

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
GEARING UP FOR GROWTH GRANTS PANEL  
HELD ON 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2016  
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

*PRESENT –*

*Councillor M. Iqbal – Chairman (In the Chair)*

**Panel Members**

*Councillor D. Whalley*

*Councillor D. Whipp*

*Julie Whittaker*

*Kevin Clark*

*Housing, Health and Economic Development Services Manager (PBC)*

*Enterprise Lancashire*

**Officers in attendance**

*Hanna Latty*

*Hassan Ditta*

*Lynne Rowland*

*Business Development Officer (PBC)*

*Employer Engagement Officer (PBC)*

*Committee Administrator (PBC)*



**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.

**2. MINUTES**

**AGREED**

That the Minutes of this Panel, at a meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. 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) Kaleem Ali – NBC Property Agents**

Kaleem Ali had set up NBC Property Agents near Nelson Town Centre and offered services in property sales, lettings and management.

The requested grant was for the purchase of illuminated window pockets and to cover the cost of training.

It was reported that the project had created five full time jobs, which included two directors, an office manager, sales negotiator and a legal advisor.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

**AGREED**

That Kaleem Ali be awarded a start-up grant of £1,488 in support of NBC Property Agents.

**REASON**

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

**(b) Thomas Jordan – Blackoak Surfacing**

Blackoak Surfacing was predominantly an asphalt surfacing company, but with a high demand in groundworks. They offered related services such as excavation, installing sub bases, kerbing, drainage and white lining. They also provided design visuals for installations such as car parks or school grounds. The target clients were council authorities and construction/development firms.

The Panel noted that, although the business had been established in August, 2015, the application for a start-up grant had been submitted within the first six months of trading in accordance with the criteria.

The requested grant would be used to purchase equipment.

The business would create four jobs within 12 months and a further two within two years.

**AGREED**

That Thomas Jordan be awarded a start-up grant of £2,000 in support of Blackoak Surfacing.

**REASON**

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

**(c) Amie Dickinson - Apricity**

Amie Dickinson was in the process of setting up a business producing quality bespoke furnishings, initially focussing on upholstered footstools, storage chests and Queen Anne window seats. She also planned to offer a reupholster service in the near future, depending on demand.

The requested grant would be used to purchase equipment, develop a website and further training.

The business would create one new skilled job.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

**AGREED**

That a start-up grant of £1,617 be awarded to Amie Dickinson in support of Apricity.

**REASON**

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

**(d) Sajad Ahmed – Convenience store**

Sajad Ahmed planned to open a large convenience store situated on the main road in Brierfield which would serve the local community as well as the passing trade.

The requested grant would be used to purchase equipment and carry out building works and marketing.

The project would create three full time equivalent jobs within 12 months.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

Mr Ahmed had also applied for a premises improvement grant for the installation of a new shopfront and associated signage.

**AGREED**

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

**REASON**

***This is a high risk investment with over optimistic income levels.***

**(e) Jake Fleming – Fleming Electrical Services**

Jake Fleming was in the process of setting up Fleming Electrical Services, an electrical contract company which would provide a high standard of electrical installations across a wide range of areas including domestic, commercial and industrial.

The requested grant would be used to purchase equipment, vehicle adverts and further training.

The project would create one full time job.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

**AGREED**

That a start-up grant of £1,118.99 be awarded to Jake Fleming in support of Fleming Electrical Services.

**REASON**

***The applicant has a realistic business plan, the business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.***

**(f) Shazia Mustafa – Driver Education Centre**

Shazia Mustafa, a self-employed, fully qualified government approved driving instructor, planned to open the Driver Education Centre in Nelson to help the general public prepare for their Driver Theory Test and Hazard Perception Test. In addition to the theory test element, Shazia also wanted to teach people to become driving instructors.

The requested grant would be used to carpet throughout the Nelson premises and to purchase equipment, promotional and learning material.

The project would create three full time jobs.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

**AGREED**

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

**REASON**

***The Driver Education Centre is an extension of the existing driving school and is therefore not a start-up business.***

**4. GRANTS FOR GROWTH**

**(a) 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 –

**(i) Beech's Butchers**

Beech's Butchers had been operating in Barrowford since 1959 and had been purchased by the current owners in 2003. A website had recently been launched to promote the business to new customers which would eventually be transformed into an ecommerce site to allow customers to buy online. In addition, the business also offered packaged promotional offers which had been highly successful and accounted for 10-15% of weekly sales. They also planned to introduce ready meals into their product range.

The project was a full refit of the premises, which consisted of new counters, new fridges and new display areas.

As a result of the project it was expected that four full time jobs would be created. Two full time jobs would also be safeguarded.

**AGREED**

That a grant of £8,164 be awarded to Beech's Butchers.

**REASON**

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

**(ii) Unique Clean (NW) Limited**

Unique Clean had been established in 2011 and became a limited company in May 2014. The company had experienced significant growth over the past few years and had been winning contracts on a regular basis, expanding their customer base.

As a result of the growth Unique Clean wanted to purchase equipment to help complete the additional work and leave scope to deal with future growth. They would also consider hiring the equipment out to other cleaning companies when not in use.

As a result of the project they expected to create eight full time jobs. Five full time jobs would also be safeguarded.

**AGREED**

That –

- (1) this application for a grant be refused;
- (2) Unique Clean (NW) Limited be invited to meet with Enterprise Lancashire to discuss a support package.

**REASON**

***The company is currently overtrading and is need of help and support.***

**(iii) Option Hygiene Limited**

Option Hygiene Limited was a janitorial supplies company that also produced cleaning products and sold disposable catering products, disposable paper products and furniture. The business had been established in August 1997 and since then had steadily grown.

The company currently had the option to expand into bulk cleaning chemical production and required an automated filling machine to enable a more cost effective process.

As a result of the project they expected to create three full time jobs and also safeguard eleven full time jobs.

**AGREED**

That a grant of £2,663 be awarded in support of Option Hygiene Limited.

**REASON**

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

**(iv) Ryan Waine Plumbing and Heating**

Ryan Waine Plumbing and Heating had been established in 2006 and had since expanded from offering standalone plumbing services to incorporating heating, electrical, renewable technologies. The company also offered a bathroom design and installation service.

In preparation for expanding the luxury bathroom installation side of the business they had purchased a town centre premises in Earby that had been vacant for a number of years. The project was to convert the premises into a bathroom showroom.

As a result of the project, the business would create two skilled full time jobs and an additional 1.5 full time equivalent part time jobs. It would also safeguard three jobs.

**AGREED**

That consideration of this application be deferred to the next meeting of this Panel.

**REASON**

***To allow for further clarification.***

**(v) Ribble Valley Reindeer Hire**

Ribble Valley Reindeer Hire had been established in 2014 and specialised in reindeer hire for both public and private events.

The business was seasonal, with the majority of bookings in winter, and had numerous repeat customers. To continue to grow, the business wanted to invest in additional reindeer to allow them to take on multiple bookings simultaneously.

The requested grant would cover the cost of purchasing four reindeer.

As a result of the project the business would create two unskilled part time jobs.

**AGREED**

That this grant application be refused.

**REASON**

***The business is not a high growth business. It appears unsustainable and will not contribute to the Council's priorities of sustaining strong economic growth.***

**(b) Boothman Park, Barley**

The Business Development Officer reported that, prior to the establishment of this Panel, a grant of £7,000 had been awarded in support of Boothman Park, Barley. The grant award had been subject to the appropriate planning permissions being in place. A number of discussions had

taken place with the applicant since the award in 2014, reminding him of the need to apply for planning permission. The most recent meeting had been held in December, 2015, at which the applicant was advised that progress would need to be made by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016. As at today's date, no planning application had been received.

The Panel was therefore asked to consider whether the grant award be cancelled.

**AGREED**

That the grant award of £7,000 in support of Boothman Park, Barley be cancelled.

**REASON**

***The applicant has failed to submit the necessary information to proceed with the project.***

**5. INWARD INVESTMENT FUND**

The Panel considered an application from Pendle Rise Shopping Centre. The Centre was running a 'Win a shop' competition, in partnership with Pendle Council and 2BR radio, and sought funding to allow the prize winner to be exempt from Business Rates charges for one year, as part of the overall prize.

It was anticipated that the competition would create approximately four jobs and would improve the perception of opportunity to other potential business owners in the area.

The Panel was reminded that Pendle Rise Shopping Centre was currently in receivership and was bought by the current owners, Fairacre, in 2015.

**AGREED**

- (1) That funding from the Inward Investment Programme to allow the 'Win a shop' prize winner to be exempt from Business Rates charges for one year be agreed in principle.
- (2) That the prize winner be directed to apply for funding from the Inward Investment Programme at the appropriate time.
- (3) That the prize winner's application be given favourable consideration, subject to receipt of a viable business plan and cash flow forecast.

**REASON**

- (1) ***In support of this initiative.***
- (2) ***In order to comply with the Inward Investment Programme criteria.***

**6. GRADUATE SCHEME**

At a previous meeting of the Panel it had been agreed that, in accordance with the graduate programme, three graduates be employed by the Council. Subsequently it was agreed that these be placed in three separate service areas – Financial Services, Economic Development and Building Control. It was reported that one graduate was now in post in Financial Services and the job description for Economic Development had been approved. Due to an internal secondment,

there was no longer a vacancy in Building Control, therefore permission was sought for the third graduate placement to be placed in Neighbourhood Services.

Previously, a number of applications from private sector businesses had also been approved. However, six placements remained outstanding, as the scheme had been unable to provide the niche graduates required. It was proposed that the businesses be given authority to recruit their own graduates, providing that they matched the eligibility criteria.

**AGREED**

- (1) That permission be granted for the Council's third graduate to be placed in Neighbourhood Services.
- (2) That, if placements to private sector businesses are unsuccessful for six months, the cases be reviewed.

**REASON**

***To facilitate with the success of the Graduate Programme.***

**7. COLNE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

The Panel was advised that Colne Town Centre Forum had recently received information on the experiences of Skipton Town Council in establishing a Business Improvement District (BID). This was a defined area in which a levy was charged on all business rate payers, in addition to the business rates bill. The levy was used to develop projects which would benefit businesses in the local area.

It was understood that in Skipton, the BID had enabled the delivery of new projects and had attracted new businesses to the area.

The view of the Forum had been mixed and it was felt that further discussions were necessary.

**AGREED**

- (1) That the Chairman of Colne Town Centre Forum be asked to meet with the Council's Strategic Director and the Council Leader.
- (2) That consideration be given to appointing a consultant to demonstrate the financial benefits to establishing a Business Improvement District in Colne.

**REASON**

***To ensure proper consideration.***

**8. PENDLE BUSINESS CLASS HUB**

Further to the decision of this Panel to fund the delivery of a Pendle Business Class Hub for three years, the Business Development Officer gave an update on progress.

## Gearing up for Growth Grants Panel (30.03.2016)

It was reported that the two participating schools, West Craven High School and Marsden Heights Community College had each been matched with local businesses and meetings were soon to be held to align the objectives.

### **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- The Employer Engagement Officer reported that the Work Inspiration Event held in February had been successful overall. Six Pendle businesses and five schools had attended and feedback was awaited.
- It was reported that there had been a good number of entries for the Pendle Business Awards. All the small sponsorship packages and all but two of the large packages had been sold.

### **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be agreed.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_