

MICROBUSINESS GRANT SCHEME

REPORT OF: Economic Development Officer
Contact Officer: William Hawkins
Email william.hawkins@midsussex.gov.uk
Tel: 01444 477322
Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present three additional Micro Business Grants for consideration by the panel.

Summary

2. A summary of the applications to be considered, together with officer recommendations for the level of financial assistance to be awarded is set out in the table below:

Organisation	Purpose for which award is sought	Award requested	Award suggested
Marvolio's Nostrums	Business Expansion	£500	£500
Farm, Field and Forest Ltd	Equipment installation	£500	£500
Slake Café Ltd	Building renovation	£500	£500
Total		£1,500	£1,500

Recommendation

Members of the Panel are requested to:

- ***Consider and decide upon the recommendations for each of the above grants, summaries of the previously awarded grants are attached in Appendix A of this report.***

Background

3. The Cabinet Grants Panel last considered bids for funds from the 2018/19 Micro Business Grant Scheme at its meeting on 16th October 2018. Over the course of the 2018/19 scheme there had been a total of 46 applications for the scheme, of which 40 were awarded funding. Following the October meeting, officers identified that there was a small amount of residual scheme funding that had not been awarded. The total residual funding was £1,500, and was not enough to offer a full grant (£2,000) to a new potential applicant.
4. Officers considered options on how to allocate this funding so that it might have the greatest benefit possible to the growth of micro businesses within the District. It was agreed in principle with the Chair of the Panel that the value of the remaining funding would be best maximised by offering a small additional grant to those businesses who had successfully applied to the 2018/19 micro business grant scheme, and who were undertaking larger projects to which they had already committed much higher levels of match funding.

Assessment and Policy Context

5. The additional grants have been considered by the Council's Economic Development Officer, William Hawkins and the Council's Regeneration and Economy Programme Manager, Mark Healy. This proposal was also agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Councillor Jonathan Ash-Edwards. A summary of the original assessment of each application is included within the individual project reports in Appendix A.
6. All the businesses included in this paper have met the basic criteria and specific grant criteria; that is they are properly constituted micro-businesses and provided the relevant information to support their application. All applicants were subject to a due diligence review including a site visit.

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 £71,428 was allocated to Mid Sussex District.
8. The current fund stands at:

Scheme	Original fund	Funds approved so far	Funds requested in this paper	Balance (<i>if all bids in this paper are approved</i>)
Micro Business Grant Scheme	£71,428.00	£ 69,757.45	£1,500.00	£170.55

Risk Management Implications

9. 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.
10. 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

11. As part of the due diligence process, all of the businesses whose bids are included in this report were assessed to be in compliance with the requisite policies/legislation.

Legal Implications

12. 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

13. Grant applications and associated documentation for the Microbusiness Grant Scheme are held in the Economic Development Team.