

APPENDIX A

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Business Support and Engagement

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Business Support and Engagement
Link Officer/s:	Chris Renahan
Action Plan Agreed:	February 2021

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:	The Council raises awareness of the existing information system enabling current and prospective business owners to search for available property and land and ensures that those using this facility know where to go for further advice, guidance and support.
Responsibility:	Economic Development and Place Team
Date:	June 2021 (development of the inward investment site will then be ongoing)
Agreed Action:	<p>Development of a microsite as part of the Inward investment strategy to act as a one-stop-shop for business enquiries and self-serve functions for land and property searches.</p> <p>Engage with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to align with their approach to business support and develop a seamless approach to fulfilling enquiries and information sharing.</p> <p>Social media and online campaign to promote the inward investment strategy and associated branding.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of website hits. • Increase in the number of enquiries for property and land. • Increase in the number of business enquiries.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>Link to Microsite www.investstocktonontees.co.uk</p> <p>Appendix 1 – TCVA marketing and processing consent statement - Expression of Interest · TVCA Portal (powerappsportals.com) . If you fill in the form this info comes up at the bottom.</p> <p>Appendix 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of regular social media presence and on-going development of social media visuals to promote the Invest Stockton-on-Tees • Social Media post of business support sessions organised in partnership with TVCA

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<p>Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)</p>	<p>2 (On-Track) (work continues to further develop this offer)</p> <p>The microsite is completed but the Land and Property search is a feature that will be included on the full site, which is due to be completed May 2022.</p> <p>All data pre-dating July 2021 do not meet GDPR, so a data cleanse was carried out on the existing property search function (CRM system), meaning that any bench marking data prior to this date was not accurate.</p> <p>From data cleanse period 7th July 2021 until present a total of 255 property searches have been logged on the property system, these include a combination of self-searches using the online search engine and those input by Officers engaging with businesses.</p> <p>In addition, research has shown that websites promoting privately owned land and property are not updated regularly enough to reflect the recent demand in the market. Economic Development encourages all property enquiries to come directly to the team to ensure the business gets the most effective and up-to-date service, as the team links directly with agents that operate across the Borough.</p>																														
<p>Evidence of Impact (April 2022):</p>	<p>Total property enquiries – 255</p> <p>In addition, there has been 110 hits (Business enquiries logged onto the property system) from 7th July 2021 – present.</p> <p>Note: these do <u>not</u> include the total number of businesses supported via the Additional Restrictions Grant</p> <p>Microsite total number of users: 343 Total number of page views: 1300 Most viewed section is "a great place for business" Most users from UK</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 5%;"></th> <th style="width: 85%;">Country ▾</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">+ ↓ Users</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>United Kingdom</td><td style="text-align: center;">332</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>United States</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>(not set)</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>Canada</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>France</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>New Zealand</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>Spain</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>Ukraine</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>United Arab Emirates</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Country ▾	+ ↓ Users	1	United Kingdom	332	2	United States	4	3	(not set)	3	4	Canada	1	5	France	1	6	New Zealand	1	7	Spain	1	8	Ukraine	1	9	United Arab Emirates	1
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Recommendation 2:	The Council strengthens communication of its business support offer via dedicated social media platforms.
Responsibility:	Economic Development
Date:	June 2021
Agreed Action:	<p>Rebrand the 'Business Support' offer as part of the Inward investment strategy.</p> <p>Work with the Tees Valley Combined Authority and business support providers to establish a seamless approach to providing business support.</p> <p>Develop a social media strategy to identify key audiences/messages, targeted campaigns, frequency of posting, content, and appropriate social media platforms.</p> <p>Develop a dedicated social media presence for the Employment & Training Hub.</p> <p>Promote business grants and recovery support programmes.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in awareness - no. and reach of followers. • Increased engagement – no. of reposts/retweets/shares, replies and participants. How many people are participating, how often are they participating and in what forms are they participating? • Increase in website visits – no. of hits, website shares, clicks and conversions. • Increase in the number of business enquiries.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>Appendix 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example rebrand of business support offer • Example business support social-media post • Example Employment & Training Hub social-media post • Example Website and Social Media posts promoting grant schemes • Example of business recovery scheme residential weekend <p>Appendix 4 – Social Media Strategy for Invest Stockton Appendix 5 – Social Media for the E&T Hub</p>
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>1 (Fully Achieved)</p> <p>The Invest Stockton-on-Tees branding is used in all promotion to businesses and currently has accounts on Twitter and LinkedIn, as they are the two most popular social media channels used by businesses.</p> <p>Invest Stockton-on-Tees social media handles: Twitter: /InvestSOT LinkedIn: /InvestSOT</p> <p>The Stockton Employment & Training Hub (E&T) branding currently has accounts on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, with Instagram and Tik Tok coming soon.</p>

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	<p>Stockton-on-Tees Employment & Training Hub social media handles: Twitter: /SOTemployment LinkedIn: /SOTemployment Facebook: /StocktonEmploymentAndTraining</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	<p>ISOT LinkedIn page went live 19/07/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. new followers: 266 • No. post shares: 287 • No. post reactions i.e. likes: 812 • Total post views (impressions): 21,743 <p>ISOT Twitter page rebranded 19/07/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. new followers: 64 • No. profile views: 12,284 • Total post views (impressions): 80,134 • No. post likes: 541 • No. retweets: 318 <p>Stockton Employment & Training Hub (across all channels) April 2021 – Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total post reach - 101,555 • No. New Followers – 571 • No. post reactions i.e. likes: 4275

Recommendation 3:	A review of local business networks (including Stockton Business Forum), and how these can best operate in the current and post-pandemic environment, be undertaken.
Responsibility:	Economic Development
Date:	March 2021
Agreed Action:	<p>Mapping exercise to identify all business networks and forums across the Tees Valley and how/if they have continued to operate during Covid.</p> <p>Engage with members of those networks who have continued to operate to understand how they have adapted their model to support businesses.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for joint forums with other Local Authorities.</p> <p>Look at examples of best practice from other areas.</p> <p>Use social media to post surveys to collect further insights.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of attendees from Stockton and frequency of attendance. • Raise awareness of the different networks and highlight the benefits to businesses in Stockton. • Increased business satisfaction from those attending networks. • Use these networks to explore the needs of protected groups and identify any gaps where particular groups are not represented.

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Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>Appendix 6 – Mapping of business networks</p> <p>Appendix 7 – BAME business survey email</p>
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>1 (Fully Achieved) (work will continue to monitor and seek opportunities for joint working)</p> <p>Many business networks continued to meet during the pandemic, albeit online as opposed to in person. It was more important than ever for business to have an outlet to talk to each other to try to make sense of the challenges they were faced with. Moving these networks online allowed the businesses more flexibility to attend, giving them back the travel time that would have ordinarily been lost.</p> <p>Moving out of the pandemic businesses are now experiencing an increase in the number of events taking place, both online and in-person and the challenge now is for them to determine the value and relevance in these events and how they can manage their attendance moving forward.</p> <p>Work continues to explore the effectiveness of these networks and where there are still gaps that support specific sectors or those groups with protected characteristics.</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the ongoing challenges around GDPR, we are working with networks to establish information sharing agreements that will allow them to share details of attendees and frequency of attendance. • Details of the events has been added to the website and events are shared via social media - https://www.stockton.gov.uk/business-networks • Work is underway to carry out an evaluation of the success of events during the pandemic, to determine business satisfaction from those attending.

Recommendation 4:	Consideration be given around developing support for businesses which are run from home (e.g. encouragement of ‘co-working spaces’ where people who work on their own could come together to chat / brainstorm).
Responsibility:	Economic Development and Place Team
Date:	May 2021
Agreed Action:	<p>Mapping of existing ‘co-working’ provision across the Tees Valley.</p> <p>Signposting to existing provision of ‘co-working’ spaces.</p> <p>Work with Teesside University to develop opportunities within Fusion Hive and other sites for co-location and hot desking.</p> <p>Work with the Place Team to identify potential locations for ‘Multispace’ opportunities, to provide a mix of workspaces designed to support businesses that operate from home as well as encourage larger businesses to use them as collaboration space for ‘home workers’.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of businesses accessing shared workspace.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A successful business model that generates enough income to cover running costs.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>When the mapping exercise was carried out in early 2021, there was only two venues that offered Co-working space to businesses in the Tees Valley</p> <p>Enterprise Made Simple Co-Working Events, Middlesbrough (1) ems: co-working Facebook</p> <p>The Assembly Hall, Teesside University, Middlesbrough Home - The Assembly Hall, Victoria Building, Teesside University, Middlesbrough</p> <p>Best practice examples include: Spaces - Manchester (spacesworks.com) 2-Work Bank House Leeds Flexible Office Space</p> <p>Appendix 8 – Designs of new Co-working space in Digital House, developed in partnership with Teesside University to provide a pipeline for Fusion Hive</p> <p>Appendix 9 – Co-working membership fees developed in partnership with Teesside University</p>
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>1 (Fully Achieved)</p> <p>Digital House is a creative workspace at accommodates up to 13 businesses and has capacity for up to 6 co-working/hot-desks, plus additional informal breakout spaces.</p> <p>An internal and external redecoration of the building has been undertaken to make way for the new co-working space.</p> <p>Discussions are also underway with a 2Work, who have developed a co-working model that is currently based in Leeds and are now keen to expand into the Tees Valley, with Stockton being the preferred option.</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	<p>Until the Co-working Space at Digital House is operational, we won't be able to measure the impact. Completion is expected by June 2022.</p>

Recommendation 5:	There is an increased awareness and understanding of the business needs of groups with protected characteristics, particularly with regards the impact of COVID-19 on sectors that employ significant numbers of people from these groups (e.g. taxi drivers, hospitality).
Responsibility:	Economic Development Team
Date:	June 2021
Agreed Action:	Engage with the Federation of Small Businesses and Council's Community Engagement Team to identify groups that represent protected characteristics.

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	Explore with key focus groups to identify what specific support is needed, what already exists and look for gaps.
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of people engaged. An increased understanding of what can be to support these groups.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>Appendix 10 – Business Support programmes for those with protected characteristics</p> <p>Appendix 7 – BAME business survey email</p>
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>1 (Fully Achieved) (will continue to develop this further)</p> <p>The team has started to pull together a document that shows the various business support programmes available cross referenced against the 9 protected characteristics (this is a work in progress as the data changes daily). Most are very generic support activities so people with those protected characteristics would not be excluded from the support, but it may not be fit for purpose for their needs.</p> <p>We worked in partnership with TVCA who conducted a survey to understand the needs of businesses with protected characteristics and this was shared with the Community Engagement Team for their networks and the Fairer Stockton Co-ordinators.</p> <p>The team have also engaged with Cultures CIC Black History Youth Award (culturescic.wixsite.com), who are now working closely with the E&T Hub to build better community pathways for those with protected characteristics, in a range of projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultures CIC team have been making introductions between The Hub team and local places of worship, allowing us to reach those not as likely to directly enter The Hub for Advice. Looking at utilising these introductions to develop ‘Community Spokes’ allowing us to take The Hub directly into bustling community groups removing barriers and making the service accessible to all. Cultures CIC team now directly refers those with protected characteristics to The Hub team. Allowing us to offer 1-on-1 support where needed and improve chances of securing employment or starting a business for those furthest from the labour market. <p>The team has also been collaborating with Licensing who have identified a 30% reduction in the number of drivers operating, due to changing career paths due to covid. We are looking to develop a scheme that will attract new drivers into the sector and have been working closely with taxi operators to understand the challenges. The scheme will include a recruitment drive, training, reduced fees, and possible incentives to attract people.</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	Too early to evidence impact but positive strides have been made to gain an increased awareness and understanding of these groups have been impacted and what measures we can take to support them.

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Recommendation 6:	<p>The Council evaluates its existing retail support programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to ensure it fits with the current and likely future needs of local businesses; b) to consider widening the programme to businesses based outside of Town Centres; c) to consider similar support packages for non-retail business (e.g. start-up support in view of the anticipated rise in such ventures).
Responsibility:	Economic Development and Town Centre Team
Date:	June 2021
Agreed Action:	<p>Understand the needs of businesses through One-to-One business diagnostic and advice provided as part of the Covid Recovery Business Support Package.</p> <p>Allocate Additional Restrictions Grant (Discretionary Grant) funding to support the recovery of businesses.</p> <p>Launch the Indigenous Growth Fund Business support package, aimed at supporting businesses outside of town centres.</p> <p>Work with the Town Centres Team to review the existing retail support programme.</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of businesses supported. • Increase in the different types of businesses supported. • Increase in the number of businesses supported in locations outside of Town Centres.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>Appendix 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) criteria • Strategic Grant Criteria • Start-up Grant Criteria • Isolation Grant Criteria • Omicron Grant Criteria • Recovery Grant Criteria • Indigenous Growth Fund Criteria (draft format)
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>1 (Fully Achieved)</p> <p>Ongoing discussions with the Town Centres team regard to the needs of local businesses, following the end of Covid related funding for businesses in April 2022.</p> <p>The majority of retail businesses across the Borough were supported via the business rates grant schemes rather than ARG.</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	<p>A total of 88 retail businesses have been supported via ARG which includes Market Traders.</p> <p>It is difficult to break the retail businesses down any further to specify location, just because most of these businesses received more than one grant so it causes issues with the filtering.</p>

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Recommendation 7:	A future update on the SBC Business and Enterprise Team’s intended work around employment, education and skills with schools, colleges and universities be provided to the Council’s Children and Young People Select Committee.
Responsibility:	Economic Development
Date:	Aiming to be available by end of 2021
Agreed Action:	As part of ongoing work, we will work with colleagues across Stockton Borough Council to understand the most appropriate time to take a report to the Select Committee.
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Report.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	<p>Appendix 12 – E&T Hub Social Media</p> <p>Appendix 13 – Designs for new E&T Hub, due to open early June 2022</p> <p>Appendix 14 – Hub Newsletter with numbers engaged</p>
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>3 (Slipped)</p> <p>The E&T hub was launched in April 2021 but was only able to operate fully from Oct 2021 when it relocated to larger premises, and once the Hub’s dedicated team were all in post by the end of 2021.</p> <p>The Hub will relocate again in early June 2022 into a purpose-built facility that will deliver a wider rang to residents and businesses across the Borough.</p> <p>Work with Schools and Colleges</p> <p>The Hub will launch a pilot project with St Patricks School/College to work with their Year 10/Year 11 students to educate them about careers in the digital sector. Starting with social media and digital marketing, challenging the children to put together a complex social media campaign with the goal of improving attendance levels across all year groups.</p> <p>Developing School Enterprise Days. We will be working with local schools and business to introduce School Enterprise Days at The Hub. Local businesses, in a range of sectors, will be invited to various host parts of the day aimed at raising aspirations and broadening career options for our younger generation. The children will cover a range of areas of business throughout the day, concluding in a ‘Dragons Den’ style pitch to the business owners based around what they think their next innovation should be and how it would work.</p> <p>Members seminar in July will be held at the new Employment & Training Hub.</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	<p>It is still early days for the hub and we will present to the Council’s Children and Young People Select Committee when it is appropriate.</p> <p>Impact of hub can be seen in Appendix 12.</p>

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Recommendation 8:	A future update be provided to the Place Select Committee around the Inclusive Growth agenda, and how this has impacted upon the people of the Borough.
Responsibility:	Chris Renahan
Date:	Aiming to be available by end of 2021
Agreed Action:	We need to understand the impact of Brexit and COVID before taking an update to the Select Committee.
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Report.
Evidence of Progress (April 2022):	n/a
Assessment of Progress (April 2022): (include explanation if required)	<p>3 (Slipped)</p> <p>This piece of work has been delayed due to covid and the development of Inclusive Growth Strategy is now in draft form and will go to CMT in the next couple of months.</p> <p>The Economic Development team have carried out a consultation exercise with key stakeholders to determine if it aligns with their visions for the Borough.</p>
Evidence of Impact (April 2022):	n/a

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
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