

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
GEARING UP FOR GROWTH GRANTS PANEL
HELD ON 16TH MARCH, 2015
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

PRESENT –

Panel Members

<i>Councillor J. Starkie</i>	<i>(Substitute for Councillor J. Cooney)</i>
<i>Councillor D. Whipp</i>	
<i>Councillor P. White</i>	
<i>Julie Whittaker</i>	<i>Economic and Housing Regeneration Manager (PBC)</i>
<i>Kevin Clark</i>	<i>Enterprise Lancashire</i>

Also in attendance

<i>Paul Collins</i>	<i>Regeneration Officer (PBC)</i>
<i>Hassan Ditta</i>	<i>Growth Graduate (PBC)</i>
<i>Hanna Latty</i>	<i>Business Development Officer (PBC)</i>
<i>Mike Williams</i>	<i>Tourism Officer (PBC)</i>
<i>Lynne Rowland</i>	<i>Committee Administrator (PBC)</i>

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Cooney and Dean Langton.)



1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors were reminded of the legal requirements concerning the declaration of interests. Other members of the Panel were also asked to declare any interest as appropriate.

The following person declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the item indicated –

Councillor P. White	Graduate Programme – Grassroots	Minute No.6
	Wholesale Food, Higham	

2. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of this Panel, at a meeting held on 2nd February, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. APPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM GRANTS

The Panel was provided with a project summary and an overview of the business with regard to the following applications for tourism grants.

(a) Pendle Heritage Centre, Barrowford

Pendle Heritage Centre was run by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a not for profit organisation which helped rescue and restore historic buildings. It had a museum, a walled garden, a visitor information centre, a café and a shop. To generate further income the Trust had increasingly tried to use the Barn for functions, but had been hampered by poor catering facilities.

This project involved flattening the walls of the kitchen to bring it up to modern hygienic specifications and the provision of a catering cooker and large refrigerator. It was expected to generate an extra 11,700 visitors, generating an estimated £175,500 per annum to the local economy.

The project would create one full time and three part time jobs and safeguard four full time and 14 part time jobs.

AGREED

That, subject to the relevant planning/building regulation compliance and owner permission for the works, a tourism grant of £3,927 be awarded for the project at Pendle Heritage Centre.

REASON

The project will help generate more income, increasing the sustainability of the Centre and generate more money into the local economy, particularly through staying visitors.

(b) Harwes Farm, Foulridge

The applicant wished to develop an annexe to the main residence at Harwes Farm, Foulridge into a 4/6 bed self-catering holiday let. In order for the annexe to be brought into use as a holiday let, maintenance work needed to be carried out to a damp wall and two bedrooms, the bathroom and kitchenette required improvement.

It was estimated that the project would generate at least £11,466 per annum in visitor expenditure and would create one part time job.

AGREED

That, subject to the appropriate planning/building regulation compliance, a tourism grant of £4,000 be awarded for the project at Harwes Farm, Foulridge.

REASON

The development of a self-catering visitor facility will generate a lot of extra staying visitors to the area and will therefore increase visitor spend in Pendle.

(c) Heather Sheldrick

Heather Sheldrick intended to publish 1,000 copies of a book of walks around Barnoldswick to sell in local outlets. The walks took in local beauty spots and visitor landmarks. It was estimated that half of the guides would be sold to visitors from outside Pendle. The grant was to help towards the cost of designing the book, including map creation, and printing.

It was estimated that the project would generate 500 visitors and £16,000 per annum to the local economy.

AGREED

That a tourism grant £2,558 be awarded to Heather Sheldrick towards the publication of a book of walks around Barnoldswick.

REASON

The project will generate more interest and visitors to the area, resulting in a positive impact on the local economy.

4. APPLICATIONS FOR START-UP GRANTS

The Panel was provided with a project summary and an overview of the business with regard to the following applications for start-up grants. In reaching their decision, the members of the Panel considered the business plans for each business and received information on what the requested grant was to be spent on.

(a) Anna Aldren – Skybear Learning

Anna Aldren was in the process of setting up Skybear Learning which would offer classes for carers in baby massage, baby yoga, Alphababies and Clever Crawlers and Little Learners to help aid their babies' development. The requested grant would match fund the cost of equipment.

The project would create one part time job with a view to becoming full time once the business was established.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £1,675 be awarded to Anna Aldren in support of Skybear Learning.

REASON

The applicant is offering a service that has been cut from the area and already has some classes booked. The business will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(b) Don Lyden – ArtWindow

Don Lyden was in the process of setting up ArtWindow which would sell limited edition prints, framed or unframed, and gift cards. The prints would be recreated paintings by one specific local artist and would be sold online and in galleries, garden centres and gift shops.

The project would create one part time job.

AGREED

That the application for a start-up grant be refused.

REASON

The applicant has a limited business plan and a limited range by restricting the work to one specific artist. The business appears unsustainable and will not contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(c) Liam Stott – Dream Environmental Services Limited

Dream Environmental Services Limited was a pest control business which would provide a service of time and knowledge to eradicate a problem or provide a preventative solution in pest management. It would also sell pest proofing products and fly control products. The service would be provided to a whole spectrum of clients ranging from private tenants/homeowners to a wide variety of businesses including the food industry, healthcare and agricultural farms.

The application included a request for funding towards a Royal Society for Public Health level 3 diploma training course. The Panel felt that this training could be provided at a lesser cost.

The project would create one new job in Pendle in year one and a further job in year two.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £1,482.13 be awarded to Liam Stott in support of Dream Environmental Services Limited, subject to other training alternatives being explored.

REASON

The business has already confirmed a number of reliable clients/contracts in the local area. The business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(d) Jacqueline Smith – Lollipop

Jacqueline Smith intended to set up a new business producing hand painted, bespoke designs on silk. This involved offering large scale designs to schools and the education sector as part of community settings for entrances, foyers and reception areas in public buildings. Jacqueline also wished to showcase her range of designs online and create some marketing/sample boards.

The project would create one full time job.

AGREED

That the application for a start-up grant be refused.

REASON

The business model is unclear and the business appears unsustainable.

(e) Nasir Mahmood – ACE Garage

Nasir Mahmood had set up ACE Garage in November, 2014. His unique selling point was that his prices were fixed for all customers depending on the job rather than charging labour for the hour.

He had applied for a start-up grant to further enhance the services the garage offered to customers by purchasing additional equipment. The investment would allow more complex jobs to be carried out and would allow the applicant to increase the capacity at which the business operated.

Nasir had taken on one apprentice since trading started in November, 2014 and he hoped to create one additional job in the next 12 months.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £2,000 be awarded in principle, subject to all equipment purchased being compliant with appropriate regulations.

REASON

The applicant has clear plans going forward, the business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(f) Rafal Kubicki – Sunbeds Planet

Rafal Kubicki had started the Sunbeds Planet business in June, 2014 and had submitted an application in November, 2014, within the first six months of trading, in line with the start-up grant criteria. The application had first been considered at the Panel meeting held on 2nd February, 2015. However a decision on whether a grant be awarded had been deferred to allow for further information. This additional information was presented to the Panel.

The business would offer five tanning booths and limited retail of tanning lotions, creams and UV glasses from its premises in Nelson and would create two jobs over the next two year period.

AGREED

That the application for a start-up grant be refused.

REASON

The grant is not essential for the continuation of the business.

5. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS FOR GROWTH

The Panel was provided with a project summary, including information on the background of the company with regard to the following applications –

(a) Fuchsia Health and Beauty

Fuchsia Health and Beauty was a beauty salon situated outside the town centre boundary of Colne, which specialised in nail extensions. They also offered bridal packages which included full hair and make-up and packages for parties. The hair element of the bridal packages was currently outsourced.

The business had identified larger premises much closer to the town centre. Relocating to the new premises would allow hair dressing facilities to be offered to the customer and would enable future growth. The premises had not previously been used as a hair and beauty salon and therefore required a full refit to make it fit for purpose.

The project would result in two full time jobs being created. An additional directors job would be safeguarded.

AGREED

That a grant of £5,828 be awarded to Fuchsia Health and Beauty.

REASON

The project will bring one vacant premises back into use and give the business future growth potential. It will also contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(b) Harp Ceramics Limited

Harp Ceramics was a family run business which supplied a wide range of tiles to retail, trade and commercial customers, with a customer base throughout East Lancashire and West Yorkshire. The business was located in a prime retail position in Colne. In order to diversify into bathroom sales the applicant needed to develop an area currently being used as upstairs living space. This would allow the creation of 10 new bathroom displays.

The project would create one full time and two part time positions and an additional full time job would be safeguarded.

AGREED

That a grant of £6,000 be awarded to Harp Ceramics, subject to the appropriate planning permissions being in place.

REASON

The project will result in multiple outputs being met including job creation, safeguarding and the generation of additional rateable floor space. It contributes to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(c) Sugden Limited

Sugden Limited was one of the market leaders in the design and manufacture of hot plate plants for the production of products such as pancakes, English muffins, crumpets, potato cakes, Welsh cakes, farl and soda bread. The business also designed and manufactured systems including conveyor systems, oil spray systems, depositors, biscuit moulders and bespoke handling systems.

They had managed to secure several new contracts and expected to increase turnover by 25% over the next two years. The project was to build an extension onto their existing site to enable them to assemble multiple machines at the same time.

The project would result in 198m² of additional floor space being created as well as four full time skilled jobs and two additional full time semi-skilled jobs being created in the next two years.

AGREED

That a grant of £10,000 be awarded to Sugden Limited.

REASONS

The project will result in the creation of jobs and the generation of additional rateable floor space. It contributes to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

6. GRADUATE PROGRAMME

(Councillor P. White declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item and withdrew from the meeting.)

Councillor J. Starkie – In the Chair

Hanna Latty presented the following requests for graduate placements –

(a) Pure Legal, Nelson

Pure Legal was a solicitors practice in Nelson. The company had identified their own graduate who had started their placement in January, 2015 as a trainee solicitor. The graduate had been asked to supply details of the employment contract. This had not been received by the deadline date.

AGREED

That this request for assistance from the Graduate Placement Scheme be declined.

REASON

The appropriate application process had not been followed.

(b) Businesswise Solutions, Nelson

Businesswise Solutions was a multi-utility provider, which specialised in the procurement and management of energy, telecoms and other essential business expenditure. They had been identified as a Key Growth Company by the Economic Development Team. The graduate would be required to assist energy consultants to deliver services offered to existing and prospective customers with a view to becoming an energy consultant. Businesswise Solutions had considered six CVs from the Council's existing graduate list and would be inviting three of the graduates for interview.

AGREED

That this request for assistance from the Graduate Placement Scheme be approved.

REASON

- (1) *Businesswise Solutions has been successful in contributing to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.***
- (2) *The skills and training required for this placement is matched by graduates registered on the Graduate Placement Scheme.***

(c) Wyndham Vacation Rentals, Earby

Wyndham Vacation Rentals was seeking a graduate in e-commerce and digital marketing. A completed application form and further documentation was still awaited.

AGREED

That this request for assistance from the Graduate Placement Scheme be approved in principle, subject to receipt of the necessary documentation.

REASON

The skills and training for this placement is matched by graduates registered on the Graduate Placement Scheme.

(d) Grassroots Wholesale Food, Higham

Grassroots Wholesale Food had submitted an application for a marketing graduate. The business had been identified as a Key Growth Company by the Economic Development Team.

AGREED

That this request for assistance from the Graduate Placement Scheme be approved.

REASON

The skills and training for this placement is matched by graduates registered on the Graduate Placement Scheme.

7. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The Panel received an update on previous applications as follows –

(a) Denwa Communications

Further to receiving funding approval at the last meeting of the Panel, it was reported that Denwa Communications had employed one of the graduates registered on the Graduate Placement Scheme as a Fast Track ICT Engineer.

Councillor P. White – in the Chair

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Hanna Latty, the Council's Business Development Officer provided an update on the recent work inspiration event which had been held in conjunction with the college and local businesses. Eighteen businesses and over 850 students had been in attendance.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED

That the next meeting of the Panel be held in the new Municipal Year. In the meantime, urgent applications received by 27th April, 2015 be circulated via email, for decision by 4th May, 2015.

CHAIRMAN _____