

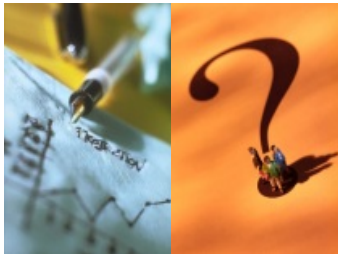
Business Generation Centres Review

Cheshire East Borough Council

Brief

BE Group was commissioned to review the effectiveness of Cheshire East Borough Council's four Business Generation Centres (BGCs). These are Brierley Business Centre and Scope House, Crewe along with Congleton Business Centre and Sandbach Enterprise Centre.

The study assessed how effective the BGC portfolio was at assisting micro and start-up businesses, both now and over the next ten years. It provides a robust evidence base to underpin and inform the investment strategy of Cheshire East Borough Council in light of public sector budget cuts.



Activities

- Background research
- Site surveys
- Assessment of the competing supply of small business space
- Consultation with key market stakeholders (including the managers of the four schemes)
- Financial appraisal.

Brierley Business Centre



Congleton Business Centre



Sandbach Enterprise Centre



Outcome

The key recommendations were that:

- Sandbach Business Enterprise Centre should be retained in Council ownership
- Scope House and Brierley Business Centre should ideally also be retained. If they are sold, the Council should ensure that they remain in their current use
- Congleton Business Centre is a surplus asset and should be sold an industrial investment opportunity
- The BGCs should either be operated as incubation facilities (accepting only business start-ups and imposing a time limit of no more than three years for their occupation) or be rebranded as ordinary business centres (without restrictions on occupancy)
- Licence agreements should reflect the true operating costs of the BGCs
- The Council explore whether the BGC programme should be extended either geographically (for example into Macclesfield) or in function (the creation of an innovation centre in Crewe with an industry sectoral emphasis).

Scope House

