

MICROBUSINESS GRANT SCHEME 2022/23

REPORT OF: Sally Blomfield – Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy
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Wards Affected: All
Key decision: No

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to ask the Cabinet Grants Panel to consider 20 Micro Business Grant applications for funding totalling £36,398.

Summary

2. A summary of the applications to be considered and the recommendations from the Economy and Sustainability Team on the level of grant to be awarded to each organisation are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Business applicants and recommended award

Organisation	Location	Purpose for which award is sought	Award Requested	Award Suggested
Event Childcare Ltd	Burgess Hill	Marketing activity and website development	£1,933	£1,932
Costells Crafts Ltd	Haywards Heath	Purchase of equipment (start-up)	£386	£386
Samantha Pullen Counselling	Haywards Heath	Premises improvements and training	£1,705	£1,705
Certa MPS Limited	Burgess Hill	New CRM system	£2,000	£2,000
AQUAPAX - Just Drinking Water Ltd	Haywards Heath	New product development	£1,175	£1,175
Kitchens Bespoke Ltd	East Grinstead	Sales Training Consultant	£2,000	£2,000
Cuckfield Coffee Co.	Lindfield	Marketing / website / new equipment	£2,000	£2,000
My Kitchen Fitter	Haywards Heath	Marketing activity and website refresh	£2,000	£2,000
Burgess Hill Rugby Football Club	Burgess Hill	Premises improvements (solar lighting)	£1,200	£1,200
BizGen Solutions	Haywards Heath	Marketing activity	£2,000	£2,000
Bella June Flowers Ltd	Hassocks	Business development	£2,000	£2,000
Haywards Heath Business Association Limited	Haywards Heath	Video production and website development	£2,000	£2,000
Preece Accountancy Ltd t/a The Financial Management Centre	Burgess Hill	Business Coach	£2,000	£2,000

Organisation	Location	Purpose for which award is sought	Award Requested	Award Suggested
1 Middle Row	East Grinstead	Premises Improvement and marketing	£2,000	£2,000
Simbiotic Tree Care	Burgess Hill	Purchase of equipment	£2,000	£2,000
Church Road Dental Care Ltd	Burgess Hill	Equipment and training	£2,000	£2,000
Macen Associates Ltd	Haywards Heath	Website development	£2,000	£2,000
Archibal Creative Ltd	Burgess Hill	Purchase of equipment	£2,000	£2,000
Charlotte Wadley Makeup	Burgess Hill	Premises improvements (new treatment rooms)	£2,000	£2,000
Sussex Tech Support Ltd	Haywards Heath	Coding a quiz for businesses on cyber security	£2,000	£2,000
Total			£36,399	£36,398

- Each application has been assessed using an agreed matrix. There were three applications received that have not been recommended for funding and these are detailed in the Appendix.
- A summary of the applicants is provided at **Appendix A** and the criteria used to assess the bids is at **Appendix B**. All bids submitted meet the eligibility criteria.

Recommendation

The Cabinets Grants Panel are recommended to consider and agree the funding for each of the applications in Table 1, summaries of which are attached in Appendix A of this report.

Background

- This is the fifth meeting of the Cabinet Grants Panel to consider the 2022/23 Micro Business Grant Scheme. This is a county-wide scheme funded through the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF), via the West Sussex Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Platform (LEAP), generated through retained business rates.
- A total of £500,000 was allocated to the seven districts and boroughs in West Sussex, with £71,428.57 allocated to Mid Sussex.
- Grants of up to £2,000 are available to assist micro businesses (defined as businesses with fewer than 10 employees) with projects that will help them grow or up to £1,500 to help with the costs of taking on an apprentice.
- Previously officers have implemented a system for returning applications, whereby businesses who have received a grant for two consecutive years must ensure a 'gap year' before being eligible again. This has been relaxed for the current round of the scheme to reflect the fact that the scheme did not operate in 2021/22. Instead return applicants are highlighted to the panel for their consideration within Appendix A.

Assessment and Policy Context

- The applications received have been assessed using an agreed matrix. A summary of the assessment of each application is included within **Appendix A**, alongside a brief summary of each applicant.

10. Each application has been scored in accordance with the matrix in **Appendix B**, noting the extent to which each applicant meets the (only relevant) criteria. Applicants are required to demonstrate that their projects meet one of the following criteria:

- Reach new customers
- Increase the number of employees
- Introduce new products and services
- Improve business premises
- Improve business productivity.

11. All of the bids included in the paper have met the basic eligibility criteria for the grant scheme. All are properly constituted businesses with fewer than 10 employees and are located in the district.

Financial Implications

12. The current Micro Business Grant fund stands at:

Total fund allocated	Funds approved so far	Funds requested in this paper	Balance (if all bids in this paper are approved)
£71,428.57	£37,230	£36,398	-£2,199.43

13. Should all grants be awarded, the total funding awarded will exceed the total allocated funds. Officers have identified funds from unclaimed previous awards in order to account for this.

Risk Management Implications

14. 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.

15. To minimise this risk all grant schemes led by the Economy and Sustainability Team are paid in arrears on receipt of invoices or other such evidence.

16. For apprenticeship grants the management of this risk requires the business to provide evidence that the apprentice noted in the application has formally started before funding is released.

17. Where applications reference physical works to properties, applicants will be required to ensure that the project has all the necessary permissions in place (including planning, building regulations, licensing and from landlords), prior to payment.

Legal Implications

18. 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.

Sustainability Implications

19. The provision of the Micro Business Grants scheme directly supports the delivery of the Council's Sustainable Economy Strategy and associated UN Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, Objective 5 of the Sustainable Economy Strategy: Encourage business start-ups, improve business survival rates and growth and the following UN Sustainability Goals; Goal 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production and Goal 13 – Climate Action.

Background Papers

20. Grant applications and associated documentation for the Micro Business Grant Scheme are held in the Economy and Sustainability Team.