author: Business Development Manager
--	--

1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a progress update on the Business Innovation and Growth Programme (BIG).

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will previously be aware of the October 2019 paper (Ref BC143/19 Business Innovation and Growth), advising members of secured funding application from Invest NI and the European Regional Development Fund under the EU Investment for Growth & Jobs Programme (2014-2020) to deliver the BIG Programme. A letter of offer was received on 2nd April 2019.
- 2.2 BIG seeks to drive innovation and productivity of local businesses in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area through a series of interventions that aim to assist companies to become more competitive in both indigenous and export markets.
- 2.3 The programme will provide local businesses with the fundamental building blocks to transform customer experience, operational processes and business model ultimately resulting in commercial success and the ability to create new jobs. The BIG programme aims to:
- Support creation of new sustainable jobs in the council area
 - Act as a pipeline to Invest NI Client financial support for entrepreneurs and businesses with high growth potential
 - Promote business growth and innovation

- Provide support for priority sectors
- Provide accessible, need driven business support that is tailored to business requirements
- Engage with key business support stakeholders to develop a portfolio approach to business support in the council area, ensuring that there is no duplication of effort

2.4 The table below highlights BIG programme targets and a progress update to achieving these targets:

	Number of Mentoring Days/ Workshops delivered (Per MONTH)	Progress Update (as of 16th October)
Recruit No. Participants	840	54
Reasonable endeavors to create No. Jobs	550	66.5 jobs projected from the 54 recruited participants thus far
Quality referrals to Invest NI	30	None to date – too early
Deliver No. mentoring days	1935	77 days allocated to date
Deliver No. Digital Action Plans	450	29
No. Workshops	15	
Thematic Programmes 1.Procurement 2.Social Enterprise 3.Export	3	See section 2.5 “Selling to the public Sector” Thematic Programme planned for December 2020
No. Networking/Launch Events	4	

2.5 Thematic Programme: Selling to the Public Sector

The core aim of the Selling to the Public Sector Thematic Programme is to highlight how accessible public sector sales opportunities are for small businesses in Northern Ireland and to show participating businesses how to move from talking about targeting public sector customers to actually doing it.

What does the programme involve?

Workshop 1: Understanding the public sector landscape in NI [8 December: 10:00 – 12:00]

Workshop 2: Preparing to respond to a public sector quoting / tendering opportunity [19 January: 10:00 – 12:00]

Keeping focused on public sector opportunities following completion of the Programme. [2 February 2021: 10:00 – 12:00]

Access to bespoke one-to-one mentoring from an experienced consultant who will work with local businesses to gear them up to explore and target new business opportunities with public sector buyers. All participants will be entitled to 3 days one to one mentoring through the Programme.

This Programme will seek to recruit 20 participants.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The project commenced on 10th June 2020 and will close on 9th June 2024. The key deliverables will take place from September 2020 to 31st December 2022 (28 Months).

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications

- 4.1 The total value of the BIG Programme is £821,250 broken down as follows
 - Grant £657,000, (80%)
 - DCSDC match funding £164,250 (20%)

5 Recommendations

Members note the content of this report