

Council
23rd April 2014



Business of External Organisations	Agenda No: 16c
Ignite Business Enterprise	
Corporate Priority: Boost employment, skills and support business Promoting and improving our town centres	
Portfolio: Prosperity and Growth	
Report presented by: Councillor Chris Siddall	
Report prepared by: Peter Smith, Head of Economic Development	
Background Papers:	Public Report
Options: Report for information	Key Decision: No
Executive Summary:	
<p>Ignite Business Enterprise was formed from the merger of Business Development Services (BDS) and Braintree Enterprise Acorn Units (BEAU) in April 2012 to deliver business support and work space options for SME's (small and medium sized enterprises) and new start-ups in the district. The purpose of the merger was to create an efficient organisation that would be sustainable in the long term.</p>	
<p>Ignite Enterprise Centre at Springwood Drive, Braintree has 30 incubator units providing start up businesses with integrated business support and work space options. The Centre is currently full and has shown an increase in full time employment over the last year from 64 to 75, including 6 new start up businesses. In addition to the Enterprise Centre, Ignite also took on a temporary lease for the former Community Centre in Victoria Road, Braintree during 2013 and created a Jewellery Village – a craft- based retail space that has supported 16 start-up & growth businesses to date, of which 7 were new starts. Ignite also lease the Corner House in Braintree town centre from the Council and have supported business start- ups through a 'pop up shop' complementing the Town Team's activities in regenerating the town centre. In total, 4 start up businesses have been supported (with a fifth in progress): Party Inspirations; Milk and Cupcakes; Tynska Designs; and Chic Décor.</p>	
<p>Ignites enterprise agency activities over the past year have delivered: 243 pre start counselling sessions; 82 start ups; 137 individuals on business planning workshops; 245 employment skills and 18 business health checks. Ignite delivered a District Business Showcase event on 23rd July 2013 with over 40 businesses attending, and managed an indoor market at the Town Hall as part of the Braintree Town Christmas event.</p>	

Planning is underway for an extension to the Springwood Drive Enterprise Centre. The extension will provide 12 new business incubator units (6 x 20m² and 6 x 40m²) as well as training and conference facilities. The extension will provide a revenue stream to support sustainable delivery of business start-up and growth advice at no net ongoing cost to the Council. The total cost of the project is £1,166,000 with the Council investing £866,000 of Growth Area Funding and a further £300,000 funding committed by Essex County Council. This will create 50 direct jobs and a total of 1100 jobs. Planning permission for the extension was secured in October 2013, tenders have been evaluated with an anticipated start on site in June 2014.