

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

1 November 2016

Supporting Businesses through Enabling Grants for New and Existing Small Businesses

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Cabinet approves the Enabling Grant Scheme for new and existing small businesses, as set out in section 4, supported by £83,333 allocated from the Pooled Business Rate Fund, and that the Head of Commercial Services be authorised to approve grants under the scheme.
- 2.2. That the Cabinet approves that a record of all grants allocated under the scheme be reported to the Grants and Concessions Panel to ensure co-ordination of the two approval processes.

3. Background

- 3.1 Between 2005 and 2009 the Council operated an 'Enabling Grant Scheme', which offered small match-funded grants to small businesses for a variety of items ranging from an extractor system for a pub kitchen, to new websites, to provision of office equipment for a new member of staff. The scheme benefitted over 300 Chichester companies district wide, from photographers to farmers, with many seeing their business turnover increase, some by up to 40-50%. This in turn created economic growth and new job opportunities in the District.
- 3.2 In September 2013, the Economic Development Service secured £51,000 in KickStart funding from WSCC to re-establish the scheme, this time focussing on website improvements and e-commerce. Some 60 businesses benefitted from the scheme.
- 3.3 An important aspect of the scheme was that it was easy to access. Each of the above phases of the scheme were administered within the Council's Economic Development Service.
- 3.4 For the past two years, a similar scheme has been operated by Arun District Council's Economic Development Service. Named LEAP (Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Platform), it offers small capital grants up to £2,000 and

apprenticeship training grants up to £1,500. In both cases a business receiving the grant must provide at least 50% match funding.

- 3.5 Following an application to the Pooled Business Rates Fund, the Chief Executives and Leaders group have approved funding of £500,000 for the West Sussex districts and boroughs to operate similar small grants schemes, from December 2016. Chichester District Council has been allocated £83,333.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The Enabling Grants Scheme will be re-established on the same simple-to-operate and easy-to-access basis as before, but widening its focus to include grants for employers taking on apprenticeships.
- 4.2 Each applicant will be eligible for at least 50% of the total cost of their project. Capital projects will be funded to a maximum of £2,000. Grants to assist apprenticeship training will be to a maximum £1,500.
- 4.3 A record of all grants allocated under the scheme will be reported to the Grants and Concessions Panel to ensure coordination of the two approval processes.

5 Outcomes to be Achieved

- 5.1 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
 - increasing apprenticeships across the District
 - assisting individuals who are currently out of work
 - making a difference to the viability, success and growth potential of at least 40 existing small businesses.
- 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 seek actual outcomes. Regular updates will be coordinated by ADC providing updates on grants awarded, match-funding secured and jobs created

6 Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 Do nothing. With funding available this is not considered appropriate.

7 Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 The total budget of £83,333 will be funded from the Pooled Business Rates Fund. We will receive the full funding in advance of the commencement of the scheme. At least £83,333 will be invested by the businesses as match funding.
- 7.2 The scheme will be administered by the Economic Development Service and no additional resources are required.

7.3 The scheme is being coordinated county-wide by Arun District Council's Economic Development Service

8 Community Impact and Corporate Risks

8.1 The scheme supports the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan and its Economic Development Strategy.

9 Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		✓
Climate Change		✓
Human Rights and Equality Impact		✓
Safeguarding		✓
Other		✓

10 Appendix

None

11 Background Papers

None