

## **1. Business Support in Spelthorne.**

Strategic business support is an integral part of the support offered to businesses in Spelthorne, provided by experts in business growth and sustainability. This service is based in the hub. There is a cost in the current budget of £36,000 to fund this support. Previously this was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which expired on 31 March 2025.

The Economic Development Team have prepared a tender document to procure a new business support programme – The Spelthorne Business Growth Service. This was due to commence in June.

The tender process was paused as an Expression of Interest (EOI) has been submitted to Surrey County Council's Economic Growth Fund, on behalf of all boroughs and districts in Surrey, for cross-county business support funding an answer expected at the beginning of August. If the bid is unsuccessful, we shall seek permission to publish the tender.

The Spelthorne Business Growth Service is highly valued by start-up and small businesses to provide them with the opportunity to start and grow their business.

### **1.1 Objectives**

- Facilitate and support the growth and sustainability of businesses within Spelthorne
- Enhance the competitiveness and resilience of local businesses
- Foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation
- Provide accessible and tailored support to businesses of all sizes and sectors
- Strengthen the local business ecosystem and contribute to economic development

### **1.2 The Business support programme focusses on 4 main areas of support.**

#### **I. Start Up Spelthorne**

Open to pre-start and start-ups or if the business is in its first 24 months of trading. This programme focuses on the A-Z of how to start a business and take you through the critical steps to fast track growth.

Training is delivered through 8 workshops to take you through each of the steps, which include topics such as how to access finance and funding, sales and marketing strategies, business strategy and planning and more.

#### **II. Business Growth**

This is for ambitious business owners who want to grow by 20%+ in the next twelve months. This programme is open to all with a specific focus on digital, tech, and creative businesses.

A business receives one-to-one business growth sessions focusing on key barriers to growth which include business strategy, technology, leadership and management, operations, import/ export or any other challenges a business may have.

### **III. Digital Skills**

It is essential that every business owner has the digital skills to ensure their survival. A business receives a digital assessment that helps focus on the technology that will allow a business to do more in less time and access the data and insights allowing informed decisions.

The programme upskills teams to thrive to help the business survive in a digital-first world. The programme puts digital at the heart of a business strategy, to realise success. A free online digital health check is completed to help you answer these questions and get digitally fitter.

### **IV. Sustainability**

Helping a business to embark on a journey to create a zero-carbon footprint. There are a series of 4 workshops designed to assist a business in creating a strategy and implementing it. This enables a business to open new markets. The programme helps a business calculate its carbon footprint, develop a clear net zero strategy and plan, communicate your net zero ambitions, identify your carbon hotspots, and think about the impact of the business' products or services.

Opportunities to collaborate and review supply chains. This segment is supported by Surrey County Council's decarbonisation scheme which is part funded by Spelthorne Borough Council.

Also linked to this is the Sustain Spelthorne programme. which ended on 31 March 2025, to help businesses save money on business costs. This included savings on new contracts, advice on navigating the cost-of-doing-business crisis, and how to achieve the best value on essential services like gas, water, insurance, electricity, telecoms and merchant fees.

## **2. General Support provided by the service (as part of i-iv)**

- 2.1 The service will support the sustainability of start-ups, early-stage, micro and small businesses in Spelthorne to grow and become more resilient. The priority of this is to support businesses who have ambitious growth plans, who need the support and guidance to develop and execute their growth plans.
- 2.2 It will offer coaching to help businesses to develop business growth plans. One to one support would comprise of a diagnostic of the business, support with developing the business growth plan and reviewing progress.

It will provide strategic, practical advice and information on subjects such as:

- Business diagnostic and analysis
- Access to funding and financial support
- Marketing and communications
- Digital and artificial intelligence
- Net zero
- Increasing sales and identifying new customers
- Business planning and strategy
- Pre-start and start up advice

- Innovation, growth and scale up advice
- 2.3 Deliver a startup club. This club will provide an identity for startups in Spelthorne. It will focus on providing a specific growth program. 4 events will be delivered specifically for startups.
  - 2.4 Deliver lunch & learn or other workshops on a monthly or two-monthly basis. These will be on topics such as cyber security, marketing, AI, finance and financing. These will be based in the hub and designed for the programme's participants.
  - 3. Mentoring & Peer to Peer Network - Adopt an Entrepreneur Scheme**
    - 3.1 A peer-to-peer network is growing. This is comprised by representatives from businesses who wish to give time and expertise to start-up or small businesses to assist in their growth strategies. The service provider will nurture this network and assign mentors to businesses.
  - 4. Collaboration**
    - 4.1 Refer businesses to further support from Surrey County Council's Business Surrey support service or other government funded programmes where applicable.
    - 4.2 Develop partnership work with the Royal Holloway University of London and the CoStar programme to provide access for businesses to support from the university with research and innovation especially in the Createch sector.
  - 5. Environmental support**
    - 5.1 The service will support businesses to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint, by providing advice and guidance on sustainability and referrals to specialist organisations which can provide sustainability audits and funding to enable businesses to become greener.
  - 6. Economic and Social**
    - 6.1 It will support the local economy through promoting local purchasing and the recruitment of local people.
    - 6.2 **Sponsors & Mentors**

Shepperton Studios are now associated with the Hub in Sunbury as a benefactor through S106 contributions, £100,000 (in annual instalments of £20,000) over a five-year period ending in 2028. In broader terms, this funding is to be used for funding an incubator supporting Spelthorne's businesses, there is a requirement to specifically fund an incubator. The intention was to collaborate with local entrepreneurs to mentor tenants and contribute to the development of the centre and its businesses.

From the funds received from Shepperton Studios, it was proposed that some of the office space is ring-fenced for "createch" businesses (where creativity meets technology – where technology enables the creative sector to produce new products, services or experiences).

It was intended to promote the Hub with our involvement with the Createch Cluster group, led by Surrey County Council. Through this group, we shall have access to Royal Holloway University's incubator and createch support as a resource Spelthorne businesses can use. We will continue to support the cluster through other means.