

The Highland Council
Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee
17 August 2016

Agenda Item	15
Report No	PDI 49/16

Business Development: Growing Our Economy - Update

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report updates Members on the performance of the Council's business development services. It summarises the delivery of the Business Gateway over the first quarter of 2016, and gives details of how the Council's wider business development services have performed over the first quarter of 2016/17.

Members will be aware that the Business Gateway Service as well as the Council's services to businesses in the Highlands are now being delivered directly by the Development and Infrastructure Service. This report also sets out how we plan to report performance across all the Council's business development services, at a Highland and at an area level.

The delivery of the Business Gateway service is directly supportive of the Council's commitment to the Highland economy, and specifically helps prioritise and support the creation of jobs in Highland.

The Council, through its Access to Finance schemes, is committed to the delivery of business development services aimed at supporting small businesses and Highland entrepreneurs with advice and finance.

1. The Business Gateway Service

1.1 The Business Gateway service is the 'gateway to business expertise' for the following private and social enterprise customers:

- people thinking of starting up in business;
- new business start-ups;
- local businesses seeking a wide range of support; and
- Businesses with specific ambitions to grow.

1.2 It is a service that is free and is provided through a local network of business advisers based across Highland, a national website and a national contact and enquiry centre. The service is now being delivered directly by the Council, and we will also continue to deliver the service on behalf of Moray Council, under a shared service agreement.

1.3 A key rationale for the transfer of Business Gateway to local government in 2008, was the opportunity it afforded to improve links between other Council Services and Council business related activity, and the potential to add value to this activity for the benefit of business.

2. Highland Council Business Development Services

- 2.1 The decision to provide all the Council's business development services directly was taken to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the Council's business development services. Highland Opportunity Limited had previously undertaken this task, but the growing financial constraints being placed upon the Council meant that efficiencies had to be made in terms of service delivery. The transfer of the Business Gateway service, along with the transfer of the business development services previously delivered by Highland Opportunity Limited (HOL) on the Council's behalf, has enabled us to amalgamate all the Council's various business development services.
- 2.2 The Business Gateway Service will continue to be offered and promoted as the "one door" into an important portfolio of business interventions and business support.
- 2.3 At the same time, the re-design of the Council, combined with the establishment of a new area committee structure, has allowed the Service to examine how we best report activity, both at the pan-Highland level, and also at a local level. This report aims to ensure that we report performance at a Highland level, through a quarterly report to this Committee, and at a local level, with reports on area performance delivered regularly to Area Committees. It is proposed to report to the Area Committees on a twice yearly basis. A report to the Spring series of meetings (May, June) would review the previous year's performance, while the report to the Winter series of meetings (November, December), would look at reviewing performance over the last 6 months. **Appendix 1** gives details of the performance of all the various business development activities, with some of the key points highlighted below.
- 2.4 Business Gateway Quarter One Activity
- 2.4.1 Start-up Activity
The end of the first quarter has seen ninety businesses assisted to start up so far this financial year. Start-up workshops are proving popular, with ninety three attendees at the twelve workshops delivered during quarter one.
- 2.4.2 Growth Activity
Business Gateway continues to work with businesses with growth aspirations and, over the course of the first quarter of 2016, a total of seven businesses across a variety of sectors have been supported with the development of growth action plans. Furthermore, there has been a rise in the numbers of businesses moving into the growth pipeline, with two businesses accepted this quarter, equal to the total for the whole of 2015/2016. One business has been accepted into account management with HIE during the first quarter.
- 2.4.3 ERDF/Local Growth Accelerator Programme
The procurement process for the delivery of the Local Growth Accelerator Programme is now underway, and we hope to have the additional growth services available to businesses in the Highlands by the final quarter of the financial year. As has been reported previously, limited operations have continued since April 2015 in relation to the Graduate Placement Programme

and the delivery of HR Advice and further details are highlighted below and in the full quarterly report attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

2.4.4 Advice to Existing Businesses, serving local markets

Business Gateway continues to offer assistance to businesses in general across the Highlands. A total of 205 businesses have accessed advice during this quarter, well ahead of target.

2.5 Graduate Placement Programme

This programme offers businesses an opportunity to recruit a graduate for six to twelve months, to deliver a growth related project. The subsidy is up to 50% of the graduate's gross salary. Alongside this financial assistance, the businesses that participate in the programme can also benefit from utilising Business Gateway's team of advisers who can offer guidance on business plans all the way through to the recruitment process. There are nine grants to businesses currently underway with a further three businesses looking to recruit. Four of the projects underway are six month placements, the remaining five being for twelve months.

2.6 Employment Grants Scheme

Supported by the European Social Fund, an Employment Grant provides a wage subsidy to businesses that create permanent posts for people who are currently out of work. The grant subsidy is set at between 30-50% of the new recruit's wages, and can last for six to twelve months. In addition, businesses benefit from the assistance of Business Gateway's specialist recruitment advisors. Further information on performance this quarter is available at **Appendix 1**.

2.7 Tourism Development

2.7.1 As well as providing support to individual tourism businesses through Business Gateway, the Council also provides sector specific support to the tourism sector through the work of the Tourism and Film section. This support primarily takes the form of both advice and financial support to business groups who undertake activity to improve the tourism offering in their area. In 2016/17 the following destination organisations are receiving support:

- Venture North (Caithness & Sutherland)
- Visit Wester Ross
- Black Isle Tourism Team
- Destination Skye & Lochalsh9
- Lochaber Chamber of Commerce (Outdoor Capital of the UK)
- Visit Inverness Loch Ness (tourism BID)
- Cairngorms Business Partnership

Support is also being provided to a new Highland-wide group for the golf tourism sector – Golf Highland.

2.7.2 The form of support being provided to each Destination Organisation is defined in a Service Level Agreement but the exact content of these varies depending on

the scale of the group, its aspirations and local priorities. However some common elements are contained in all agreements, such as assisting tourism businesses in accessing individual business development opportunities, including the sharing of best practice as well as activity to keep businesses up to date on tourism developments and market intelligence. This is often delivered through local networking events and / or a local tourism conference organised by the Destination Organisation but digital methods such as e-newsletters and social media are increasingly used.

2.8 Access to Finance

The Access to Finance service, previously delivered by HOL on behalf of the Council, has now been fully assimilated into the Development and Infrastructure Service. Loan funding will be delivered under the Highland Opportunity Investments Limited (HOIL) banner. The full breakdown of activity is contained in the activity report attached however, to-date, there has been forty enquires received by the service. This suggests that there is good continuing awareness of the service following the recent change.

2.9 Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)

The Enterprise Europe Network has transferred to the direct management of the Council. It provides Highland businesses with a range of support aimed at encouraging them to consider internationalisation through the provision of a specialist advisory service. The recent referendum vote for leaving the European Union makes the services that the EEN deliver of particular relevance to Highland businesses, helping them to continue to trade successfully once the UK formally leaves the European Union. The Council is currently in negotiation with Scottish Enterprise with a view to the future funding of the service in the Highlands.

2.10 HR and Public Procurement Support

A limited service is currently being provided while we conclude the ERDF application process. Further details are available in the detailed Business Development Services report attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. It is important to note that businesses continue to receive assistance with HR issues as well as with public procurement support.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

The Business Gateway service is fully funded from the Development and Infrastructure Service revenue budget. Additional activity is funded from the Service's economic initiatives and employability funds, Highland Opportunity Investments Ltd, as well as loan finance from the European Regional Development and Social Funds.

3.2 Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Risk, Rural and Gaelic

There are no direct legal, equality, climate change/Carbon Clever, risk, rural or Gaelic implications directly arising from this report.

3.3 Legal/Risk

When securing external funding the Council is required in effect to enter into contractual agreements with the Scottish Government to ensure the funds are correctly utilised and accounted for. If this is not done correctly the Council will be financially at risk of not being able to reclaim the funds involved and reputationally at risk of being perceived as unable to manage public funds correctly.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

- note Business Development Service performance for the 1st Quarter of 2016; and
- approve reporting proposals, as outlined in section two of this report, for business development activity at a Highland and twice yearly at an Area level.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 28 July 2016

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Definitions:What is a growth company?

A company that has ambitions to grow its turnover by £100k over the next three years.

What is a growth pipeline company?

A company that has ambitions to grow its turnover by £200k, over the next three years.

What is Account Management?

A business that is in process of or will meet the turnover criteria for account management with HIE and is in a growth sector, defined as education, business services, food and drink, tourism, creative industries, energy and life sciences.

Note: For growth pipeline and account management, although the criteria for access to account management is growth in turnover of £200k over a three year period, the criteria differs in fragile areas, for certain sectors and business types, e.g. social enterprise and activity such as internationalisation.

What is meant by “existing businesses”?

An existing business is any local business that is seeking support whatever its growth aspirations. This will include businesses seeking support to survive in a challenging environment.



business development
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Quarter 1 Activity Report

April – June 2016

Quarter in Review

In this first quarter of 2016.17 the Business Gateway service in Highland has successfully been transferred to The Highland Council. Accordingly, the clients will not have noticed any change at the customer touchpoint. We continue to work in collaboration with Moray Council and our service Manager is responsible for the delivery of the service within the Moray area as part of the Service Level Agreement. Our clients continue to receive a high level of service and the recent progressive report from Business Gateway National also been very positive. Our delivery is client facing and our expertise is to engage with the many and varied businesses in the Highland area.

There have been a steady number of start-up and existing business enquiries during this period which has resulted in a number of conversions into new start-up businesses. Existing businesses continue to show growth aspirations with a number looking to employ people, take on new premises and develop new markets. We have been working with these businesses to help them achieve their growth ambitions through one to one advice and workshops. A number are working on business growth plans, with their advisers checking the viability of any development plans ahead of any implementation or further investment. We also continue to collaborate with our key stakeholders to ensure these businesses are supported at all stages in their development. Our relationship with Highland and Islands Enterprise continues to improve and grow with more companies preparing to go into accountant management in this first quarter than the whole of the last fiscal year.

Based on our start up statistics and on enquiries regarding expansion from existing businesses, particularly those looking for finance to fund their growth ambitions this quarter, a number of Business Gateway joint client business meetings have been held in conjunction with the Opportunity Funds Investment Manager, which have led to the successful securing of loan funds.

Underlying trends - based on business engagement evidence it would suggest that growth in the Inverness and Caithness areas is continuing to be evident across a range of different sectors. The North Coast 500 route has resulted in an increase in visitors to the Caithness, Sutherland and Ross-shire areas specifically. It continues to receive national and international publicity and now features in the marketing activity of businesses on the Route. Anecdotally, businesses are reporting that the season started a couple of weeks earlier than usual and it is hoped that this expansion of the season will continue. We are working with several businesses on (and adjoining) the Route to help them exploit this initiative through collaborative marketing and developing additional attractions and facilities.

In Lochaber the Rio Tinto Alcan threatened closure has hit the area hard; however it is beginning to look more positive with a buyer currently in negotiations. Almost in its own micro climate the Ross-shire economy is focused on oil and it continues to show signs of recession with a number of companies going into receivership. The number of rigs in Cromarty Firth is down to eight, with continued work being undertaken at Cromarty Firth Port Authority. There are a number of positives with the new landing facility at Cromarty Firth port being awarded a large contract for renewable energy and has taken delivery of part of the project with turbines that will be transported by road to the Corriemoillie site. There have also been a record number of cruise passengers with some 5,500 disembarking on one day in May.

Within Skye and Lochalsh discussions have taken place with local FSB on local business representational matters in relation to Highland Council and in addition the possibility of a small campaign to "Extend the Season". Related to season extension matters contacts have been maintained with the recently "revived / reformed" "Destination Skye & Lochalsh" development organisation. Discussions have also been held with Lochaber Chamber of Commerce regarding developments with the "Developing the Youth Workforce" project. It is likely that once project staff is recruited for this initiative there will be further engagement with the Chamber.

Inverness has been enjoying something of a development boom in recent times. Improved connectivity through Inverness Airport is helping to bring tourists and investment into the city. In the city centre, discussions are underway on how to maximise the tourist appeal of Inverness Castle, currently used by the Scottish Court Service. Other developments in the city centre include the £3.2m regeneration of Academy Street, one of Inverness's most historic streets, with a number of listed buildings. The £3bn dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness will further improve accessibility, as will Transport Scotland's Aberdeen to Inverness rail improvement programme, designed to significantly improve journey times and connectivity for both passenger and freight traffic at a cost of up to £500m.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise and BT are investing £146m in superfast broadband and work has also begun on Highland Council's £43m West Link road project, which has been in discussion for 40 years. The West Link project includes the relocation and redevelopment of the 18-hole Torvean Golf Course and an upgraded clubhouse and new all-weather pitch for Highland Rugby Club.

Highland Core	Q1	Y to D	Target	Progress	2015/16
Volume Start Ups Commenced Trading	85	85	252	34%	252
Higher Value Start Ups (PHVSU) engaged with	4	4	20	20%	24
High Value Start Ups - completed Action Plans for growth	1	1	10	10%	7
Attendees on Start-up Workshops	93	93	380	24%	317
Growth co.s engaged with Growth Action Plans	7	7	50	14%	51
Companies accepted into Growth Pipeline - HIE	2	2	2	100%	0
Companies accepted Into Account Management - HIE	1	1	1	100%	2
Businesses accessing local advisory services	205	205	500	41%	526
Highland LGAP	Q1	Y to D	Target	Progress	2015/16
Specialist Advice					
Unique businesses assisted one to one	36	36	60	60%	89
HR Advisory Service					
Businesses assisted with one to one advice	74	74	125	59%	228
No of jobs created	13	13	65	20%	69
Growth Workshops					
Half day workshops delivered	32	32	60	53%	33
Unique businesses assisted	0	0	215	0%	
Growth & Leadership Programmes					
Programmes per annum	0	0	2	0%	2
Business assisted	0	0	20	0%	
Regional Specific Entrepreneurial Support					
No. of businesses supported to grow substantially	0	0	5	0%	
Key Sector Entrepreneurial Support					
No of businesses supported	0	0	35	0%	
Graduate Placement Service					
Business Development plans developed	1	4	25	16%	6
Graduate Placement (eligibility assessed)	1	4	25	16%	6
Growth Advisory Service					
No of clients on growth workshops/seminars	0	0	350	0%	0
Business Base					
Businesses attending growth or key sector support	0	0	170	0%	0

Additional Measurements	Q1	Y to D	Target	Progress	2015/16
Local Events					
Local Events	3	3	10	30%	23
Local Events Delegates	203	203	110	185%	186
Enquiries					
Total Enquiries	495	495	1400	35%	1319
Repeat Enquiries	151	151	400	38%	401
Courses					
Start Up Courses	12	12	38	32%	39
Highland Recruitment/HR Total					
No. of Repeat Businesses Given Advice	74	74			228
No of New Jobs (First Time Employers)	4	4	25		25
No of New Jobs (Graduates)	3	3	25		6

Breakdown by Month

	Enquiries	Repeat Enquiries
April	174	52
May	163	48
June	158	43
Total	495	143

Business Gateway Performance

The performance tables for Highland are listed. As this is the first quarter this might give an indication of what we may see as we go through the year. We are unsure at this stage how Brexit may influence the numbers in the coming months. I am happy to report that the first quarter is fairly positive across the Highland area with the number of enquiries a healthy 495, 35% of target. Higher Value Start-Ups have been encouraging but are below our forecast at 20%; there are a number in the pipeline for quarter 2 which will bring us back to target. Our specialist advice and HR support continue to power ahead at 60% and 59% respectively. Our start-up workshops continue to be popular with over 90 attendees in quarter 1. Our digital workshops also continue to gather pace with over 150 attendees as the appetite for businesses to digitise their proposition continues to be a focus.

The target has already been reached for companies accepted into HIE growth pipeline and the account managed target has also been reached. The number of delegates at local events has surged with a number of useful events in the first quarter. It has been another good performance from the Business Gateway service in the Highlands.

Business Start Up

There were a total of 90 start ups recorded for the first quarter of 2016.17 representing a comprehensive range of sectors. From IT services, fashion, property services, photography to creative industries and dog grooming. Within the area of Sutherland there were eight new starts in this quarter, that's almost half the total starts for 2015/16. This has resulted in the creation of 12 jobs (including owners).

Some specific businesses/projects receiving assistance via Business Gateway have included Carnegie Whisky Cellars in Sutherland, working closely with Business Gateway we have also levered support for the business from the Prince's Trust.

A more complex business case included the Corrie Robertson / Glendale Tea room which represented intensive work to assist a client who had never run a business before and who had bought a business premises (a café) in conjunction with a residential premises. Both the house and Café had been empty for a number of years. The business planning process included the business plan & financials along with an introduction to a range of topics including – environmental health, procurement for the hospitality industry, licencing authorities, staff recruitment, building control, SEPA. We were also involved in securing debt funding for the business.

An interesting project is the Lochaber Cinema Group, who are progressing the idea of a community owned and run cinema in Fort William town centre. We are offering support with business planning as well as looking at various funding options to assist with capital costs

Business Growth

Our local area advisers are now meeting monthly with Highland and Islands Enterprise. The process includes a contact form where we share information on the businesses we are working with and if there are potential links, along with growth pipeline and account management discussions. This is now all recorded so that we can review the progress of the businesses. In this first quarter we have delivered more than the whole of the last financial year for growth pipeline and account management. We are now working actively on joint initiatives including Innovate Your Business. The lack of ERDF funding has stalled some of our activities that would have stimulated growth within businesses we have identified as having potential. Our own Local Growth Accelerator programme should be on line by quarter 4 and will be the platform to help these growing businesses. The Graduate Placement Programme has helped a number of our businesses develop their skills base and deliver specific projects within their business.

Specialist advice

Public Procurement support

In this last quarter eight businesses have been supported with specialist public procurement advice. The low numbers are due to the delay in ERDF funding which has meant the service has had to be delivered by the HR advisers on a reactive basis. In addition all (Senior) Area Business Managers are now also tooled-up to provide a basic advice service on how to find and tender for public contracts, allowing as much public tendering support as possible. We are continuing to work actively with other agencies supporting supplier events and encourage local businesses to tender for contracts.

This specialist advice service is well received by our clients. Many small suppliers who are good at what they do generally don't have the skills or resources to submit a tender proposal that reflects their level of expertise in their field. For example this quarter we have worked with a charity offering a service which they have provided for the Highland Council on an informal basis for some years now. This work has recently been formally tendered and the client came to us for support as they did not know where to start. With our support the client has made it onto the framework and now feels more confident to tender for future contracts.

Marketing/PR

This first quarter Business Gateway has had a good amount of visibility via local marketing activity, covering a broad mix of media and used a number of platforms to deliver visibility for the Business Gateway service in Highland:

Local activity

- There have been nine Q&A features in this quarter in Highland. These features are an in depth conversation as part of the publications editorial content with business owners that have been helped by Business Gateway and their pros and cons of running a business.
- Business Gateway featured heavily in the Scottish Provisional Press Group newspapers supplement Business Matters which showcased a number of our current clients.
- Social media – Business Gateway services continues to be very visible through the local Facebook pages for Ross-shire, Caithness, Lochaber, Skye, Inverness and Moray. We continue to build useful engagement and numbers within the social media stream. Our local approach can drill down to specific demographics within communities and can therefore produce a filtering process. Twitter continues to be useful to signpost workshops, events and partnership working. More recently we had very short notice on new Digital workshops being launched and through our Facebook database filled all of the spaces.
- Press ads – There has been some activity in this last quarter including a number of start-up ads in the local press but also a focus on growing businesses as we started the New Year. There has been full page advertising in the Executive and the Grapevine magazines.
- Business Gateway had information and enquiry stand at The PACE event organised with our partners SDS in Alness. This produced a very good turnout with some good enquiries for start-up businesses.
- Our Business Gateway surgeries in Aviemore, Kingussie, Newtonmore and Granton on Spey continue to be popular and generate significant enquiries.
- Xpo North, the creative industries event was a useful visibility vehicle for Business Gateway with some 1200 visitors at the event.
- New annual advertising contract signed by BG National with Inverness Airport over the next year with the following with 8 x digital screens and a 6 sheet at Inverness Airport. The artwork will stay the same for the moment (all calls to action are localised) but there will be a change with the new creative in the autumn.
- The Q2 BG National advertising plan has been approved and locally we have added a cross section of platforms, from football advertising LEDs Ross County and ICT live TV games to Bus backs radio.

Access to Finance

Enquiries and activities within Access to Finance service continues to be positive with 40 enquiries handled over the quarter. 20 of these have been completed with an on-going case load of 20 carried forward. Of those supported over £2.25 million of finance accessed for clients across a range of sectors including manufacturing, Tourism, Crafts & retail, fisheries and food and drink. Traditionally quarter 2 is quieter; due to summer break however enquiries ongoing have value from £15k to almost £1million. A number of referrals have been seen from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and a new positive relationship with a number of their team members established. Most positive has been the work of Business Gateway Managers who are actively working with clients of all scales and style. Relationships with banks and other funding sources continue to grow with an improved attitude towards lending being noted, pre Referendum.

BG Recruitment Support

HR support

This quarter has seen a steady number of HR enquiries. Due to the ERDF regulations the work of the recruitment advisers is now split differently. Emma Lawson (and Marianne Ross on her return from maternity leave) will be taking on more of the Highland Council's employability work as well as continuing to work with businesses requiring basic HR and recruitment queries, including employment contract templates, annual leave issues, recruitment processes. Pamela Looper will be focussing on ERDF funded activities for growth clients including Graduate Placements and in-depth (likely to be more than four) HR/Recruitment advice, for example - policies & procedures, people strategies etc.

The Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI) reopened at the start of April, with only 11 spaces for the whole of the Highland Council area, and was fully committed by mid-May. The SERI scheme will be reviewed in September/October and we have requested more places should there be a next round. The Highland Council's Employment Grant is available to micro businesses across the Highlands, which supports employment of those with significant barriers to employment and this includes disability, homeless, low skills, no work experience etc. This has enjoyed success across the Highland area with fifteen businesses supported with grant funding. We continue to engage with businesses to promote this scheme.

We have successfully streamlined the Graduate Placement Programme (GPP) application process and made it more user friendly and this is having a positive effect on the applications. The programme has also been advertised locally. The number of businesses interested in the programme has grown significantly this quarter resulting in four approved applications with another five in progress. The expectation is for the number of graduate placement applications to continue to increase in the next quarter. The success of the GPP in Highland has been the catalyst for it to be extended to Moray, where a maximum of five graduate placements will be available. The first application has already been submitted and is likely to be / has been approved early next quarter. The GPP pilot in Moray will be offered in collaboration with the Highland Council. The Highland Council will lead on this ERDF funded programme and facilitate payment of the grant claims. Moray Council will assess and administer the Moray placements with Business Gateway support. The Moray pilot will be reviewed at the end of the financial year. We will continue to promote the programme in the Highlands and Moray working with eligible businesses to support the development of business growth plans, assist with the application and provide business support and specialist advice where required.

The Business Gateway HR support service continues to receive referrals through the (senior) Area Business Managers, Moray Council, Skills Development Scotland, Jobcentre Plus, HIE and other organisations.

Snapshot of Activities and Events

April 2016

- “Innovate Your Business” Clinic with HIE – Dornoch
- Attendance at “Marine Harvest” Feed Plant Development Open day
- Promotion of FSB Scottish Parliamentary Election hustings event
- Promotion of Highland Council “Your Island Your cash” funding event for local third sector organisations
- Liaison activities with Lochaber Chamber of Commerce for “Developing Youth Work force” project
- Cruise ship briefing event in conjunction with Visit Scotland + Police Scotland

May 2016

- Golspie Gallery Opening (client business)
- Oil & Gas Industry PACE Event – Alness
- “Stronger Sutherland” Participatory Budget Event – Lairg
- Alternative Banking Event – Bonar Bridge
- Highland Council Service Review Meeting – Golspie
- Discussions with local FSB representative on possible “Extend the season” initiatives.
- Attendance at local LEADER event
- Regular e alerts for Cruise ship visits
- Preparation + submission of case studies to BG national for promotional purposes.

June 2016

- Assynt Client Clinics – Lochinver
- Stronger Sutherland Feedback Meeting – Golspie
- Heart of Sutherland Tourism Group - Lairg
- Meeting with Interface – Bonar Office
- Careers Fair with BG Ross-shire – Tain
- Meeting with HIE (with Investment Manager) - Helmsdale
- 2-Day Start Up Workshop - Kinlochbervie
- Prince’s Trust Meeting - Bonar Bridge
- Attendance at Skye Ward Form to discuss economic / business development matters with local councillors + inclusion of business development matters within “Community Planning” activities.
- BG representation at Xpo North
- Attendance at West Highland College “open afternoon” to discuss “curriculum development” in college courses + inclusion of entrepreneurial training in courses where possible and relevant.
- Tain Duthac Centre Jobs fair
- Meeting with Wester Ross Fisheries Trust

Snapshot of Business Gateway next quarter visibility:

- Case study on a Business Gateway client to coincide with the launch of the Press and Journal's Business Magazine 'Leader' in late July.
- HIE Cyber Programme Workshop: This workshop is for HIE/BG and business facing staff, to update on the Cyber Programme and new online toolkit - the Highland workshop will be held on 4 August at #hellodigital Inverness.
- In this quarter we intend to promote the HR support service – for both short queries and growth businesses. We are looking at getting a pension advisor company or IFA to fund the lunch and learn workshop. The main topic at the moment is auto enrolment for workplace pensions. We will also promote our services, the graduate placement programme and employment grant.
- We are actively looking at areas that we feel will benefit from surgeries, given the success in the Badenoch and Strathspey area.
- BG Workshop clinics – Start Your Own Business - Marketing & Promotion - Record Keeping. Also, regular presentations at workshops in our local areas with Business Gateway clients.
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise, monthly meeting to include Inner Moray Firth Updates
- Academy Street Action Group Meeting
- Promotion and recruitment of delegates for ongoing start up and growth training sessions
- Cruise ship e alert
- Liaison with relaunched "Destination Skye & Lochalsh" destination development organisation, together with possible follow up activities.
- Liaison with HIE and FSB regarding presentations and participation in September Skye Ward Forum that will be dedicated to economic development.
- Promotion and participation with "Atlas" – "Gather Connect Inspire" Event to creative industries sector.
- BG representation at Westminster Parliamentary Scottish Affairs committee – Impact of UK immigration policies on population and business development on the West Coast.

European Enterprise Network (EEN)

The Enterprise Europe Network exists to help small and medium sized companies (SMEs) in Europe to internationalise and make the most of opportunities in the single market. Enterprise Europe Scotland is a partner of this network and internationalisation services offered by the network are delivered by Highland Council. EEN Innovation services are delivered by HIE. The key internationalisation services available through the Enterprise Europe network are:

Access to the network: 3000 staff, 600 partners, 60 countries all able to assist with enquiries and finding the right business partner.

Advice and Information: on doing business in Europe such as EU legislation, policy, VAT and taxation in Europe. We can provide market information, country profiles, trade statistics and company lists.

Partner Search: a database with over 8000 live opportunities of companies looking for distributors, agents, joint ventures and suppliers, opportunity to publish profiles.

Events: information and brokerage events, scheduled 1-2-1 meetings often attached to large international trade fairs.

Voice on EU legislation: EEN can link companies into the European consultation process to have a say on shaping future legislation that affects business and feedback on proposals and initiatives.

Examples of recent enquiries:

- IT company looking for market information from across Europe as well as suppliers of MIS systems.
- Textile company looking for market information for the USA.
- Jeweller requesting contact information for potential partners/retailers in Denmark.
- Tourism business requesting information on brokerage events at international trade fairs.
- Business support organisation looking for information on EU labelling legislation.
- Fisheries sector company looking for distributors in Germany.
- Highland energy business seeking contacts for potential European partnerships.

Engagement with Stakeholders:

- Various meetings with HIE's internationalisation team

- Invited to speak at HIE/SDI's "Doing Business in Scandinavia" event on 18th April
- Invited to speak at SE/SDI's "Doing Business in Scandinavia" event on 19th April
- Invited to speak at HIE's "Preparing to Export" course on 25th May
- Invited to speak at HIE's "Doing Business in France" event on 7th June
- Various meetings with Inverness Chamber of Commerce
- Co-ordinated and organised "Reaching Customers Overseas" event in Aviemore on 5th May

Other significant activity:

Xpo North – the EEN team co-ordinated and organised a two-day brokerage event at Xpo North on 8th and 9th June. The event was open to all businesses in the area. 112 meetings were arranged, 22 of these meetings were trans-national.

Performance Statistics:

The following table shows actual delivery against targets for the first 18 months of the Enterprise Europe Network's current 24-month programme which runs from 1st January 2015 through to 31st December 2016. At this stage, we should have achieved 75% of the 2-year target.

TARGETS FOR 2015 AND 2016	TARGET	ACTUAL	%	NOTES
Regional/local events organised	8	10	125%	Shared with HIE
Participants in regional/local events	150	203	135%	Shared with HIE
SMEs/clients receiving individual advisory support	300	124	41%	
Brokerage events/company missions organised	4	14	350%	Shared consortium target
SMEs/clients in brokerage events/company mission	25	73	292%	Includes 46 H&I companies participating in Xpo north (shared consortium target)
Meetings at brokerage events/company	75	84	112%	
Partnership profiles produced	24	12	50%	
Expression of interests received by local companies	48	27	56%	
Exression of interests made by local companies	40	46	115%	
Clients involved in SME Feedback actions (with SE)	20	23	115%	Shared with SE
Achievements	22	1	5%	1 x PA. A few in the pipeline
Active contributions to Network activities	6	27	450%	
SMEs/clients using digital services prvided by the Network	3000	5635	188%	
Cooperation with local stakeholders	7	10	143%	Shared consortium target
Enquiries from EEN partners answered	30	40	133%	