

Growing Business Fund Grant Panel Meeting Minutes (Unconfirmed)
Wednesday, 02 September 2020 | 10.00am - 12.30pm
Held via conference call on Microsoft Teams

Present - Panel:

Mike Burrows (MB)	(Chair)
Martin Ince (MI)	Martin Ince Communications
Paul Stewart (PS)	Center Parcs
Dominic Keen (DK)	Britbots
Daryl Griffiths (DG)	Burnett Barker Solicitors
Dr Sumathi Sundram (SS)	S&V Consultants Ltd
C-J Green (C-JG)	Brave Goose

In Attendance:

Jason Middleton (JM)	New Anglia LEP
Rose Joy (RJ)	New Anglia LEP
Barry Henson (BH)	Suffolk County Council
Amanda Castell (AC)	Finance East
Stuart Ager (SA)	Finance East
Neil Sargent (NS)	Finance East

Actions outstanding Updates from the meeting: Wednesday, 03 June 2020	
None	
1	Welcome and Introductions
MB welcomed members and roll call made for attendance purposes. Meeting quorate.	
2	Not present on telecon call
Chris Dashper, New Anglia LEP; Roberta Willner, Norfolk County Council and Vimmi Hayes, Suffolk County Council Apologies received: Julie West, New Anglia LEP; and Jackie Potter, Micropress Limited	
3	Declarations of Interest and GDPR
Declarations of Interest - No Declarations of Interest declared.	
4	Meeting Minutes: Panel Meeting held on Wednesday, 08 July 2020
Minutes confirmed. Project updates - BH provided update. MENTA - work has now started on the project, following increased grant award. Pecksniffs Bespoke Fragrances & Cosmetics Ltd - no further developments.	
5	New Application for Approval (3)
	(1) Polar Systems Limited - Agreed to support Approved grant - £127,741 awarded under <i>De Minimis</i> Eleven full-time positions, two of which will be apprentice positions. Query raised on whether the grant should be awarded under the temporary State Aid <i>De Minimis</i> rate or the standard <i>De Minimis</i> rate. General discussion took place.

Recommendation: business to be informed, in writing, that they have now reached their €200,000 State Aid limit and that they will not be eligible for any further funding.

Recommendation: depending on the timescale of the project, if there is the suggestion of a long lead time, then it would be advisable to steer the business towards paying a significant deposit (say 20%) against the item to enable them to claim the grant.

(2) CTR Secure Services Limited - Agreed to support subject to PEP check.

Approved grant - £160,000

Eight full-time positions to be created.

Note: Company within an Assisted Area - 20%

Query raised whether a Politically Exposed Person (PEP) check has been carried out on the Directors and Shareholders in view of the nature of the business. General discussion took place.

Recommendation - NS to carry out a PEP check prior to confirming grant award.

Query raised of the possible risk of cash flow problems if the common build on the split plot with another business does not go ahead. NS to ascertain from the business what contingency plans they have should the other build not take place and/or be completed.

Recommendation - NS to seek assurance from the business that there will be no significant risk to the project should the other build not take place and that the project will be able to proceed prior to confirming grant award.

(3) Slic Sheet Metal Fabrications Limited - Agreed to support

Approved grant - £31,185

Three full-time positions to be created, one of which will be an apprentice position.

BH confirmed previous BR&RGS grant is complete.

It was noted the business is currently seeing a major uplift in sales due to the hand sanitiser unit, and query raised over sustainability and over trading going forward, post Covid-19 work. AC reassured the Panel that the business was realistically only taking on work that they can achieve. General discussion took place.

6 Small Grant Scheme (SGS) / Growth Through Innovation (GTI) Updates

Small Grant Scheme - JM provided update.

The Panel noted the award of:

- eight Small Grant Scheme grants in the month of June 2020, totalling £84,591 (Grants Awarded) and £405,038 (Total Project Cost), the award of - see Annexe 1.
- three Small Grant Scheme grants in the month of July 2020, totalling £12,182 (Grants awarded) and £60,910 (Total Project cost) - see Annexe 1
- two Small Grant Scheme grants in the month of August 2020, totalling £8,143 (Grants Awarded) and £40,715 (Total Project Cost) - see Annexe 1.

Have seen a significant drop, both in terms of applications and in the number of claims coming forward. Overall SGS has been impacted by Covid-19 because larger grant projects are now going through the BR&R scheme as the business can get a higher intervention rate. This is understandable.

It is anticipated that there will be some SGS coming forward (one is currently going through Due Diligence), but throughput will be significantly lower. Mindful that there will be a need to do a promotional push to encourage more SGS applications as need the match funding to support Growth Hub/Start Up provision which could potentially cause a financial issue if not resolved.

Query raised on the lifetime of the BR&R scheme. Noted that as nearly half of the BR&R funds are already committed, the anticipation is that the scheme will probably run out of funding soon which will negate the impact on SGS.

Growth Through Innovation (GTI) - JM provided update.

The Panel noted the award of:

- five GTI grants in the month of June 2020, totalling £95,591 (Grants Awarded) – see Annexe 2
- five GTI grants in the month of July 2020, totalling £97,401 (Grants awarded) - see Annexe 2
- eight GTI grants in the month of August 2020, totalling £94,841 (Grants Awarded) - see Annexe 2.

Seeing an increase in applications coming through and is on course to meet Programme commitment, however the projects coming forward are longer projects than envisaged so this will mean the Programme will be behind in spend profile. GTI is doing well.

GTI case studies - no case studies done yet, as none have been paid. Will look to develop case studies in due course.

7 Funding, Updates and Jobs Creation

Small Grant Scheme

The overall Programme total is now 302 grants paid, total paid out is £2.82m, with another 36 approved but unclaimed grants totalling £346k. Due to withdrawals and some claims being lower than expected, the amount of uncommitted funds has increased to £295k.

Growing Business Fund

Only a further £10k has been paid out, making £724k for the year to date. With today's approvals, commitments now stand at £1.06m which still leaves £1m left in the pot. There is quite a bit in the GBF pipeline, so we need to prioritise the projects in the pipeline that can spend and claim before the 31 March 2021 deadline.

Growth Through Innovation Fund

No claims due yet, with the first due at the end of September.

Business Resilience & Recovery Grant Scheme

Since first grant approval on 07 May, there have been 63 grants awarded, totalling £2.4m, of which 50 have had an up-front first stage payment. There are another six applications with the Panel for consideration, totalling £250k, and so far with those initial upfront payments have paid out £944k. Have four final claims which is another £86k, so in total have paid out just over £1m and allocated nearly £2.5m of the £7m pot. If the scheme continues at its current run rate run, it will not last beyond January/February next year in terms of funding.

Acknowledged there are some 'grey areas' in the criteria as to what is 'growth' and 'diversification', so one or two projects have been rejected and or re-directed to SGS or GTI as a more appropriate fit. All the projects are looked at critically by the LEP and in some cases are not necessarily getting the full 50% but the overall wish is to support as many businesses as possible, therefore the affordability criteria is put into place when making the decision.

Noted that SCC team are struggling to keep up with the demand created by the BR&R scheme which is on top of the other projects that also need to be claimed and paid.

Job Creation

Only another two more confirmed since the last meeting. Total for GBF and 'old' SGS is now 2,355. SGS figure remains unchanged from last meeting of 138.5 and looks to stay this way for the foreseeable future. This is not surprising given the current climate and SCC have made a 'semi-conscious' decision to park job creation for the time being and will look at undertaking an exercise in the New Year to pick up more jobs at that stage. BH outlined job criteria and general discussion took place on job creation under the current climate.

BR&R and jobs saved by intervention - looking to conduct a one-off evaluation of BR&R scheme towards the end of the Programme to ascertain whether business saved any jobs, created any jobs, and overall impact.

8	GBF Applications 'Pipeline'
<p>There are three applications being prepared at present for submission to the GBF Panel on 07 October, which if approved, will make a big dent in the unallocated funds.</p> <p>It was noted that due diligence for the BR&R scheme is now with Finance East who will have to look carefully at priorities to ensure GBF projects are dealt with as the main priority.</p>	
9	PR and Marketing
<p>Launched two new schemes, the Visitor Economy Grant (VEG) and Wider Economy Grant (WEG) which are bolt-ons to the Business Growth Programme and linked to SGS. Details can be found on the LEP website. Grants will be £1k - £3k with no match funding for businesses impacted by Covid-19. Approx. 195 grants in total. Have had 160 enquiries so far and the LEP newsletter only went out last week to the promote the scheme.</p> <p>LEP Comms team are sending out on a regular basis Covid newsletter using the CRM database of businesses who have signed up (approx. 10,000 on the distribution list) which gives a high penetration rate of businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk. The newsletter gives information on the various schemes available and by tailoring content we can influence take up.</p> <p>Will continue to use newsletters and social media to promote and push schemes out in order of priority.</p>	
10	Any Other Business
None.	
The meeting closed at 11.25am	

**Next Meeting via conference call on Microsoft Teams
Wednesday, 07 October 2020 |10.00am - 12.30pm**

Annexe 1

New Anglia Small Grant Scheme projects approved in June 2020

		Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)
	Approved		
1	CMI Print Services Ltd	13,389	44,631
2	Smart Offices Ltd	9,000	45,000
3	Total Site Services	4,575	22,875
4	Lifeline24 Ltd	4,297	21,487
5	Spa Pavilion Ltd	24,360	121,800
6	Brief Media Ltd.	3,900	23,900
7	WhataHoot Ltd.	24,044	120,220
8	Rob Sambrook Photography	1,026	5,124
	Total	84,591	405,038

New Anglia Small Grant Scheme projects approved in July 2020

		Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)
	Approved		
1	Norfolk Bluebell Wood Ltd	2,440	12,200
2	Tosier Chocolate Ltd (2)	6,742	33,710
3	Newmans Cleaning Services Ltd	3,000	15,000
	Total	12,182	60,910

New Anglia Small Grant Scheme projects approved in August 2020

		Grant	Total
	Approved		
1	Gutter Force Ltd (2)	3,578	17,890
2	Jake Austin Window Cleaning Services	4,565	22,825
	Total	8,143	40,715

Annexe 2

Growth Through Innovation (GTI) Fund Grant Approvals April 2020 to date

Date Approved	Company Name	Grant Awarded
Jun-20	Geotekk	£21,487
Jun-20	Offshore Digital Engineering Ltd	£17,100
Jun-20	MBASO Ltd t/as Supapass	£24,997
Jun-20	Spark EV Technology	£11,082
Jun-20	Showbiz Software Ltd	£20,925
Jul-20	Developing Experts Ltd	£21,892
Jul-20	Siamecric Systems Ltd	£19,098
Jul-20	Purple Line Ltd	£25,000
Jul-20	G-Lok Systems Ltd	£11,161
Jul-20	Coracle Online Ltd	£25,500
Aug-20	James White Drinks Ltd	£13,860
Aug-20	Captain Fawcett Ltd	£3,440
Aug-20	Ensemble Architecture Limited	£9,409
Aug-20	Thyngs Limited	£25,000
Aug-20	Evans (Instruments) Limited	£3,094
Aug-20	Pharmweigh Ltd	£14,388
Aug-20	RATS Marine Limited	£22,500
Aug-20	Just Another Label Ltd	£3,150
Total GTI scheme		£310,333