

# Chichester District Council

CABINET

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## Enabling Grants to support New and Existing Businesses

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the proposed continuation of the Enabling Grants scheme for 2022/23, funded by £71,428 allocated from the Pooled Business Rates Fund.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Since 2016 £71,428 has been secured annually from the pooled business rate fund to offer the Enabling Grant scheme.
- 3.2 From 2016, the scheme has awarded 182 grants to businesses across the District, with many seeing their business turnover increase. This has created economic growth and new job opportunities in the District. Grants have funded a range of projects including apprenticeships, new websites, the purchase of equipment to develop new products and services and upgrading of shop interiors.
- 3.3 Each round of the scheme has been administered within the Council's Economic Development Service and an important aspect of the scheme is that it is easy to access.
- 3.4 Following the success of the scheme to date across the County, a further application to the Pooled Business Rates Fund, in conjunction with the other West Sussex districts and boroughs, has now been approved, with the Council securing a further £71,428 to continue the scheme in 2022/23.
- 3.5 In order to access the funds, a lead authority is needed and this Council's Economic Development team have agreed to fulfil this role for the 2022/23 programme. Without a lead authority, the scheme cannot proceed and the funds would not be available. As the lead Authority, CDC will be required to coordinate regular updates from the other participating districts and boroughs to provide feedback on grants awarded, match-funding secured and jobs created.

3.6.1 It should be noted that it is highly unlikely the scheme will be able to continue beyond 2022/23, as Pooled Business Rates monies will not be available for this purpose. It is therefore considered important to deliver the scheme for 2022/23 to ensure businesses are supported this way whilst funds are still accessible.

## **4 Proposal**

4.6 The Enabling Grant Scheme is planned to launch in April 2022 on the same simple-to-operate and easy-to-access basis as the previous grant scheme. The eligibility criteria have been reviewed and applicants are required to consider environmental sustainability within their project proposals. Applications from businesses providing green jobs will be prioritised.

4.7 Each applicant will be eligible for up to 50% of the total cost of their project, subject to a maximum of £2,000. The grants will not be offered to fund spend incurred by businesses retrospectively.

4.8 Smaller grants up to a maximum of £500 will be available for start-up businesses, without the need for match funding from the applicant.

## **5 Outcomes to be Achieved**

5.6 To create jobs and growth by:

- giving small businesses the confidence to try something new
- enhancing the entrepreneurial culture within the District
- increasing access to new markets for small businesses
- encouraging investment by small business owners

5.2 The application forms will ask applicants to state their intended outcomes, jobs created, business turnover, profit enhancements, etc. The Council will then carry out a post-project evaluation to measure the outcomes.

## **6 Alternatives Considered**

6.6 Do nothing. With funding available this is not considered appropriate.

## **7 Resource and Legal Implications**

7.6 CDC will receive £71,428 from the Pooled Business Rates Fund. Based on data from previous years' schemes, this could lead to a minimum of £71,428 being invested as match funding by businesses securing enabling grants.

7.7 The scheme will be administered by the Economic Development Service and no additional resources are required. The team will also coordinate the scheme county-wide, with this work being undertaken by existing resource.

## **8 Consultation**

8.6 The proposal for this Enabling Grants scheme has been considered by the Economic Development Panel, who highlighted the need to review and finesse the eligibility

criteria to cover the area of environmental sustainability, which is referenced in paragraph 4.1 of this report.

## 9 Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.6 This scheme supports the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan and Economic Development Strategy.

## 10 Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		x
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b> The evaluation will consider environmental sustainability within their project proposals and that applications from businesses providing green jobs will be prioritised	x	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>		x
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		x
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		x
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		x
<b>Other</b> (please specify)		x

## 11 Appendix

None

## 12 Background Papers

None