

REGENERATION AND LIVEABILITY PORTFOLIO

DECISION SCHEDULE



Thursday, 29 January 2009

at 10.00 am

in Committee Room B

The Mayor Stuart Drummond responsible for Regeneration and Liveability will consider the following items.

1. **KEY DECISIONS**

None

2. **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

2.1 Pride In Hartlepool Proposals - *Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection*

2.2 HBC Financial Assistance Schemes For Businesses And Residents Entering Employment - *Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development*

3. **REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS**

None

Regeneration and Liveability Portfolio

Report to Portfolio Holder
Thursday, 29 January 2009



Report of: Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection

Subject: PRIDE IN HARTLEPOOL PROPOSALS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider recommendations of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group in respect of proposals for community projects.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

List of Pride in Hartlepool proposals and recommendations for funding of those proposals.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder is responsible for sustainable development.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Recommendation of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group to Procurement, Property and Public Protection Portfolio Holder.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To agree the recommendation of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group in respect of community environmental projects.

Report of: Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection

Subject: PRIDE IN HARTLEPOOL PROPOSALS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider recommendations of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group in respect of proposals for community projects.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group met on Wednesday, 25 November 2008 and recommended the following for approval.

2.2 Eldon Grove Primary School - The school is requesting £3,371.60 to convert part of the school playing field to an allotment garden for pupils to develop as an “enterprise initiative” and as a central focus of a community engagement plan the school are putting together. The school is actively seeking additional funding from Morrison’s “Let it Grow” Scheme and B&Q Community Grant Scheme. Members recommended that the £3,371.60 be approved.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The funding for the above project is available within the Pride in Hartlepool budget.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That the recommendation of the Pride in Hartlepool Steering Group be approved.

REGENERATION AND LIVEABILITY PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

29 January 2009



Report of: Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development

Subject: HBC FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES FOR BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS ENTERING EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for changes to the approval mechanism in respect of the Financial Assistance Schemes operated by the Council's Economic Development Unit.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report outlines the range of financial assistance schemes operated within the unit and proposes slight adjustments to the approval mechanisms.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The financial assistance schemes relate to a range of economic development initiatives.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Decision for the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

Agree the approval methods for the various financial assistance schemes operated within the Economic Development Unit

Report of: Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development

Subject: HBC FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES FOR BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS ENTERING EMPLOYMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the various Financial Assistance Schemes operated by the Council's Economic Development Team and seeks to make amendments to the approval mechanisms for the various schemes to improve the consistency of approach and the service to the clients. In essence the report seeks for approval of all grants up to and including £5,000 to be approved by two officers, one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager, or in their absence the Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment).
- 1.2 Other officers likely to be involved in the process would be relevant staff from the Economic Development Team.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hartlepool Borough Council has offered financial assistance to businesses and individuals for a considerable number of years, enhancing the core budget with additional funding levered in from other external organisations. Currently seven different grant funds operate, with maximum grants ranging from £20,000 (Business grants Package) to £500 (Women's Development Fund and Bursaries).
- 2.2 A description of the current schemes in operation is attached in **Appendix A**, together with details of the existing approval mechanism and the proposed changes.
- 2.3 In 2002, changes to the approval mechanisms for grants at a smaller level were agreed to simplify the process and ensure that the awards were made in a timely manner. Delegation to the Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development in respect of the Business Grants Package was also approved at that time.
- 2.4 Since 2002, the type of award, particularly in respect of the Business Grants Package, has changed in that the level of Job Creation being predicted has dropped and, as a consequence, the level of grant award has also reduced. This also reflects an ongoing desire to ensure that the Borough Council resources are utilised as widely as possible.

However the rigidity of the process in terms of the Business Grants Package has meant that robust local businesses with an excellent track record have had a far more onerous route to approval than a brand new business, where the whole basis of the application is that of projected profits from a standing start, despite the fact that both applications may be for the same amount.

- 2.5 In addition the use of “panels” for smaller awards has also at times proved to be difficult administratively as the Council relies on the attendance of individuals from external organisations to form a quorum. There have also been times when this has caused difficulty in terms of having decisions made in a timely fashion. The value for money aspect of involving a group of people from a variety of agencies to consider small grant awards is also questionable.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 To ensure consistency of approach and to ensure that decisions are made in a timely fashion, it is proposed that in future all decisions on awards up to £5,000 will be made by two officers, one of whom will be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence. Should any new regimes be introduced in the future, it is appropriate for these to also be operated within this mechanism.
- 3.2 Administratively, this will mean that all requests for support will be made by completion of an application form together with the provision of further background papers as appropriate, which for businesses will for the most part be a business plan, although in the case of established businesses, the provision of actual financial accounts and an executive summary may prove adequate. Upon making a decision in respect of each award, that decision will be annotated on the application form and will include the signature and date of both awarding officers.
- 3.3 Those awards in excess of £5,000, which are currently only those within the Business Grants Regime, will continue to be considered in the current manner, with officers assisting businesses to prepare a case which is considered by a panel, including an external representative, normally from a financial background. This panel will make a recommendation for approval or decline, which is referred to the Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development for ultimate decision making.
- 3.4 It is proposed that in future 6 monthly update reports of the awards made will be provided to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing for information purposes.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the changes to the approval mechanisms are approved

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 These amendments mean that the majority of the grant awards will be approved utilising one simple, accountable methodology.
- 5.2 The amendments also mean that the current situation, where lower level decisions in respect of the Business Grants Package will also be made in a timely fashion.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

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Appendix A

Existing Financial Assistance Schemes being operated within the Economic Development Unit

Title	Scope of Scheme	Existing approval mechanism	Proposed approval mechanism
<p>Business Grants Package</p>	<p>£20,000 maximum</p> <p>Businesses can apply for any 2 forms of assistance towards the cost of a project, subject to eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital • Rates Relief • Job Creation <p>(a max. of £10,000 in total is applicable for the latter 2 areas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers advise businesses with preparation of application to include business plan • Report prepared for consideration by panel (including 1 external representative) • Panel make recommendation • Ultimate decision delegated to Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards of £5,001+ - no change • Awards up to £5,000: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Officers advise with preparation of application ○ Report prepared for consideration by HBC officers ○ Ultimate decision delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence

<p>Access to Markets</p>	<p>£2,500 max (up to 50% of the costs of a project)</p> <p>All types of businesses are eligible to apply, provided that the project relates to winning business from outside of the area. Assistance retains maximum flexibility in the type of activity which will be funded, but tends to be in the area of website development, bespoke marketing exercises or the production of marketing material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers assist with preparation of application, including where necessary business plan and financial forecasts • Completed application assessed by HBC Officers • Ultimate decision delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change
<p>Enterprise Development Fund</p>	<p>£5,000</p> <p>Businesses up to 3 years old, employing less than 10 people are eligible to apply for assistance. The assistance provided tends to be for capital purposes, although the fund maintains maximum flexibility to ensure that the needs of the business are the primary consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers assist with preparation of application, including where necessary business plan and financial forecasts • Completed application assessed by HBC Officers • Ultimate decision delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change

<p>ICT</p>	<p>£2,000 max. (50% of costs of project)</p> <p>All types of businesses are eligible provided they are aged between 6 – 24 months. Projects must be in respect of developing use of ICT within a business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers assist with preparation of application, including where necessary business plan and financial forecasts • Completed application assessed by HBC Officers • Ultimate decision delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change
<p>Women's Development Fund</p>	<p>£500 maximum</p> <p>Available for both individuals and new businesses (up to 6 months old).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients prepare application, including necessary supporting documentation (e.g. business plan) • Application presented to panel including representation from several external organizations • Ultimate decision made by panel, if there is a quorum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients prepare application with appropriate supporting documentation • Ultimate decision to be delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence

<p>Security Grant</p>	<p>50% of eligible costs < £2,500 grant award, subject to recommendation of the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form completed • CPO visits and confirms suitability of requests • Completed application assessed by HBC Officers • Ultimate decision delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change
<p>Bursaries</p>	<p>£500 maximum Small bursary towards the costs of entering employment, including self-employment, subject to evidence of job offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form completed • Officers meet with client and check eligibility • Application considered by a panel, including external representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application process remains unchanged • Ultimate decision to be delegated to 2 officers one of whom must be the Economic Development Manager (or Principal Economic Development Officer (Business Services) or Principal Economic Development Officer (Employment)) in their absence