

## **ND+ Programme Update – 05.11.2021**

### **Additional Restrictions Grants**

ND+ are continuing to process grant applications on behalf of Torridge District Council for final round of BEIS COVID support funding. North Devon Council have administered its own ARG funds and have now paid out the full allocation.

To date across the Additional Restrictions Grant Schemes ND+ has received and processed 1,428 grant applications, supporting 431 Small and Medium sized business across Torridge by awarding grants to the value of £2,253,991

### **ARG Business BOOST programme**

With the support of ARG funding, ND+ has launched a new business support programme to support both new and existing business across Northern Devon. The programme will support both new start up business and existing business to recover from the effects of the pandemic and adapt to a changed operating environment.

The programme is called **Business BOOST** and went live in October, a press release for the scheme went out in early October.

To date (as of 05.11.2021) we have already seen a positive uptake of the programme in its first month with a combination of business and grant enquiries. We have engaged with 35 local SME clients, 21 have now had 1-1 appointments with a Business Advisor with a further 8 appointments booked. This is alongside receiving small grant applications which we are currently processing. Of these 29 businesses, 14 are from Torridge and 15 from North Devon.

Further promotion of the scheme is due to follow, if Councillors would like any scheme further details to share with their local businesses, please contact Vicky Fether [vfether@northdevonplus.co.uk](mailto:vfether@northdevonplus.co.uk).

**North Devon** –A selection of business supported to date include:

- Health / Fitness instructor seeking a health check of her business and considering a grant for website development.
- Retailer seeking business support and possible grant support for a new stock management system to assist with business efficiency / online sales.
- A new start-up businesses looking for help in making sure their plans are robust - we are helping with support/advice on developing a business plan and marketing strategy. Covered benefits of a Business Plan and Marketing strategy.

- Business seeking support to ensure their investment is maximised and how this is best structured. Also exploring another unrelated business regarding how to best set up structure a charitable organisation

**Torrige** A selection of business supported to date include:

- A small cosmetic manufacturer looking for grant assistance to develop their website to improve their online presence and attract more sales.
- A charitable organisation helping homeless and vulnerable people seeking support to create a centre for people in need to drop in for a meal or a coffee and tap into help and support.
- Rural garage business, looking to improve efficiency and considering applying for a grant to help with the cost of buying a piece of equipment to assist with development of their operations.
- Potential property development pre-start venture seeking support on how to structure the business.
- Pre-start venture looking to set up a new tourist activity.
- Start-up support for a mobile catering business touring rural area offering quality take-away food.

### **Kickstart Scheme**

In October 2020 the Government announced a £2 billion fund to create high quality 6-month work placements for young people aged 16-24, who are claiming Universal Credit. With the support of our local authorities, Torrige District Council & North Devon Council; Barnstaple Chamber & North Devon+ are operating as an approved Gateway for employers to access the scheme through the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). We are providing support to micro and small businesses who individually have less than 30 placements to access the scheme.

To date we have had 38 companies approved by the DWP for a Kickstart Placement with 86 placements in total.

Out of 86 placements the DWP have matched their clients with 48 placements to date.

So far 11 young people have completed their 6-month placement and 9 (82%) have already been kept on in permanent roles by companies such as Atlas Packaging, Moo Free Chocolates, Lineal Software Solutions and 514 Elemental which is a fantastic success. Atlas Packaging have now also registered further placement opportunities.

We are still working hard with the Employers and the Kickstart team at the Job Centres to find suitable candidates for the remaining placements.

The scheme was officially due to complete recruitment in December 2021; however, the government has now extended this until March 2022 with placements running up to 6 months beyond the cut-off date.

### **Future Farm Resilience Programme**

ND+ is currently working in partnership with West Devon Business Information Point to deliver the Future Farm Resilience Programme.

This is offering free, tailored one to one advice, webinars, and business skills development workshops to help farmers and land managers navigate the changes brought about by the Agricultural Transition.

Between 2021 and 2027, the government will gradually reduce and then stop Direct Payments. Instead, farmers will be supported to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions.

There will be three levels of support aimed at paying for sustainable farming practices, creating habitats for nature recovery, and making landscape-scale change, such as establishing new woodland and other ecosystem services.

The move away from Direct Payments will be a big change for some farmers, so they will happen over a 7-year transition period to give time to plan and adjust. The Future Farming Resilience Fund has been funded by Defra to allow us to support farmers and land managers with this transition.

The support is free and available from September 2021 to February 2022 to any farmer or land manager currently in receipt of BPS payments. The scheme is running throughout Devon and Somerset, and North Devon + is supporting business across Devon.

### **DCC 'Growth Hub Services for All' Programme –**

North Devon + has successfully bid to run the Devon County Council 'Growth Hub Services for All' business support programme within North Devon, Torridge, and West Devon.

This programme will provide a mix of one-to-one support, specialist advice and group workshops to help businesses across the area to grow. Through the programme, businesses can receive up to 12 hours' of support.

The programme will run until March 2023

The support will include a combination of workshops, 1-2-1 advice and follow-up support and will run until March 2023.