

Growing Business Fund Grant Panel Meeting Minutes (Confirmed)

Wednesday, 02 December 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 Limited
Kathy Atkinson (KA)	Kettle Foods Limited

In attendance:

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

1 Welcome and Introductions

MB welcomed members to the meeting. Meeting quorate.

2 Not present on telecon call

Apologies received: Stuart Ager, Finance East, and Jackie Potter, Micropress Limited

Not present on the call: Chris Dashper, New Anglia LEP; Vimmi Hayes, Suffolk County Council and Roberta Willner, Norfolk County Council

3 Declarations of Interest and GDPR

Declarations of Interest - KA pointed out a potential conflict with Lifeline 24 Limited based on company proximity to Kettle Foods Limited.

4 Meeting Minutes: Panel Meeting held on Wednesday, 04 November 2020

Meeting notes approved.

Project updates - BH provided update on the following:

- **Olympic construction Limited** - with reference to the previous BR&R grant, BH confirmed that this grant has now been paid and closed. This was an independent project and the new GBF project is going ahead.
- **Pink office Limited** - this project is indirectly linked to the CTR Secure Services Limited project, who had a grant approved in September 2020. BH confirmed notification had been received that the land purchase for the two projects should take place in January 2021 which should enable SCC to pay both grants in due course.

Matters arising

- **GBF Panel Dates** - the Panel noted the tentative dates for January 2021 are now the 13 January and 20 January. JW to confirm which date in due course. Dates for February and March 2021 have been sent.

5	New Applications for Approval (5)
	<p>(1) Lifeline 24 Ltd - Agreed to support £476,450 - GBER 33 new jobs created</p> <p>AC provided background to the grant application and general discussion took place. The Panel noted the money for the development of the new premises, and purchase of additional equipment, will be made available when a sister company repays an intercompany loan next year in April 2021 and that assurance had been given to this effect by the company.</p> <p>The Panel acknowledged that there is market demand for this service and noted the company is having to expand as a result of the increase in sales, the majority of which is from the public sector, and not reliant on contract.</p> <p>Projected annual salaries for the proposed new jobs queried. AC outlined company progression pay scheme and reassurance given.</p> <p>(2) Brisko Scaffolding Ltd - Agreed to support £200,000 - GBER 18 jobs to be created</p> <p>NS provided background to the grant application. The Panel noted that Brisko Scaffolding Limited have been the recipient of a previous GBF award, which has been successfully completed, and is also the recipient of a CBIL loan.</p> <p>Assessed as a Medium sized business but NS pointed out that if connected companies are taken account of, through shareholder ownership, then the business becomes a Large sized business. Panel discussed the overall size of the company and it was agreed that it should be regarded as a Large company in an Assisted Area.</p> <p>Assisted Area status - BH pointed out that the Assisted Area status comes to an end on 31 December this year and the impact of this on the grant application. For the rules to apply, as they stand, it would mean an extremely tight spend timescale for the company as they would need to claim the £200k by the 15 December latest, to enable SCC payment prior to 31 December. On reviewing the expenditure list, the site works are not expected to go ahead until January 2021 therefore the only expenditure that might be achievable is placing a deposit for the purchase of vehicles, depending on lead time</p> <p>The Panel discussed options as a way forward to progress the grant application. Panel agreed to approve the grant application but conscious of the need to manage client expectation.</p> <p>Recommendation: NS to communicate process around spend timescale.</p> <p>(3) HF Bond Limited - Agreed to support £80,000 - GBER Four jobs to be created.</p> <p>AC provided background to the grant. Agreed this was a straightforward grant application with good capital expenditure</p> <p>(4) Rossdales LLP - Agreed to support £37,885 - GBER Three jobs to be created.</p> <p>NS provided background to the grant application. The Panel noted this is a high-profile business in the local area, providing an important service that is committed to growth.</p> <p>(5) A further application was considered and declined by the Panel.</p>

6	Small Grant Scheme (SGS) Growth Through Innovation (GTI) Updates
Small Grant scheme - JM provided update. Although SGS had slowed down last month, the scheme has picked up considerably, and now about to commit all the money in the SGS grant scheme; an email has gone out to this effect to the Growth Hub to manage client expectations. JM reported that there may be over-commitment on the scheme due to some slippage, but this is being carefully monitored.	
The Panel noted the award of 12 grants in the month of October 2020, totalling £79,717 (Grants Awarded) and £ 398,600 (Total Project Cost) - see Annexe 1.	
Action: JW to circulate the November stats when available.	
Growth Through Innovation (GTI) - JM provided update. The Panel noted the award of three GTI grants in the month of October 2020, totalling £50,255 (Grant Awarded) and £105,462 (Total Project Cost) - see Annexe 2.	
JM reported the scheme has slowed up but in terms of pipeline there is one currently going through Due Diligence and three applications are with the Growth Hub totalling circa £90k.	
Business Resilience & Recovery (BR&R) Consultancy - JM provided update. Scheme still going well and as of Monday, 30 November, have approved 105 grants, totalling £4m, which leaves less than £2m in the pot. This is proving to be a very successful scheme.	
Visitor Economy Grant/Wider Economy Grant schemes (VEG/WEG) - JM provided update. These two small grant schemes sit under the Small Grant Scheme and, like BR&R, are a response to Covid-19 and designed by Government (grants between £1-3k). As of Monday, 30 November have approved 90 projects within those two schemes, totalling £250k, which leaves £70k left. The scheme runs to the end of February so going to do another push over the next few weeks to spend the remaining money. The grants are going quickly.	
7	Funding, Updates and Jobs Creation
Growing Business Fund – BH provided update. In November/December have paid out £484k so that has made good progress with payments. Total paid out is £1.322m, and with today's approvals, another £1.559m approved, leaves us with just under £900k still to be allocated which actually means in practice, that all of this year's original allocation of £2.79m has either been paid out, or committed, and we have just 'dipped' about £100k into the additional £1m that the LEP provisionally allocated. On this basis, there is a good chance of committing all the monies by 31 March 2021. There are a couple of claims currently in progress to pay out this month, so the figures will increase further by Xmas.	
Small Grant Scheme - BH provided update. There have been two more pay outs since the last Panel meeting, so overall Programme total is now 313 grants paid, total paid out is £2.9m, with another 48 committed, but not yet claimed, totaling £440k; leaving £122k in the pot but there are a couple of grant applications with the Panel of approx. £40k so with the others in the pipeline the SGS monies is almost gone. BH reiterated the scheme may slightly over commit but as mentioned earlier there may be some underclaim(s) or withdrawal(s) which will have the effect of putting monies back in the pot.	
Growth Through Innovation Fund (GTI) - BH provided update. Have made the first three payments on this scheme since the last Panel meeting, so money is now starting to go out, with another 22 grants, totalling £358k: so, some progress on the GTIF	
Business Resilience & Recovery Grant Scheme - BH provided update. 105 grants have been approved, totalling just over £4m, leaving just over £2m still available. Out of the 105 grants, 29 projects have been completed and closed, so there is still a lot of activity in terms of claims and SCC have quite a number to get through by the end of December to meet the State Aid regulations when the Assisted Area status comes to an end on 31 December so pretty hectic at SCC	
Job creation - jobs are still being created so since the last Panel, another five jobs have been confirmed for GBF and 'old' SGS and another two for SGS, so totals stand at 2384 and 147.5, respectively.	

8	GBF Applications ‘Pipeline’
Potential applications - Finance East have five potential cases to bring to the Panel in January 2021.	
General discussion took place on a grant application that was deemed urgent in view of the nature of the business in the Covid-19 supply chain. The Panel agreed to holding a one-off Extraordinary Panel meeting on Wednesday, 17 December 2020 to accommodate this grant application submission.	
9	PR and Marketing
JM provided update. Still continuing to prioritise and promote grants where there are funds available i.e. Business Resilience & Recovery, Visitor Economy Grant/Wider Economy Grant, and growth Through Innovation Fund. In terms of the VEG/WEG grants, the scheme was closed for new applicants because there was a large pipeline, however, some of the these businesses have not come forward with their application and now had over two months to apply so as the scheme is on ‘a first come, first served’ basis, as of today the scheme has been re-opened on the LEP website and will be promoted through the local tourism teams, the Economic Development Officers and other partners; the promotion will be done in a controlled way so that client expectation is managed. The Panel noted that all the money must be spent and claimed by the end of February 2021.	
Comment made that the landscape for support is currently quite complicated and confusing with all the grants and schemes on offer and query made how the message was being sent out to SMEs in the marketplace.	
Business Script - JM reported that the Business Script, outlining all the different schemes, produced by the LEP Comms Team, is produced weekly and goes out to the LEP, Growth Hub, Local Authorities, and all business support partners. The Business Script includes all the Local authority discretionary grants and schemes run by the Business Rates team and this information is constantly being updated. In addition to the standard Business Script there also an EU Exit version; the content of which is increasing in size. Expecting to receive a script from Government within the next two weeks outlining EU exit guidance which will be incorporated.	
Observation made that we should anticipate a deluge of enquiries in January from businesses on EU Exit queries. Noted that the message from Government is that if you import/export or do business with the EU your business will be affected, but if there is a No Deal Exit from the EU it will not matter which country you are trading with, the business will be impacted because of EU Trade Agreements.	
EU Exit support - JM reported that in the process of obtaining some monies from BEIS to pro-actively contact businesses, as well as get specialist support and advice, for businesses.	
JM reported that, overall, we are all coping well, with the LEP, Growth Hub and Local Authorities all working together, to provide a coherent and consistent message across to all partners.	
10	Any Other Business
None.	
The meeting closed at 11.38.	

Extraordinary Meeting via conference call on Microsoft Teams
Wednesday, 17 December 2021 |3.00pm - 4.00pm

Annexe 1

New Anglia Small Grant Scheme projects Approved in October 2020

October projects 2020		Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)
Approved			
1	Kiezebrink UK Ltd (3)	5,280	26,402
2	TGA Trading Ltd (2)	4,600	23,000
3	A&T Optimus Ltd	12,636	63,182
4	Bacons Firewood	2,610	13,050
5	Banqueting Hire Service Ltd	11,548	57,741
6	Gammax Independent Inspection Services Ltd	4,173	20,868
7	Smart Bookkeeping & Accounts Ltd	3,600	18,000
8	JHW Business Services Ltd	2,107	10,535
9	Felgains Ltd	5,580	27,903
10	STC Solutions Ltd	5,525	27,625
11	Cubiqdesign Ltd	16,433	82,165
12	Norfolk Coffee Co	5,625	28,129
Total – October 2020		79,717	398,600

Annexe 2

New Anglia Growth Through Innovation Scheme projects Approved in October 2020

October projects 2020			
Approved	Grant Awarded (£)	Total Project Cost (£)	
1 Merxin Ltd	25000	54,000	
2 Exo Environmental Ltd	21220	42,440	
3 Blue Novation Ltd	4035	9022	
Total - October 2020	50,255	105,462	