

Want to hear some good news?

by CHRIS OLIVER

News that's good for your business?

News that's especially good if you want to start, expand or relocate a business in Barking & Dagenham?

And that's whether you're based in Barking & Dagenham, or elsewhere in the Gateway, the capital, the UK or even overseas.

You, for example, might, be thinking of relocating to the Gateway area to share in the prosperity the 2012 Olympics will generate.

Or perhaps you're just looking for cheaper, bigger or better premises, and easier access to the City of London, the motorways, the London airports and railway termini.

If you are or could be any of the aforesaid, then here is the news. Barking & Dagenham Enterprise (BDE) is working in partnership with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (LBBD), and is now in business to help you.

Whether it's contacts, advice, networking or information on premises you're after, that's what business-minded BDE is about.

We recently celebrated our first anniversary as the lead organisation for creating a fresh approach to encouraging enterprise in all its forms in the borough.

There's still plenty to celebrate, and even more to go for.

Barking & Dagenham Small Business Centre, just one of BDE's 14 services to business, has already achieved its 120th start-up, and there's more where they came from. BDE projects are helping businesses to grow and to adapt to this fast changing business world.

BDE presently manages 23 different programmes, and another seven are in the pipeline. It's the first point of contact for inward investment, which is managed by Gateway to London.

There's an enterprise-fuelled buzz about Barking & Dagenham these days.

How it came about is quite a story.

Business and local authorities can have different agendas, but the LBBD is definitely business-minded.

This local authority mounted a successful bid for funds for an enterprise-encouragement scheme under the Government's



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Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI).

LBBD won £15.5 million over three years, with the prospect of more if the results of encouraging and supporting enterprise warrant it.

This was the only Gateway local authority to mount a winning LEGI bid. And to make sure it delivered the results, LBBD went about things in a businesslike fashion.

Barking & Dagenham Enterprise (BDE) was created as the engine of delivery for the LEGI programme of enterprise support. At the wheel of BDE is a board of ten local businesspeople, as well as a matching number from the public, voluntary and education/training sectors.

BDE is now working with developers to add to the stock of easy-in, easy-out serviced accommodation for new or expanding businesses.

'Enterprise' is a word that we define in Barking & Dagenham not just as what entrepreneurs do, which is start up businesses, although that comes into it.

And entrepreneurs are not the only kind of enterprising people that BDE executive director Judy Chapman and her team are interested in attracting and supporting.

In our view, 'Enterprise' is also about the people of Barking & Dagenham adopting a flexible approach to working life, and seizing the opportunities to retrain, to go and do something different - and better.

BDE is about connecting local people to the opportunities that abound in Barking & Dagenham thanks to the backing of the LEGI scheme.

Over 165,000 people live in culturally-diverse Barking & Dagenham, a figure we at BDE expect to see increase by 30,000 over the next 10 years, much of it in the younger age groups.

Of these 165,000 residents,

many are looking for new work. Many local businesses are looking for staff. That seems straightforward enough, but in practice there can be mismatches for a multitude of reasons.

The LEGI projects are here to help the people of Barking & Dagenham to

- Enter or return to work
- Reskill to qualify for better-paid work
- Create their own work
- Start up a business
- Continue learning

As a businessman, the more

people who are packing a little enterprise into their lives, on however small a scale, the better for me in my business and for you in your business, let alone better for the people concerned.

Newly-busy people, even people busy making and selling goods and services, also buy things from you and me - the existing business community - as well as from each other.

And when things go right for anybody - from a new businessman or woman to someone who's returning to work or getting a better job - those people start spending all over again out of work hours - in pubs restaurants, shops, whatever.

The good news is that in Barking & Dagenham, they've already started. And the even better news is that there's plenty of room if you care to join us.

To find out more about Barking & Dagenham Enterprise and the services it can offer, call 020 8724 8292 or email paul.bishop@boldanddynamic.co.uk