

Growing Business Fund Grant Panel Meeting Minutes (Confirmed)
Wednesday, 05 February 2020 | 10.00am - 12.30pm
The Cloud, Concertus Design and Property Consultants, 2 Friars Bridge Road
Ipswich Suffolk IP1 1RR

Present - Panel:

Mike Burrows (MB)	Chair
Jeanette Wheeler (JWh)	Birketts
Martin Ince (MI)	Martin Ince Communications
Daryl Griffiths (DG)	Burnett Barker Solicitors
Jackie Potter (JP)	Micropress

In Attendance:

Jason Middleton (JM)	New Anglia LEP
Julie West (JW)	New Anglia LEP
Rose Joy (RJ)	New Anglia LEP
Barry Henson (BH)	Suffolk County Council
Stuart Ager (SA)	Finance East
Amanda Castell (AC)	Finance East
Sam Vinyard-Jones (SV-J)	New Anglia Growth Hub

Actions outstanding | Updates from the meeting: Wednesday, 06 November 2019

PR & Marketing - Action: JW to send details of suitable case study to JWh.

1 Welcome and Introductions

MB welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions made round the table.

2 Apologies received

Vimmi Hayes, Suffolk County Council; Paul Stewart, Center Parcs; Dr Sumathi Sundram, S&V Consultants Ltd; Neil Sargent, Finance East; Dominic Keen, Britbots; Roberta Willner, Norfolk County Council and Chris Dashper, New Anglia LEP

3 Declarations of Interest and GDPR

Declarations of Interest - No Declarations of Interest declared.

4 Meeting Minutes: Panel Meeting held on Wednesday, 06 November 2019

Minutes confirmed with no amendment.

5 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference have been signed off by the LEP Board and therefore will no longer need to be a standing agenda item for compliance. The Terms of Reference will only need to go to the LEP Board as and when there is a significant change(s) or a change in Panel membership.

6 New Applications for Approval (2)

- a) **Focus Trovex LLP - Agreed to support Approved Grant: £73,400**
 Five full-time positions to be created.
Note: This is a **small** business enterprise.

(b) **Condimentum Ltd - Agreed to support Approved increase to the existing grant - £118,483**
 25 full-time positions to be created linked to this project
Note: This is an extension to an existing application

AC provided an update on the additional funding required as a result of changes to the original project.

Employment - Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE) - following discussion the Panel **agreed** they had no issues or concerns.

BH reported that in terms of the grant monies, the expenditure categories are the same as the original application submitted and that this request is a 'top up' for additional expenditure in those categories as a result of changes to the original project as outlined by AC.

It was agreed that Condimentum Ltd would make an excellent project for the LEP to publicise because of its economic benefit to the area.

Action: **JW to liaise with LEP Comms team to arrange LEP publicity as soon as possible.**

7 Small Grant Scheme Update

JM provided update. The Panel noted the award of:

Month	Nos. of grants awarded	Grant Awarded	Total Project Costs
October	7	£59,614	£353,078
November	5	£39,091	£195,458
December	8	£104,403	£629,458

Still seeing a slow-down in the number of Small Grant Scheme applications coming through, and at a lower value, in the same way as the Growing Business Fund applications, due to the current economic uncertainty. However, December turned out to be a 'bumper' month, including two applications for £25k. Although the number of applications coming through has now dropped down, what we are seeing is an increase in the grant value, with grants pitched at just below the Growing Business Fund threshold.

Five grants were approved in January 2020.

The Small Grant Scheme remains ahead of profile. The Panel commented that the scheme is a successful project. JM emphasised that everything will be done to continue the SGS scheme beyond its extension and is currently talking with government to ensure continuation of the SGS scheme and the Growth Hub.

BH provided further update.

The overall programme total is now 274 grants paid, total paid out is £2.547m, with another 38 approved but unclaimed grants totalling £392,000. This leaves approx. £280,000 not committed so the currently available funding is running down now.

8 Funding, Updates and Jobs Creation

Updates - BH updated the panel on the following:

Stephen Walters Ltd. - now paid. General discussion took place on how long productivity monitoring should take place.

Computer Service Centre - did not buy the property but leased it instead, with an option to buy. The grant was paid partly against the property purchase therefore received a proportion of the grant back (£67,100) which has gone back into this year's allocation of funds.

FreshAsia - notified the project never went ahead and have paid back the £400,000 grant monies, these funds to go back to Government as old monies through the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) scheme.

BH updated the Panel on the overall funding position and job creation.

Growing Business Fund - actual spend this financial year now stands at £2.533m, out of the initial allocation of £2.79m. We are now close to full spend and with the one grant approved today of £73,400, we have c.£130,000 left of the original allocation for the year. There are now only three other grants committed but not yet claimed totalling £117,000, which means we could be starting the new financial year with no commitments to carry forward.

The initial allocation for 2020-2021 is again £2.79m, therefore, if we start with no commitments, to actually commit and spend £2.79m will be a tall order to achieve. Ideally, we need some large projects coming through early in the year but even so we may not be paying anything out in Quarter 1 or Quarter 2 and the LEP Board needs to be made aware of this.

BH highlighted the need to look critically at the type of projects being supported, and their timescale, in order to achieve spend and ensure they are paid out by the end of March.

JM reported that he had spoken with the new Growth Hub Manager, Richard Glinn, to brief the Business Advisers of this, and it will be brought to their attention at the LEP/Growth Hub Team Away Day on Tuesday, 11 February 2020.

A further 63 jobs have been evidenced since the last Panel meeting, making the overall total now 2,310 which with the 132 jobs confirmed from the Small Grant Scheme gives an overall figure approaching 2,500 jobs. This is a significant number.

9 GBF Applications 'Pipeline'

JW reported that there is a good pipeline of applications coming through (totalling approx. £2.6m), at various stages.

Hopeful of 3-4 applications being presented to the March Growing Business Fund Panel Meeting.

10 PR and Marketing

JW provided update.

Growth Hub website - now live and being continually updated.

Case studies - Five of the nine case studies have been completed, covering the whole range of business support, including grants. Focus is on getting these into the press and on social media.

Printed material/visual materials - order been placed and gone to print, with pop-ups already delivered.

Press releases – aim to release one per month

Having reached some benchmark figures, the Panel members felt it was a good time to promote and increase the visibility the LEP and the various business support schemes to make businesses aware that support is available and ongoing despite the current economic uncertainty with Brexit..

A marketing campaign (LEP and Growth Hub) covering all grants is now underway and will be ongoing.

Action: JW to speak with the LEP/Growth Hub Comms teams to get key points from The GBF Panel out the same day on social media via LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.

Action: JW to bring the new printed literature for GBF Panel members to distribute.

Scale Up website - now has 180 members signed up to it which has exceeded expectation.

Scale Up events - Next round table event planned for 27 February 2020 - details on the website.

11 Any Other Business

Growing Business Fund Panel membership - it was noted that:

Jeanette Wheeler, Birketts - announced that she will be stepping down from the Panel as of April but will continue to liaise with JW going forward.

Max Applin, Max Applin Consulting - no longer wishes to be on the Panel and has sent a resignation email to this effect.

Action: **JW to start the recruitment process to replace one new Panel member who is also on the LEP Board and be mindful of the potential end date of the GBF Scheme.**

It was also noted that David Dukes has been replaced by Roberta Willner to represent Norfolk County Council on the Panel.

Future of the Growing Business Fund Scheme - continuation of the GBF scheme was discussed. The Panel noted that the LEP see the GBF scheme as a flagship programme that has an important place in supporting the local economy and should be maintained but this is funding dependent.

Smartsheet - BH reported that the current Smartsheet facility used for day to day grant management will cease as of Thursday, 20 February 2020.

Action: **JW to liaise with BH regarding replacement for the Smartsheet going forward.**

Green Agenda - general discussion took place on the need to pro-actively encourage businesses to come forward with projects that address green /environmental/clean energy issues.

JM reported that for the Small Grant Scheme, an executive decision had been made, to only allow awards against vehicles that adhere to the latest emission standards - Euro 6.

The meeting closed at 12.00noon.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 04 March 2020 |10.00am - 12.30pm

Suffolk Suite, Center Parcs, Elvedon Forest, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0YZ.

Annexe 1

New Anglia Small Grant Scheme projects approved in: October 2019 | November 2019 | December 2019

<u>October 2019</u>			
No.	Approved	Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)
1	The Rainbird Partnership Ltd	3,668	18,341
2	WBC (Norfolk) Ltd	5,048	25,243
3	Steele Media Ltd	25,000	180,000
4	SSAF Window Films Ltd	3,490	17,451
5	Revolution Fitness Academy Ltd	8,007	40,036
6	Tom Soper Photography	2,191	10,957
7	Surftech Surfaces Ltd	12,210	61,050
		59,614	353,078
<u>November 2019</u>			
	Approved	Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)
1	Re Form Sports Fitness Ltd	13,078	65,392
2	David Holliday Limited	2,820	14,100
3	Creative Image Management Ltd.	10,260	51,300
4	Big House Holiday Rentals Ltd.	4,800	24,000
5	H. Smith & Sons (Honingham) Limited	8,133	40,666
		39,091	195,458
<u>December 2019</u>			
	Approved	Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)
1	F.W. Frost (Engineers) Ltd.	15,097	75,486
2	Image Display & Graphics Ltd	12,332	61,660
3	DLH Autorecyclers Limited (2)	6,670	33,350
4	J&A Garner - Godwick Hall	25,000	127,459
5	Cross Media Print and Digital Solutions Ltd.	25,000	229,979
6	Thompson Packaging Limited	8,939	44,699
7	DaRo Fibre Products Ltd	8,077	40,385
8	Hoseflex Ltd.	3,288	16,440
		104,403	629,458