

## MICRO BUSINESS GRANT SCHEME

**REPORT OF:** Business Development Officer  
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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present 8 micro business 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
Fine Baps	New Service	£1,800	£1,800
Fun Pots	Marketing, New Service and Apprentice	£2,090	£2,090
Just Drinking Water Ltd	Marketing	£2,000	£2,000
Paul Johnson Photography	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
RAW (Resilience and Wellbeing)	New Service	£1,873	£1,873
Sell4Profit Ltd	Marketing	£2,000	£2,000
The Jonathan Lea Network	Marketing	£2,000	£2,000
The workABLE	New Service	£2,000	£2,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£15,263.00</b>	<b>£15,263.00</b>

### 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 the fourth meeting of the Cabinet Grants Panel to consider the 2019/20 Micro Business Grant Scheme. The scheme has seen a great deal of interest. Following this meeting, the panel will have reviewed all of the 40 applications that have been submitted so far. This figure has changed since the last panel meeting due to the withdrawal of three Micro Business applications. Officers will be working with the remaining fund to ensure the panel is presented the final applicants in October.

## **Assessment and Policy Context**

4. The applications received have been considered by officers within the Council's Economic Development Team. A summary of the assessment of each application is included within the individual project reports in Appendix A.
5. All of the businesses whose bids are 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. All have provided any additional information requested by officers to support their applications.

## **Financial Implications**

6. The micro business grants are funded through an allocation from the WSCC LEAP business rates pool, with £500,000 to be allocated between districts.
7. The current fund stands at:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Fund as at 23 09 2019</b>	<b>Funds approved so far</b>	<b>Funds requested in this paper</b>	<b>Balance(if all bids in this paper are approved)</b>
Micro Business Grant Scheme	£23,622.80	£47,805.77	£15,263.00	£8359.80*

\* Officers note that the remaining balance may change due to underspends on granted projects.

8. Some of the applicants have noted they are not VAT registered and have requested that the grant awarded includes the VAT on items/services purchased. A written confirmation from the applicant is requested during the application process and this is further checked during the due diligence review. Applicants in question are: RAW (Resilience and Wellbeing) and The workABLE.

## **Risk Management Implications**

9. 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.
10. To minimise risk to the fund the decision was taken in 2017/18 to pay grants in arrears on receipt of invoices or other evidence. This approach differs from practice in some other parts of the County where payments are made to businesses as soon as the bid is approved. The payment-on-invoice approach is one key means on reducing risk to the fund and ensuring that grant payments do support the delivery of genuine growth or the recruitment of an apprentice.
11. The approach to due diligence adopted for Mid Sussex also differs from approaches used elsewhere in the County. The desk research part of the due diligence work is complemented by site visits to all businesses whose bids meet the eligibility criteria. We believe this is a proportionate approach that protects the Micro Business Grant Fund whilst ensuring that no undue administrative burden is presented to businesses in accessing grants that they have successfully secured. The due diligence process also ensures that businesses understand the application process and the approach the Council takes in paying the grants.

## **Equality implications**

12. As part of the due diligence process all of the businesses whose bids are included in this report Council have been assessed to be in compliance with the requisite policies/legislation, in particular the 2010 Equality Act.

## **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 Micro Business Grant Scheme are held in the Economic Development Team.