

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Meeting with Cabinet Member, Health and Communities

17 June 2014

Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities

BETTER BUSINESS FOR ALL INITIATIVE

1. Purpose of the report:

To inform the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities of progress made to support local businesses in partnership with other regulators as part of the 'Better Business for All' (BBfA) initiative, and to seek approval to enter into an agreement with North West Leicestershire District Council for the services of an environmental health officer to support the BBfA initiative within the D2N2 local economic partnership.

2. Information and analysis

2.1. The Better Business for All initiative was established by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO); part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) after a successful pilot within the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Economic Partnership (LEP). Complying with legal requirements – or 'red tape' - is always considered a burden by businesses and business representatives. The central government response tends to be to seek to reduce the amount of legislation, but also to influence how legislation is enforced at a local level. The main objective of the Better Business for All initiative is to open a dialogue between local regulators and businesses to seek to ensure that regulators support compliance and thus help businesses to reduce costs and prosper thus aiding economic recovery.

2.2. In July 2013 the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities agreed to support the Better Business for All initiative and a partnership of local and national regulators, local businesses, the D2N2 LEP, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and business representatives has been created. A Steering Group chaired by a Board Member from the LEP has been formed and Derbyshire Trading Standards Division is playing a lead role within the steering group and the BBfA initiative which was launched within the D2N2 LEP region in October last year. Derbyshire County Council has made a commitment to the objectives of the BBfA initiative by signing up to a Charter agreed by the Steering Group in January this year. See link below:

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/business/trading_standards/business/better_business_for_all/default.asp

2.3. As well as launching the BBfA initiative within D2N2 and establishing a Steering Group consisting of both business and regulatory representatives and chaired by the Business representative on the LEP Management Board, the partnership has provided awareness training for local regulators and identified a number of work-streams to provide enhanced support for local businesses. Achievements to date include:

- Establishing a single point of contact for businesses to enquire about regulatory requirements. This is being provided by the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce (DNCC) and is accessible via the telephone number: 0844 225 4089.
- Providing a free health and safety advisory service to local business. This is a pilot service provided by South Derbyshire District Council, supported by Derbyshire Trading Standards and accessible via DNCC. The effectiveness of the service and how to generate income to make it sustainable are intended outcomes from the project.
- Publishing a BBfA newsletter that provides advice and information to local businesses about how complying with regulations and seeking advice from regulators can improve their business:
<http://www.thebusinessadvicewebsite.co.uk/files/uploads/1394212205.pdf>

2.4. During much of the previous financial year, the D2N2 BBfA partnership has benefitted from a coordinator provided by BRDO. An environmental health manager from North West Leicestershire District Council was seconded to BRDO and supported the D2N2 BBfA programme. That arrangement finished at the end of March 2014 as BRDO want to provide support to other LEP regions. The D2N2 BBfA partnership is keen to resurrect the coordination support and has identified sufficient funding to support a fixed term post from the beginning of July 2014 to the end of March 2015. It is proposed that Derbyshire County Council, as lead authority for the D2N2 BBfA initiative, enter into an agreement with North West Leicestershire to secure the services of the environmental health manager that was previously providing this support.

2.5. It is proposed that the post-holder would be co-located between Derbyshire County Council, North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC), the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce/D2N2 LEP and the remainder of the time would be working from home and within the D2N2 region. The individual would remain an employee of North West Leicestershire District Council which would remain responsible for all employment and financial issues, but would be under the supervision of the Head of Trading Standards for the duration of the agreement. Derbyshire County Council, on behalf of the D2N2 BBfA partnership would assume responsibility for paying NWLDC for the post-holder's salary and on-costs together with travel and other costs associated with the job role. The funding for the role has been identified by the partnership and includes:

- £15,000 from the D2N2 LEP
- £10,000 from Derbyshire District Council Environmental Health Services (hosted by Derbyshire Dales District Council)
- £14,000 residual BRDO grant held by Derbyshire Trading Standards obo the BBfA partnership
- £10,000 from DNCC

2.6. Part of the job role would be to seek contributions from other partners and to make recommendations as to the viability of creating a permanent BBfA support role. As funding from central government decreases it is important that local businesses can receive consistent and appropriate advice from regulators. Another important element of the BBfA coordinating role is to explore other income streams including seeking payment from businesses for regulatory advice.

3. Financial Considerations

As detailed in the body of the report.

4. Legal and Human Resources

As lead authority for the BBfA partnership, the proposal is for the post-holder to remain an employee of North West Leicestershire District Council, returning to their substantive post on 1/4/16 and as such, the County Council will not take on any financial, employment or other liabilities. The Trade Unions will be consulted on the proposal.

5. Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

6. Background papers

CabCo report: Support for local businesses – Reducing Regulatory Burdens; 9th July 2013

7. Key Decision:

No

8. Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report?

No

9. Strategic Director's recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities agrees to entering into an agreement with North West Leicestershire District Council on behalf of the D2N2 partnership for the services of an environmental health manager to facilitate the development of the D2N2 BBfA programme.

David Lowe
Strategic Director
Health and Communities