

8. MICROBUSINESS GRANT SCHEME

REPORT OF: Programme Manager, Burgess Hill Growth Area
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision No

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present ten microbusiness grant applications for consideration by the Cabinet Grants Panel, including the application held over from the previous meeting of the Panel.

Summary

2. A summary of the applications to be considered and the recommendations from the Grants Assessment Group on the level of financial assistance to be awarded to each organisation are detailed as follows:

Organisation	Purpose for which award is sought	Award Requested	Award Suggested
Premier Marketing	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
Bright Light Film	Purchase of laptop and software	£275	£275
MIJC Ltd	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
ASL Carpentry & Construction	Apprentice and clothing/website	£2,100	£2,100
Ozlana Australia Ltd	Trade mission to South Korea	£2,000	£2,000
N Smith Home Transformation	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
ER Longley Hydroworks	Website redesign and apprentice	£3,500	£3,500
Tiny Land	Website design and CE certification	£2,000	£2,000
Get Marketing Ltd	Laptop	£950	£950
Worth Glamping Ltd	Website upgrade and software	£2,000	£2,000
Total		£17,325	£17,325

NB – the suggested award is based in the assumption that due diligence checks have been satisfactorily passed. This will be confirmed, or otherwise, at the Cabinet Grants Panel meeting.

3. The Panel is asked to note that, following initial due diligence checks, two of the applications included in the circulated Matrix were found to come from outside the District and therefore are ineligible. The companies concerned were Ten2Two Sussex and RTFJ.

Recommendations

Members of the Panel are requested to

- a) consider and decide upon the recommendations for each of the above applications, summaries of which are attached in Appendix A of this report.***

Background

4. After viewing 20 applications for grants over the past three months, there are a further ten in front of the Panel for consideration at this meeting. Out of the 30 grants, 7 have related to the recruitment of an apprentice. In geographical terms 12 applications have come from Haywards Heath and 7 from Burgess Hill, with the remainder from smaller settlements. It is noticeable that we have yet to receive an application from East Grinstead.
5. Should the Panel agree the recommendations in this paper, the fund will have £22,166 remaining. If demand continues at the level seen over the past two months then we are likely to run out of funds in the next two months. At the first meeting of the Cabinets Grant Panel to consider microbusiness grants, the Panel agreed that consideration should be given to topping the fund up to the £83,300 originally expected from WSCC if demand requires it. Further detailed recommendations in relation to this will be brought to the next Cabinet Grants Panel.

Assessment and Policy Context

6. The applications received have been considered by Council Officers Rachel Ryan-Crisp and Gordon Reay. A summary of the assessment of each application is included within the individual project reports in Appendix A.
7. All organisations have met the basic criteria and specific grant criteria, i.e. are properly constituted micro-businesses and have provided the relevant information to support their application. As noted above, a verbal confirmation of the due diligence checks will be provided at the Cabinet Grants Panel.

Financial Implications

8. The microbusiness grants are funded through an allocation from the WSCC business rates pool, with £500,000 to be divided equally between districts.
9. The current fund stands at:

Scheme	Original fund	Funds approved	Funds requested	Balance
Microbusiness grant	£71,400	£31,909	£17,325	£22,166

Risk Management Implications

10. The main associated risk to the successful implementation of the decisions arising from this report is the inability of the funded organisations to carry out the services, activities or equipment purchase for which funding had been awarded.
11. To minimise this risk we have requested that recipient businesses provide proof of purchase of equipment or employment of the apprentice. We consider this a proportionate approach given the relatively small sums involved in this grant programme.

Equality implications

12. As part of the due diligence process all of the organisations for this funding from the Council have been assessed to be in compliance with the requisite policies/legislation.

Legal Implications

13. The Council is not obliged to provide grant funding, but by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, it is able to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. This includes the incurring of expenditure, giving financial assistance to any person (or organisation) and entering into arrangements or agreements with any person.

Background Papers

14. Grant applications and associated documentation for the Microbusiness Grant Programme are held in the Burgess Hill Programme Management team.