
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	25 August 2022
Report By:	Interim Corporate Director Environment & Regeneration	Report No:	E+R/22/08/09/SJ/LM
Contact Officer:	Stuart Jamieson	Contact No:	01475 712402
Subject:	Omicron Business Support Intervention		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide members with proposals for the use of funding allocated to business support following the prevalence of the COVID-19 Omicron Variant.
- 1.3 Members supported the allocation of an additional £579,000 in funding to support local businesses and whilst at the time of allocation notional themes were identified, Committee has not had the benefit of approving detailed proposals.
- 1.4 Officers have reviewed the support mechanisms to local businesses and have set out proposal in Para 4.1

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to the use of the Omicron Business Support earmarked reserve in line with the interventions set out in Para 4.1.

Stuart Jamieson
Interim Director
Environment and Regeneration

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 As part of the Councils response to the COVID pandemic an allocation of £579,000 was allocated to business support on the advent of the omicron variant.
- 3.2 Whilst a number of potential interventions were promoted the Committee has never had the opportunity to agree to detailed officer proposals.
- 3.3 Following the appointment of a number of staff in the business development section, including the Team Leader for Business Development, officers have reviewed the interventions available to local businesses both from a core budget perspective as well as from special interventions – this review has also sought the views of a number of local businesses.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the £579,000 omicron earmarked reserve be deployed as follows:-

1. Help businesses either launch or improve their digital presence

Offering 1-2-1 support to help companies with elements such as:

- Setting up a website
- Setting up other social media platforms eg Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok
- Training staff

100 businesses @ 4 days each @ £500 = £200,000
Promotion £2,000
TOTAL: £202,000

2. Development of strategies to grow

Work with businesses to identify new opportunities to:

- Find new customers
- Diversify to find new markets
- Develop new products

30 businesses @ 5 days each @ £500 = £75,000
Promotion £2,000
TOTAL: £77,000

3. Increase the marketing grant from £500
Also expand the range of eligible expenditure.

Estimate: £30,000

4. Self-employment as a career option

Run various events followed by workshops and 1-2-1 mentoring sessions to encourage various groups eg women returners, recently redundant, school / college / university leavers to consider self-employment

6 events @ £1,500 = £9,000
3 lots of 4 workshops @ £2,000 = £6,000
1-2-1 mentoring sessions for 30 clients @ 2 days @ £500 = £30,000

Promotion £1,500
 Start up grants 10@£10,000
 TOTAL: £146,500

- 5. Supplier Development Programme
 Run various “Meet the buyer” events in conjunction with IC’s Procurement Team and the Supplier Development Programme to increase awareness of the opportunities with in Inverclyde Council for local businesses. SDP offers training on how to register with Public Contract Scotland and bid for contracts.

4 events @ £1,500 = £6,000
 Promotion £1,500
 TOTAL: £7,500

- 6. Suppliers to the largest businesses in Inverclyde
 Similar to (4), work with the biggest businesses in the area to highlight their supplier requirements to local smaller businesses.

5 events @ £1,500 = £7,500
 Promotion £1,500
 TOTAL: £9,000

- 7. Focus on some sector specific programmes eg retail, hospitality, food and drink, tourism to address particular issues they’re facing and provide 1-2-1 advice from experts in the particular field.

3 sectors @ £15,000 = £45,000
 Promotion: £2,000
 TOTAL: £47,000

- 8. Export support
 Work with other agencies eg Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce and Scottish Development International to support businesses who would like to either launch or expand their exporting activities.

Estimate: £50,000 – comprising mainly grant support to the businesses.

- 9. Cruise ships
 Put together a programme that would raise awareness of what shops etc are available locally, both to crew staff and holidaymakers.

Estimate: £10,000

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	✓		
Legal/Risk	✓		
Human Resources		✓	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	✓		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			✓
Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing			✓
Environmental & Sustainability		✓	
Data Protection			✓

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
E+R	Omicron	2022/23	£579		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

5.3 Legal/Risk

None

5.4 Human Resources

None

5.5 Strategic

The project support the strategic aims of the Council in the regeneration of Port Glasgow Town Centre.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
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X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.
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5.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.9 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.