

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Finance

14 December 2021

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) – Business Support

The application form for ARG Business Support Grants went live on the HDC website on Monday 27th September and remained open for 4 weeks. In that time, over 100 applications were received from businesses across the Hambleton District. Following assessment, grants ranging from £900 to £5,000 were awarded (along with a small number of discretionary grants exceeding £5,000 awarded to businesses demonstrating significant project development and financial input).

In total, 94 businesses have been supported, from well known local brands such as Treske and Lewis and Cooper, to smaller enterprises including a children's football academy and a hair dressing academy

In total, £421,360 of ARG funding has been awarded in this round and the Council are considering a further round of funding in January 2022. A reserve list has also been compiled of those businesses that have contacted us, who will be notified should further funding be made available.

Business Support – Hambleton Apprenticeship Scheme

The Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Scheme which has been delivered by the Council for a number of years continues to have a high take up from local businesses. A total of 18 apprentices have been supported to date in 2021/2022 in a range of different business settings from bricklaying to dental nurse to electrician to marketing and content development. This is well on the way towards the Council Plan target of facilitating 30 young people into local small businesses by April 2022 through apprenticeships and the graduate scheme.

Business Support – Insight with Passion Workshops Phase 3

The third phase of the Council's business support programme to support small customer facing businesses to survive and thrive has been a success, with businesses accessing the support at the suitable level for their business and personal preference. We have had some great feedback from businesses that have benefitted from the direct support through on-line workshops, bite sized videos and 1:1 sessions – recognising the pro-active approach of the Council when it comes to supporting small businesses. A total of 52 businesses have been supported during this phase of work.

C4DI Northallerton

C4DI Northallerton is now fully operational, the Business & Economy team have a daily presence on site and C4DI attend on a weekly basis. Over the past couple of months, there have been a number of tours and events held at C4Di Northallerton, all of which have been well attended and well received by the Elected Members, LEP and local businesses. The most recent event held on the 18th November with Northallerton BID, a Lunch & Learn session was attended by over 30 people representing local businesses. Both Sunderland University and York College attended the event to engage with C4DI and local businesses and start developing working relationships which will develop further once Campus@Northallerton is open and fully operational.

There continues to be a lot of interest in the building, C4DI & HDC have continued to meet with potential new members who are keen to learn more about what the membership offers but also they are keen to look inside the building. Currently there are 10 members, 3 of which are office based.

Vibrant Market Towns

Officers continue to work in partnership with key local stakeholders including the Town and Parish Councils and Business Networks to support the promotion of Small Business Saturday which is taking place this year on the 4 December, also to support the promotion of the many Christmas Events and activities planned to take place in the run up to Christmas in each of our market towns. This is in addition to promotion on-line and on social media @HambletonBiz and @DischHambleton Twitter, Instagram and Facebook

Financial scenario

Strong financial management has been a cornerstone of the Political Leadership of Hambleton District Council. It has enabled investment in fantastic facilities for the residents as well as investment in economic infrastructure. Strong focus on service delivery has been maintained in the current year whilst delivering the investments in services in the Council Plan. Mid-year budget review was received at December Cabinet that showed that delivery continues within the financial envelope. Some capital expenditure will move to quarter 1 of 2022/23 but the significant benefits from those investments will still be delivered within the lifetime of this Council.

Draft budget proposals for 2022/23 are to be agreed at December Council. Although this will be the final budget for Hambleton District Council it was set broadly in line with the 4-year Financial Strategy approved by Council in February 2021. Formal consultation is now underway which will finish in early January. The responses will form part of the final budget report to February Council for approval.

**Councillor Peter R Wilkinson
Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Finance**