

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH CABINET** held as a Virtual Meeting on Monday, 4 May 2020 at 14:30pm

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: John Ward (Chair)

Councillors: Clive Arthey  
Derek Davis  
Elisabeth Malvisi  
Lee Parker

David Busby  
Michael Holt  
Jan Osborne

### **In attendance:**

Councillor(s): Alastair McCraw

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)  
Strategic Director (KN)  
Monitoring Officer (EY)  
Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities (TB)  
Assistant Director – Economic Development and Regeneration (FD)  
Governance Officer (CP)

### **240 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None received

### **241 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

### **242 BCA/19/46 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2020**

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020 be signed as a true record.**

### **243 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**

There were no petitions received.

**244    QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no questions received.

**245    MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

There were no matters referred.

**246    FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The Forthcoming Decision List was noted.

**247    BCA/19/46 BABERGH BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Member for Economy introduced the report which sought agreement for a business grants programme that enabled small and medium sized businesses access to a range of financial support.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor Ward.

In response to a query from Councillor Arthey, Councillor Holt confirmed that the available grant figure was £150,000 and the cost to administer the scheme was £7,500.

Councillor Busby queried whether viability checks were to be put in place for those applying for the grants. The Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration confirmed that checks would be place and the criteria for each grant was currently being put in place.

Councillor Osborne asked if the grant programme could be amended if the type of support needed changed during recovery from the current Covid-19 emergency. The Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration advised that these grants had not been established to deal with the Covid-19 emergency and were to encourage resilience, innovation and growth. It was confirmed that a detailed review had been built in for the end of the first year of the programme.

Councillor Parker raised the issue of accessibility of the scheme and queried how long the grants would take to process. In response the Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration confirmed that as the application process was online it was anticipated that they would be able to be dealt with quickly.

Councillor McCraw clarified to Members that the grants programme was funded from unallocated sums and was included in the existing budgets for each Council. Councillor McCraw also commented that the number of grants under the programme would be a maximum of 20.

Councillor Holt advised Members that future funding of the programme would need to be agreed by Cabinet Members.

Councillor Ward commented that small grants could make a huge difference to small businesses and the programme would be very helpful to businesses in the Districts.

Councillor Busby enquired whether the funding could be spent on sponsoring apprenticeships instead of the programme. The Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration commented that there were other support programmes for businesses looking to take on apprentices.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 That a sum of £157,500 be agreed over a three year period from the unallocated sum from the Business rates pilot to fund a new grants programme from the financial year commencing April 2020.**
- 1.2 That £150,000 of this sum be allocated over the three-year period to provide flexible capital funding to businesses, to be utilised by them to deliver improvements and change that enable the following outcomes:**
  - Create and sustain jobs;**
  - Enable the growth of innovation in our businesses;**
  - Create and retain commercial floorspace;**
  - Access professional advice and training;**
  - Access additional funding (both grants and loans);**
  - Improve business frontage and town centre streetscapes (impacting on footfall and visitor satisfaction);**
  - Encourage the development of technology-based business solutions;**
  - Improve environmental outcomes and carbon efficiencies;**
  - Improve disabled access; and**
  - React and be resilient to changing business landscape.**
- 1.3 That Cabinet noted that the sum above of £157,500 included a 5% sum to be allocated to provide administrative support for the management of the programme.**
- 1.4 That the Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy should be granted delegated authority to agree details of the grant scheme and approval process.**

**Reason for Decision:** To provide a comprehensive business support grant programme that will enable sustainable and sustained innovation and economic growth consistent across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council districts.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 15:31pm.

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Chair (and date)