

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
GEARING UP FOR GROWTH GRANTS PANEL
HELD ON 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2014
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

PRESENT –

Panel Members

Councillor A. R. Greaves

Councillor P. White

Kevin Clark

Dean Langton

Julie Whittaker

Enterprise Lancashire

*Head of Central and Regeneration Services, Pendle Borough
Council (PBC)*

Economic and Housing Regeneration Manager, PBC

Also in attendance

Imtiaz Shah

Hassan Ditta

Hanna Latty

Lynne Rowland

Employer Engagement Officer (PBC)

Growth Graduate (PBC)

Business Development Officer (PBC)

Committee Administrator

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



1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

AGREED

That Councillor P. White be appointed Chairman of the Gearing up for Growth Grants Panel for the municipal year 2014/15.

Councillor P. White (Chairman – in the Chair)

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

At a meeting of the Council's Executive on 24th July, 2014 Members considered a report on the continuing delivery of the successful Gearing Up For Growth economic development programme. It had been agreed that a Grants Panel be convened to assess applications for grants and to investigate the potential for introducing free Wi-Fi in the town centres in the Borough.

The Panel consisted of three Executive Members (2 Conservatives and 1 Liberal Democrat) the Head of Central and Regeneration Services, the Economic and Housing Regeneration Manager and a private sector representative.

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and introductions took place.

3. BACKGROUND CRITERIA AND APPLICATIONS FOR START-UP GRANTS

Imtiaz Shah, the Council's Employer Engagement Officer, provided information on the criteria for start-up grant support 2014/15.

He advised that grant assistance of up to 50% of the eligible costs, subject to a minimum award of £500 and a maximum grant of £2,000 was available. New businesses and/or those trading for less than six months, located within Pendle boundaries were eligible to apply. He provided examples of expenditure that would and would not qualify for assistance under the scheme.

He explained the grant process and provided information on the documentation required, which included a business plan outlining the business case and viability of the business for 12 months plus; a 12 month cash flow forecast and 2 quotes for all the items being claimed for under the grant scheme. All grants would be paid retrospectively on evidence of expenditure /payment by the applicant and only for payments made after the date of the offer letter.

The Panel was provided with a project summary and an overview of the business with regard to the following applications. 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) 360 Degree Care – Dr Javeed

360 Degree Care – Dr Javeed aimed to deliver a standard of excellence within the domiciliary care sector by providing care related support services to raise the standards and quality of life for those living in the community.

AGREED

That the application for grant assistance of £2,000 be supported, subject to the applicant seeking additional support from elsewhere.

REASON

The business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(b) Aneesa Neelam

Aneesa Neelam intended to establish an online one stop baby shop with a USP that all products had been made by independent people in the UK and was the only stock she intended to sell.

AGREED

That the request for a grant of £500 be refused.

REASON

The business appears unsustainable and will not contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(c) Claire Parry – The Natural Therapy Centre

The Natural Therapy Centre offered natural therapies to rebalance the mind, body and soul by using a unique combination of therapies tailored to each individual client. However, it was reported that Claire Parry was not yet fully qualified to deliver all of the therapies.

AGREED

That Claire Parry be advised to obtain the necessary qualifications to deliver all of the therapies advertised and be encouraged to submit a further application once qualified.

REASON

In support of the new business and to increase its chance of success.

(d) Andrew Pickard – Aspire Personal Training

Mr Pickard's business idea was to open and run his own personal training environment to which his current and potential new clients could have exclusive access to a tailored training environment and equipment.

AGREED

That a decision on whether a grant be awarded to Aspire Personal Training be deferred to the next meeting of the Panel.

REASON

To allow for further information.

(e) Amy Greenhall – Little Blossoms of Barrowford

Little Blossoms of Barrowford was a business that would provide high quality childcare and education for children from 3 months to 5 years of age.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £2,000 be awarded to Amy Greenhall in support of Little Blossoms of Barrowford.

REASON

The business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(f) Mohammed Ismail – Next Destination

Mohammed Ismail intended to launch his own brand of tailor made long haul travel. This would be predominantly based online, targeting the more discerning customer, to specialised and bespoke travel destinations.

AGREED

That Mr Ismail's application for a start-up grant to launch 'Next Destination' be refused.

REASON

The business appears unsustainable and will not contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(g) Marcin Burzynski – SAMI SWOI Continental Delicatessen Shop

Mr Burzynski planned to open a shop in Nelson which offered a unique selection of the finest quality cold meats, fresh produce and bakery at an affordable price.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £2,000 be awarded to Mr Burzynski in support of his proposal to open a shop in Nelson, subject to the appropriate planning permissions being in place.

REASON

The business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

4. BACKGROUND, CRITERIA AND APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS FOR GROWTH

Hassan Ditta, the Council's Growth Graduate provided information on the criteria for Grants for Growth funding. The purpose of the grant was to assist growth and development of private sector businesses within Pendle.

Existing businesses located within Pendle which had been trading for over 6 months were eligible to apply for grant assistance of up to 25% of the eligible costs, subject to a minimum award of £2,000 and a maximum grant of £10,000. Examples of expenditure that would and would not qualify for assistance under the scheme were provided. All projects must create new jobs and the grant would be funded proportionately.

He explained the grant process and provided information on the documentation required in support of the application. In this case, three itemised quotations based on a common specification would be required for all aspects of the proposed development, where appropriate. All grants would be paid retrospectively on evidence of expenditure /payment by the applicant and only for payments made after the date of the offer letter.

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

(a) J D Engineering Ltd

J D Engineering had been established in 1979. The company had not been trading for the previous 10 years, however machinery owned by J D Engineering had been sublet to local engineering companies during this time. The aim was to kick start the company into a leading

engineering company in Pendle, that also specialised in 3D printing. The project would create 3.5 full time equivalent jobs consisting of 3 full time jobs and one part time position.

AGREED

- (1) That this application for a Grant for Growth be refused.
- (2) That the applicant be invited to submit a further application after having traded for at least six months.

REASON

In order to satisfy the Grants for Growth criteria.

(b) Weighing Scales Ltd

Weighing Scales Ltd had been established in 2006 and sold, serviced, repaired and calibrated all types of weighing equipment from medical scales to weigh bridges. The business also serviced microscopes and tested laboratory equipment.

In order to allow the business to continue to grow, the company was to relocate from their existing premises to a significantly larger unit on Brunswick Street in Nelson. However, work was required on the Brunswick Street unit to make the building fit for purpose. Two quotations had been submitted in support of the application. The project would create one full time unskilled position and one further part time position.

AGREED

That a grant of £4,024 be awarded to Weighing Scales Limited, subject to written confirmation from the applicant that a third quotation could not be obtained.

REASON

The project contributes to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

5. BACKGROUND, CRITERIA AND APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAMME

Imtiaz Shah gave an overview of the Graduate Placement Scheme, through which Pendle Council would provide grant funding as part of its Gearing up for Growth Scheme to support local businesses and organisations. The Council would subsidise the cost of taking on a skilled graduate, with a relevant degree, for 6 – 12 months.

The Scheme had been designed to help Pendle graduates make their mark with local businesses and organisations, using their skills and training and had been running since 2013. However, it was felt that the process needed to be reviewed.

AGREED

That a review of the Graduate Placement Scheme process be carried out and the results reported

back to the next meeting of the Panel.

REASON

To establish if the process can be improved.

6. FREE WI-FI IN TOWN CENTRES

The Chairman advised that, at a meeting of the Council's Executive on 24th July, 2014 it was agreed that this Panel would investigate the potential for introducing free Wi-Fi in the town centres in the Borough and that £100,000 would be initially ring-fenced for this project.

By comparing 4 different towns, Hanna Latty, the Council's Business Development Officer had established that various different approaches had been used in providing Wi-Fi access in town centres, with no commonality in the models. It had also been noted that this service was not always provided by the local authority. It was felt that further investigation was required.

AGREED

That the Council's Business Development Officer be asked to carry out further investigations into the potential for introducing free Wi-Fi in town centres in the Borough, to include discussions with Lancashire County Council over their possible involvement in the project, and report back to the next meeting of the Panel.

7. BACKGROUND TO THE INWARD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

AGREED

That a report on the Inward Investment Programme be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED

That the next meeting of the Panel be held at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 3rd November and every four weeks thereafter.

CHAIRMAN _____