

7. MICROBUSINESS GRANT SCHEME

REPORT OF: Economic Development Officer
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Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present 14 microbusiness grant applications for consideration by the Cabinet Grants Panel.

Summary

2. A summary of the applications to be considered and the recommendations from the Economic Development Team 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
Creative Reach Ltd	New product	£2,000	£2,000
Cullen Scholefield Ltd	Website and marketing strategy	£2,000	£2,000
Flinders Coffee Ltd	New facilities	£2,000	£2,000
Marvolio's Nostrums	Business expansion	£2,000	£2,000
NetworkU	Marketing campaign	£2,000	£2,000
Not Another Bunch of Flowers	New equipment	£2,000	£2,000
The Perrymount Ltd	New service	£2,000	£2,000
Potential Personal Training	Building improvements	£1,500	£1,500
Reab Physical Health Ltd	New website	£2,000	£2,000
See Me Go	Marketing and equipment	£1,500	£1,500
Spiral Flooring	Advertising and marketing materials	£1,500	£1,500
Strategic Marcomms	Marketing campaign	£2,000	£2,000
Sussex Mother	Event equipment	£1,000	£1,000
Tremletts Carpentry	New equipment	£1,650	£1,650
Total		£25,150	£25,150

3. The panel is asked to note that, following the last meeting of the panel, the application of Cullen Scholefield Ltd has been deferred to this meeting so that the specific costings of the project can be reviewed before a decision is made.

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.***
- b) Consider and decide upon the recommendation for the Cullen Scholefield Ltd application, once the project costings have been obtained and circulated ahead of the meeting on 16 August.***

Background

4. This is the third meeting of the Cabinet Grants Panel to consider the 2018/19 Micro Business Grant Scheme. The scheme has now had all of its funding allocated, and is fully subscribed, subject to the Panel's decisions on the applications. There are a total of 41 applications for the scheme. Following this meeting, 33 of these applications will have been reviewed by the Panel.

Assessment and Policy Context

5. The applications received have been considered by the Council's Economic Development Officers, William Hawkins and Kim Christmas and the Council's Regeneration and Economy Programme Manager, Mark Healy. A summary of the assessment of each application is included within the individual project reports in Appendix A
6. 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. All applicants have been subject to a due diligence review including a site visit with just two exceptions: Spiral Flooring and the Perrymount Ltd. These due diligence reviews are scheduled to take place before the Cabinet Grants Panel meets, and a verbal update on the outcome of the reviews for these two businesses will be provided at the Cabinet Grants Panel meeting.

Financial Implications

7. The microbusiness grants are funded through an allocation from the WSCC business rates pool, with £500,000 to be divided proportionally between districts. A total of £72,000 is allocated to Mid Sussex District.
8. The current fund stands at:

Scheme	Original fund	Funds approved so far	Funds requested in this paper	Balance (if all bids in this paper are approved)
Micro Business Grant Scheme	£72,000.00	£32,933.50	£25,150.00	£13,916.50

9. As some of the applicants listed have noted they are not VAT registered, it is requested that the grant awarded includes the VAT on items/services purchased. Written confirmation of each applicant's VAT status will be requested before this is confirmed. Applicants in question are: See Me Go, NetworkU and Marvolio's Nostrums. Due diligence reviews will confirm if this is the case for The Perrymount Ltd and Spiral Flooring.

Risk Management Implications

10. The main risk associated with 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, the decision has been taken to only pay out the grants following proof, from the applicant, that the project in question has begun, or equipment has been purchased. This could be in the form of receipts, invoices and other related documents

Equality implications

12. As part of the due diligence process, all of the businesses whose bids are included in this report 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 incurring 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 Scheme are held in the Economic Development Team.