

7. MICROBUSINESS GRANT SCHEMES

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 six microbusiness grant applications for consideration by the Cabinet Grants Panel, including the one 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
Ottilie	Website upgrade, social media promotion and events	£1,788.75	£1,788.75
Sussex Osteopath & Complementary Health Clinic	New storage facilities and a replacement floor	£2,000	£2,000
Heather Martin Garden Design	Purchase of equipment	£406	£406
Winslow Skincare	Purchase of equipment	£2,000	£2,000
HomeSmiths Ltd	Training on specialist software	£596.50	£596.50
South Downs Cellars	Relocation of wine storage facility	£2,000	£2,000
Total		£8,791.25	£8791.25

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.

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

3. This is likely to be the last tranche of grant applications for this round. We understand that WSCC may allocate further funding for another scheme but there is no confirmation of this as yet.
4. Should all the grants in front of the Panel be awarded, the fund will be oversubscribed by around £975, but off-setting this are a couple of applicants who are unlikely to spend their funds within the required timescale. At the moment, the amount of funds committed is £75,184 with £32,561.02 paid out.

5. A detailed analysis of applications will be presented to the Panel once the funds have been fully allocated.

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 (plus top up)	Funds approved	Funds requested	Balance
Microbusiness grant	£83,000	£75,184	£8,791.25	-£975.25

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.