



ARTICLE NO: 1E

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MEMBERS UPDATE: 2010/11

Article of: Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates

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Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Adrian Owens

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**SUBJECT: FINAL EVALUATION REPORT - WEST LANCASHIRE "INVESTING IN
BUSINESS" REGENERATION PROGRAMME**

Borough Wide Interest.

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To apprise Members of the outcome of the final evaluation of the recently completed West Lancashire "Investing In Business" Regeneration (liB) Programme.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that the Council has been managing the North West Regional Development Agency funded liB Programme since July 2003, on behalf of the West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership (the LSP). The Programme completed at the end of June 2010, by which time £7,996,173 of the available £8M of NWDA funding had been spent. It is a mandatory requirement that the programme is subject to a full evaluation.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The final evaluation report, produced by ERS, Research and Consultancy was completed in August 2010 and a copy has been placed in the Members' library.

3.2 The report notes the significant legacy of capital investment, in terms of key transport exchanges, safer and more desirable employment sites, more vibrant towns and villages, and new and improved business premises hosting thriving businesses and social enterprises that are training and employing local people.

- 3.3 It highlights business support, environmental enhancement and training projects that have successfully delivered local outputs, exceeding the targets of funders and the expectations of most stakeholders. In particular, it has derived additional benefits to beneficiaries considered to be hard to reach, hard to help and far from the labour market and regular economic activity.
- 3.4 A range of good practice has emerged which, through adoption within mainstream delivery by partners, should significantly enhance the Programme's legacy, quoting Burscough regeneration as a model for future engagement with the private sector in brokering future regeneration. Additionally, a strong evidence base has been provided to inform future economic development and planning policy.
- 3.5 The outward facing approach to developing the Borough's role within the region and sub region, of which the Programme is only the latest example, should continue to benefit economic regeneration within the Borough. Similarly, networks and infrastructure built as part of the Programme should provide a strong basis from which to deliver future local impacts. These networks are seen as now independently sustainable at local, sub regional and regional level.
- 3.6 Programme management is identified as an exemplar of good practice fulfilling all operational requirements, deriving excellent results from projects and securing strong commitment and high quality input from a wide range of stakeholders. The ability to efficiently and effectively deliver large scale regeneration activities over a long timeframe, demonstrated by the Council and the LSP, should instil confidence developing and delivering future regeneration activities, using the liB Programme as a platform for continued development.
- 3.7 Apart from the outputs, many of which can be attached to the benefit and achievements of many individual projects throughout the Borough, the Programme achieved many other outcomes that have made their mark on the Borough and, it is hoped, will continue to do so for a long time to come. A selection of these achievements is listed in the attached Appendix B to this report.

4.0 ISSUES

- 4.1 A key issue for the NWDA is compliance with the Treasury inspired Regional Development Agency Evaluation Framework. Unfortunately, this tends to focus on a programme's contribution to the regional and national economy, measured through Gross Value Added (GVA). Whilst GVA is clearly of great value and importance to the NWDA it was nonetheless felt vital that the local impacts of what was, after all, a local programme was of equal importance. For this reason, both approaches were specified and the NWDA local contract managers concurred with this approach.
- 4.2 The Programme distinguished itself by exceeding all of the original contracted output targets, some by a significant margin, except for jobs and businesses created owing to the economic circumstances and in line with national trends.

4.3 Given a change in the NWDA's output regime in 2005, a considerable number of additional output targets were made available to the Programme to achieve, particularly those related to supporting businesses and skills development and training. However, the Programme managed to make a significant contribution to many of these additional targets. A summary of the outputs achieved by the Programme are attached as appendix A to this report.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 The Council will continue to work with its partners to ensure that, wherever possible, the Programme's benefits can be fully utilised for enterprise and economic benefit both sub regionally and regionally, as well as locally for West Lancashire people.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Sustainability of enterprise and economic development and growth has been a key consideration throughout this Programme, and will be in the future in those activities that continue as the Programme's legacy.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 All the costs of undertaking this evaluation exercise, including the Council's related costs, were met from the Programme's NWDA funds.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 There are no risks associated with this report since the Programme is now concluded and the report has been signed off by the NWDA.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The report is extremely positive and demonstrates the level of skill and expertise both within and external to the Council in terms of project and programme management and delivery. Some of the recommendations in the report had already been addressed during the lifetime of the Programme and other 'lessons learnt' from the evaluation will form the basis of any future regeneration programme and project activity.

Background Documents

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>File Ref</u>
July 2010	West Lancashire "Investing in Business" Regeneration	liB/P/Evaluation

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Appendix A – liB Lifetime Outputs

Appendix B – liB Project Significant Achievements