

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

03/12/21

KEY DECISION: No

Lichfield District Start Up Grant Scheme

1. Decision:

- 1.1 That the cabinet member approves the allocation of funding to the applicants from the Lichfield District Start Up Grant Scheme's third round to the projects detailed in the report.

2. Statement of Reasons:

- 2.1 The Lichfield District Start Up Grant Scheme was approved by Lichfield District Council's cabinet on the 1st December 2020 and commenced in March 2021. The scheme is funded by the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allocation, offering one off grants of £3,000 to assist residents who have been made redundant or currently economically inactive and seeking to start up a business within the financial year 21/22 in Lichfield district. The overall allocation for this element is £215,138 with £10,000 being allocated to the Enterprise for Success Programme providing a two day start up workshop which applicants are required to attend before making a submission for funding.

To be eligible, applicants must be:

- An individual who has recently been made redundant and seeking to establish a business within Lichfield District.
- An economically inactive resident who is seeking to establish a business within Lichfield District.

- 2.2 Grant is available to meet the following types of costs to business:

- Capital equipment, excluding laptops, mobile phones and tablets.
- Marketing.
- Professional qualifications or training.

- 2.3 Residents who are seeking to access this funding must have first received support provided by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Enterprise for Success programme. The programme encourages new business start-ups and helps young businesses grow and thrive by offering a range of business workshops with individual business support sessions. The support provides valuable information for applicants to strengthen their business model and strategy, and develop a strong business plan to positively influence the company's long term survival.

2.4 The scoring criteria – detailed in **Appendix 1** – cover the following areas:

- Employment
- Growth
- Business Plan

2.5 Overall eight applications were submitted within this round, with 54 expression of interests being received up until the end of November 2021. Unfortunately one application has been deemed ineligible due to the proposed business is seeking to be set up in Hednesford by a Cannock Chase resident. The eligible applicants are seeking to start businesses within childcare, personal care, interior design, beauty treatment, mobile app design, confectionary gifts and handwoven textiles.

The project items being applied for vary, through paid for advertising/marketing, operational equipment to deliver services or create products, create the infrastructure for the business and to gain professional accreditation or qualifications.

2.6 Within round three, the amount of grant allocated overall, if approved, would be £21,000.

2.7 The following summary paragraph provides information on why it is recommended that monies are allocated to the following respective bids:

Blossoms Childcare

The applicant is seeking to start a home based childcare provision, having registered with Ofsted and Childminding UK, aligning with the offer of an outdoor forest school to support children through early development, following the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. The items being applied for are equipment to operate the business, from physical activity to educational learning, these are essential for the business to commence. They have the relevant qualifications and experience to deliver the business and working with the targeted customers. There is demand for the business through face to face primary research taking place with potential clients and secondary research through reviewing childcare reports focussing upon flexible shift patterns and the requirement for childcare.

The Magic Bottle

The applicant is seeking to manufacture, package and sell aromatherapy products for wellbeing with the items requested going towards furnishings, stock and packaging. These three broad areas of the business shall support it to have a professional look and be able to operate the administration element whilst also creating the products and delivering to clients. They have worked within sectors selling similar products previously and have experience of popular products and where they can find a place in the market. Primary market research has taken place by developing questionnaires and receiving positive feedback from target groups and networks, whilst also doing a SWOT analysis of the marketplace and competition.

Nanuskas

The applicant is seeking to start up a design consultancy company, providing decorating and design services, they have previously worked in architectural technology and consultancy roles in the sector, whilst having the relevant qualifications within the software and processes used. The grant shall go towards the practical tools for both elements of the business, by being able to undertake carpentry, painting and decorating, whilst utilising the hardware to create interior designs, project plan and manage. The furnishings are required to be able to operate the

business from. Their experience and knowledge of the market is backed by market research of the sector and having reviewed market reports on interior design showing the gap in opportunities which the business shall support.

Mitchell Hammond Aesthetics Clinic

The applicant is seeking to provide non-surgical aesthetic treatments, being a qualified phlebotomist and completing a pathway to aesthetics course. They have experience of working with the sector in a customer services role and managed other businesses showing their experience to support business operation and growth. The items being applied for focus on business operation, growth and qualifications. They have applied for first aid training to be able to support clients, to utilise the grant for an additional qualification, Advanced Aesthetic Training, to be able to offer more services to clients and marketing/stationary items towards marketing the business and being able to operate. They have undertaken a SWOT analysis and research into the sector looking at growth and treatment patterns/trends. With their qualifications, experiences and research, they are capable of delivering/operating the business and being able to grow their treatment offer and client base to expand.

D.Wedlock Designs

The applicant has qualifications in UX/UI design and is seeking to become self-employed making unique web applications, whilst also producing sports memorabilia. The grant shall go towards advancing their current skills by undertaking a visual design course, whilst purchasing an A2 photo printer and picture frames for their memorabilia products and a social media campaign to market both elements of the business. The equipment being applied for supports creating the products to sell and the course will allow the applicant to upskill and be able to deliver more in house for clients, offering additional services. The applicant has experience and qualifications in designing and creating mobile applications whilst working with clients previously in designing similar sports memorabilia stock. They have researched the sports memorabilia market, understanding current trends and where they can provide additionality, also having insight and experience of working in the mobile application market.

Kingfisher Gifts

The applicant is seeking to establish a confectionary gift business by selling personalised gifts such as chocolate bouquets, afternoon teas, gift baskets through an e-commerce website and attending markets and fairs. They have experience of working within food, drink and confectionary production and supervisory roles, understanding the wider market through experience and researching competitors' products and services. The items being applied for are for the business to be able to operate strongly through e-commerce, create a space for the products to be created and packaging products to deliver items safely. All items being applied for shall support the businesses growth by providing a stable e-commerce route, being able to package and produce the products for sale.

Botanical Weaves

The applicant is seeking to create handwoven textiles using entirely locally sourced materials. They have a qualification in weaving and experience in the sector through working with textiles, knitting and weaving for over two decades. The grant shall go towards purchasing a loom to make the products. With the applicant's experience they are engaged with potential clients through networking, whilst having a good grasp of the market and competition through reviewing market reports. The loom is essential for the business to manufacture the products and the larger equipment shall allow the business to create more, larger products at a faster rate.

2.8 Overall round grant request breakdown

| <u>Project costs</u> | <u>Grant requested</u> |
|---|------------------------|
| <i>Blossoms Childcare</i> £3,000 | £3,000 |
| <i>The Magic Bottle</i> £3,000 | £3,000 |
| <i>Nanuskas</i> £3,000 | £3,000 |
| <i>Mitchell Hammond Aesthetics Clinic</i> £3,000 | £3,000 |
| <i>D.Wedlock Designs</i> £3,294 | £3,000 |
| <i>Kingfisher Gifts</i> £3,000 | £3,000 |
| <i>Botanical Weaves</i> £4,550 | £3,000 |
| Total: £22,844 | £21,000 |

3. Any Alternative Options:

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to fund any or only some of the applications however this would not be in line with the agreed purpose of the scheme or the judgements reached having assessed the bids against the agreed criteria.



Signed:

Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Local Plan

Date of Decision: 06/12/2021

Appendices

Appendix 1: Scoring criteria details

Employment

- To create job opportunities, inclusive of the applicant's role.

Growth

- That the equipment being applied for supports the businesses outcomes.
- That the proposed business activity relates to the applicant's previous experience and qualifications, showing an understanding of the activities.
- That there is a thorough plan to generate income and increase the businesses cashflow.
- That there is an increase in income and cashflow.

Business Plan

- That the financial projections are realistic in relation to the planned growth of the business, outlined within the business plan.
- That the applicant has undertaken in depth market research and within their application shows a thorough understanding of their sector/area of work through their business plan.