

# An Effective Business Plan

A business plan gives you a clear idea of where you are going and how you will get there through setting out:

- What you want to achieve
- How you will achieve it
- How you will know whether you have achieved it

## Suggested headings for writing a business plan

**Background information** – a description of the business and what it is, what it does and what it wants to do. This should include what the business does well and how the proposed action will improve the service provided.

**Aim** – a broad statement about what you want to achieve and how this will develop as a result of your work

**Objective** – what you will need to do in order to achieve the aim, objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed.

**Tasks** – these are linked to each objective, they describe the work necessary to achieve each objective.

**Target dates** – when you expect the tasks that contribute to each objective to be completed and each objective achieved.

**Constraints** – things that could prevent you from completing the tasks and achieving your objectives and how you will overcome this. You could identify this by performing a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

**Resources** – the people, funding and equipment that will be needed to complete the tasks and achieve the objectives.

**Monitoring and evaluation** – how you will check that each task has been completed and how you will decide that the objectives have been achieved.

**Future trends** – the future direction of your business.

## How to make the plan work for your business

- Input from both staff and managers and yourself as the owner is key. Give copies of the plan to staff and ask for feedback
- Continually use the plan on an ongoing basis and review frequently
- Make sure that objectives have a named person responsible for them to make sure they get done