

4. GEARING UP FOR GROWTH PROGRAMME IN 2015/16

The Business Development Officer provided a summary of achievements of Start-up and Grants for Growth 2012-2016, which included statistics specific to the 2015/16 programme. In the last year the programme had helped create 15 new businesses; supported 12 businesses to grow; created 76 new jobs; and increased private sector investment by £385k, with a further £563k projected. There had also been 12 business seminars held during business month and the Council had hosted a Work Inspiration Event for Pendle Year 9 students and 25 businesses.

The programme had proved to be successful, with a 93% survival rate of businesses supported with a start-up grant in the last two years.

5. 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) Craig Stubbs/Alan Craig Art Ltd

Craig Stubbs was setting up Alan Craig Art Limited as a sole trader and intended to combine fine art photography and aerial photography. The unique selling point was that, by applying a technique to the aerial photography, captured using drones, a photograph was made to look like a painting. The fine art photography would involve landscapes and portraits.

It was reported that Mr Stubbs would be securing a loan from Business Finance Solutions for equipment; college fees; on-going printing and cashflow for running the business during set up. This start-up application was to match fund the purchase of equipment.

The project would create one part time job, up to 16 hours per week.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

The Panel discussed the various elements of the proposal and questioned the compliance with regulations.

AGREED

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

REASON

There is concern that this business proposal does not comply with the necessary regulations. In addition, due to the limitation on time devoted to the business, it appears unsustainable and will not contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(b) Kenneth Halstead – KH Engineering Services

Kenneth Halstead was to offer programming services to users of CNC turning and multi-tasking

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lathes on specific operating programmes and convert other machines on different programming systems to a standard system. The programming system would allow changes in process and machining more simplistic and less time consuming.

Initially, Mr Halstead planned to employ third parties and subcontract work rather than employing additional staff.

The requested grant would be used to purchase specialist software.

The business would create one full time job.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

AGREED

That Kenneth Halstead be awarded a start-up grant of £2,000 in support of KH Engineering Services.

REASON

Due to Mr Halstead's specialist knowledge and contacts the business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

(c) Lisa Gervaise T/A Ear Care Clinic

Lisa Gervaise was setting up a business in ear micro suction – the removal of ear wax using microscopic vision and a suction device. In addition, hearing tests would be on offer as well as advice for further management.

The business would be located within an existing clinic in Barrowford.

The requested grant would be used to purchase equipment to carry out the micro suction procedures.

Ms Gervaise would continue with her existing job initially and would work on this project part time.

Enterprise Lancashire had provided the applicant with business support.

AGREED

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

REASON

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

6. GRANTS FOR GROWTH

The Panel was provided with a project summary, including information on the background of the

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company with regard to the following applications –

(a) Raptor Titanium Limited

Raptor Titanium Limited had been established in 2012 and manufactured custom motorcycle parts tailored for the motorcycle racing community. The majority of the manufacturing was done on-site, however certain elements were outsourced as they did not have machining facilities on-site.

The project was to purchase a second robotic arm which would allow the company to fully automate the manufacturing process. This would increase their production capacity and reduce manufacturing costs which would allow them to become more competitive in their sector.

The requested grant would go towards the purchase of one robotic arm.

As a result of the project the business would create one managerial post and one semi-skilled job.

AGREED

That a grant of £4,250 be awarded to Raptor Titanium Limited.

REASON

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

(b) Michael James Furniture

Michael James Furniture had been established in 2009 and manufactured high quality bespoke wooden furniture. The units were designed according to detailed CAD drawings.

An award of a previous grant to assist with the cost of purchasing a CNC router, had resulted in the company doubling their turnover and increasing retained profits. Unprecedented growth had led to the company working at capacity and, to continue growing, they wanted to purchase two new machines.

The requested grant would contribute to the purchase of equipment.

As a result of this project the business would create two full time posts which would consist of one skilled job and one semi-skilled.

AGREED

That a grant of £6,000 be awarded to Michael James Furniture.

REASON

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

(c) Paprika Lady Ltd

Paprika Lady Ltd had been established in 2012 and imported high quality paprika powder and spice mixes from Hungary. The business had received a lot of positive feedback about its product from major UK retailers but had not managed to secure sales due to the packaging and lack of marketing on the products. As a result of this, investment had been made over the previous year on branding and packaging and they now felt ready to purchase a packing machine in preparation for the larger quantity of orders expected.

The new packing machine would allow them to pack the product into 50 gram, fully branded tins.

As a result of the project, the business would create 4.5 full time jobs.

AGREED

That –

- (1) this application for a grant be refused;
- (2) Paprika Lady Limited be invited to re-apply for a grant once the product has gone to market, and orders have been received.

REASON

The purchase of a packing machine is premature, as the market for the product has not been proven.

7. APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The Employer Engagement Officer reported that, since the last meeting, two start-up grants and two growth grant applications had been determined by the Panel via email.

A start-up grant of £968 had been awarded to Mohammed Shafait T/A Plumbserve. Also, Karen Handford (Handford Housekeeping) had been awarded a start-up grant of £611.

The two growth grant applications had first been considered at the last meeting of the Panel. As requested, Ryan Waine Plumbing and Heating had supplied further information and Unique Clean (NW) Limited had received support from Enterprise Lancashire. Both applications had been approved.

8. UPDATE ON THE PENDLE BUSINESS AWARDS

The Business Development Officer reported that the Pendle Business Awards held earlier in the month had gone well. The awards had been opened with a film promoting investment in Pendle and it was planned to include this on the Council's website. Consideration would soon be given to the categories for next year's awards with a view to attracting new businesses. The Panel agreed that it was important to highlight the varied types and sizes of businesses in Pendle.

9. COLNE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Following discussions at the last meeting, the Regeneration Officer reported that indicative figures

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had been generated to help determine the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) in Colne. It had been confirmed that a levy on town centre based businesses alone would not be sufficient to successfully operate a BID. However, the inclusion of businesses on North Valley could potentially generate revenue of £90 – £100k per annum at a rate of 1%.

AGREED

- (1) That this Panel supports the establishment of a Business Improvement District in Colne.
- (2) That the Regeneration Officer be asked to re-consider the boundaries of the proposed Business Improvement District, to include businesses such as Asda and Boundary Mill, and calculate the possible revenue to be generated.

10. PENDLE BUSINESS CLASS HUB

The Business Development Officer reported on progress with the Pendle Business Class Hub.

The Panel was advised that West Craven High School had been matched with Silentnight, Hope Technology and Cottages.com and had almost agreed an action plan.

Marsden Heights Community College had been matched with Businesswise Solutions, 3B Systems and Daisy Group and was currently developing its action plan.

It was planned to publically launch the scheme in September, 2016.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

At the last meeting, the Panel was advised of a 'Win a shop' competition being run by Pendle Rise Shopping Centre in partnership with Pendle Council and 2BR radio. The Regeneration Officer reported that, following consideration of the three entries received, a beauty salon had been chosen as the winner.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting of the Panel be held in early September, 2016.

CHAIRMAN _____