

Breckland Council briefing note

Partnership working

Breckland Council is acutely aware of the challenges facing local businesses in the current climate especially small and independent traders. We are working with local town councils and partnerships in support of their actions in tackling the local problems.

Business Response Toolkit

Breckland Council currently holds a contingency budget of £10,000 specifically to assist any individuals or businesses in the region in a closure situation where proactive support is needed. The Business Response Toolkit budget would cover the cost of running job fairs and provision of essential staff guidance, advice and training, and cover any gaps in provision not provided with the rest of the service.

High street initiatives

In February Breckland Council launched the BLISS campaign (Breckland Local Independent Shop Stars), supporting retail businesses in the market towns and villages. The campaign encouraged customers to vote for their favourite local shop and raised awareness of the importance of supporting local independent businesses in these challenging economic times. 80 shops signed up to take part and over 1,800 shoppers voted for their favourites. The campaign continues to raise a good amount of positive coverage in the press and all shops who participated will feature in an online web directory. Breckland is currently exploring the option of a loyalty card to encourage more footfall on the high street.

Tackling unemployment

Breckland has held three successful job fairs at Thetford, Dereham and Watton which were attended by 76 companies and over 1000 people, successfully pairing many job seekers and employers. A further job fair in Thetford is planned for later in the year.

Support for Micro businesses

Breckland Council continues to run the very successful BELA (Breckland Enterprise and Learning Account) grant scheme. BELA is a small grant package up to the value of £500 which the applicant must match, specifically for start up and established micro businesses (less than 10 employees) in Breckland. So far BELA has provided 61 small businesses with essential early stage skills and business support, to the value of £10,000. BELA phase 3 has just been agreed, which will provide 50 small match funded grants to the value of £25,000.

Support for business start ups

Breckland Council offers support to business start ups in partnership with NWES (Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Service). Breckland provides funds to NWES so that each new start up is offered a series of tailored advice sessions including information about training and development courses, managed workspace options, loans and specialist expertise.