

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
GEARING UP FOR GROWTH GRANTS PANEL
HELD ON 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2017
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

PRESENT –

Councillor D. Whipp (In the Chair)

Panel Members

Councillor M. Arshad

Councillor A. Mahmood (Substitute for Councillor M. Iqbal)

Julie Whittaker Housing, Health and Economic Development Services Manager (PBC)

Kevin Clark Enterprise Lancashire

Officers in attendance

Paul Collins Business Support Team Leader (PBC)

Hassan Ditta Employer Engagement Officer (PBC)

Judith Stockton Senior Regeneration Officer (PBC)

Ashleigh Smith Economic Promotion Graduate (PBC)

Lynne Rowland Committee Administrator (PBC)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Iqbal)

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9. 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 an interest in the item indicated –

Kevin Clark	Grants for Growth - The Physio & Therapy Rooms Limited	Minute No.12(d)
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10. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of this Panel, at a meeting held on 4th July, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. 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 plan and received information on what the requested grant was to be spent on.

(a) Adrian Banks – AMB Pest and Wildlife Management

Adrian Banks was in the process of setting up a professional pest control company. He would provide a range of services to a whole spectrum of clientele ranging from private tenants/homeowners to businesses, including the food industry, healthcare and agricultural farms.

The requested grant was for the purchase of equipment.

The project would create one full time job initially.

Enterprise Lancashire had approved the business plan and cash flow.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £1,521 be awarded to Adrian Banks in support of AMB Pest and Wildlife Management.

REASON

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

(b) Kyran Potter – GreenByte IT Disposal Ltd

Kyran Potter was in the process of setting up GreenByte IT Disposal Ltd which would offer secure data destruction and IT disposal services nationwide, collecting redundant end of life IT from education and business sectors.

The requested grant was for the purchase of a Hard Drive destroyer.

The business would not create any new jobs as Kyran was currently in full time employment. However, this would be reviewed as the business grew.

Enterprise Lancashire had approved the business plan and cash flow.

AGREED

That a start-up grant of £2,000 be awarded to Kyran Potter in support of GreenByte IT Disposal Ltd.

REASON

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

(c) Iram Nasser – New Look Clinic

For the past couple of months, Iram Nasser had been operating a beauty business from home. She now wished to expand with medical beauty treatments, for which she needed to purchase a microdermabrasion machine.

It was intended that the project would create two full time equivalent jobs.

It was reported that Enterprise Lancashire had approved the business plan and cash flow, with some points to note.

AGREED

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

REASON

The business does not appear sustainable and therefore does not meet the Council's priorities of sustaining strong economic growth.

12. 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) Bees Boutique

Bees Boutique was a retail business that created bespoke couture for ladies and men. The business also supplied bespoke jewellery and offered a tailoring service. It was established in 2013.

The project was to purchase two new sewing machines which would allow the company to produce up to 90% of the garments in house to a much higher quality and detail. The machines would also enable further customisation of garments.

A second element was to develop an ecommerce website.

The project would create 1.5 full time equivalent jobs.

Consideration of this application had been deferred at a previous meeting of the Panel, to allow for further information. The requested information had been received and was considered when determining the application.

AGREED

That a grant of £2,500 be awarded to Bees Boutique.

REASON

The business appears sustainable and will contribute to the Council's priority of creating jobs.

(b) Games@Nine

Games@Nine was a business that bought and sold electronic goods including games and games consoles, televisions, laptops and mobile phones. It was set up in 2015.

The business had grown to the stage where the existing retail space was insufficient to allow additional growth as there was not enough storage room for goods.

The project was to convert a space at the back of the building for additional storage and would create one part time job.

It was reported that some of the requested information was still awaited.

AGREED

That this application for a growth grant be refused.

REASON

It would not represent a sound investment.

(c) Next Escape Ltd

Next Escape Ltd was a travel agent, which was incorporated in 2014, but only officially started trading in January, 2017.

To move the business forward, an ecommerce website needed to be developed which would allow customers to book flights, hotels, cars or all-inclusive holidays online and make payments online. The current computer equipment also needed to be updated to support new software.

The business had recently started the process to receive ATOL and IATA industry recognised licenses.

The project would create 1.5 full time jobs.

AGREED

That this application for a growth grant be refused.

REASON

It would not represent a sound investment.

(d) The Physio & Therapy Rooms Limited

(Kevin Clark declared a personal interest in this application and therefore took no part in the discussion and abstained from voting.)

The Physio and Therapy Rooms Limited was a physiotherapy clinic that specialised in musculoskeletal therapies.

The business had purchased existing clinic premises in Barrowford and intended to transform them into a modern, well equipped healthcare treatment centre.

The project was to carry out premises improvement works.

It would create four full time jobs and would also allow 4.5 full time equivalent self-employed practitioners to continue to practise from the building.

AGREED

That a grant of £5,000 be awarded to The Physio and Therapy Rooms Limited.

REASON

This is an inward investment and will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating jobs and sustaining strong economic growth.

13. BROWNFIELD SITES GRANT FUND

At the last meeting of the Panel, it was agreed that the maximum amount of funding allowed under European 'de minimus' rules (200,000 euros/approximately £176,000) be awarded for a scheme at the former Reedyford Mill site, Nelson (Pendle Court Phase 2), subject to there being no breach in State Aid rules.

The Panel was advised that, since that meeting, further information had been supplied by the applicant regarding previous public funding they had received. The consequence of this information meant that the funding could not formally be offered to the developer until May 2018.

By this time it was expected that work would have started on 20% of the site, which would leave 80% of the site to be developed.

To support the development of the remainder of the site, the Panel was asked to consider whether, in May 2018, the original level of grant agreed be given, or whether the grant award be apportioned to 80% (approximately £140,800).

AGREED

That the grant award be apportioned to 80% (approximately £140,800).

REASON

To keep the level of profit allowed with grant the same as that agreed at the last Panel meeting.

14. COLNE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Business Support Team Leader gave an update on progress made with developing a Business Improvement District (BID) for Colne.

He advised that the Steering Group had met for the first time, where representation had been 50/50 between Council Members and businesses. This was due to the fact that a number of businesses that had originally shown an interest could no longer commit the time. As it was a requirement of the BID that it be business led, work was ongoing to encourage other businesses to join.

Gearing up for Growth Grants Panel (06.09.2017)

A survey of all Colne businesses had been undertaken to assess the business priorities, which would inform the Colne BID business plan proposal.

The next Steering Group meeting would be held on 18th September.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The Business Support Team Leader reported that, at a meeting of the Executive on 22nd June 2017, it was agreed that the delivery of the Pendle Business Awards be outsourced to a suitable delivery partner, as there was no longer the capacity to deliver the event in-house.

The Panel was advised that an invitation to tender for the 2018 Awards had been issued, with responses due by the end of September.

This Panel had been authorised to agree the allocation of a maximum £30,000 fund for the delivery of the Awards. A separate meeting would be arranged to consider the tender returns.

- The Employer Engagement Officer reported on Pendle Business Week which would take place from 16th to 20th October, 2017. The event was being promoted on social media and referenced in the bi-monthly newsletter to approximately 1700 businesses. Delivery partners had also been asked to actively promote the event.

There were currently 18 sessions pending.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.

CHAIRMAN _____