

10. BUSINESS SUPPORT PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth in relation to the proposal to offer business support to a growth business locating to Newark & Sherwood.

The report set out the nature of the organisation's business, setting out the marketing plan and the four main areas of focus to develop future contracts. It was reported that the proposal was to offer a support grant of £20,000. Also contained within the report was additional information as to the proposal and how the Council would fund this, either through the Think BIG Loan Fund or alternatively by way of a reduction in business rates. Such a decision would be at the discretion and judgement of Members.

In considering the report, Members were informed that the imposition of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a factor as in order to construct and occupy a building in the district CIL monies would have to be charged as the Council had no discretion to waive these.

Members referred to the comparison contained within the report to that of the loan provided to Clipper Logistics in 2012, querying whether the proposal to fund the loan through a reduction in business rates would set a precedent. In response, they were advised that each application would be considered on its own merits and that not all applicants would be entitled to this type of assistance. It had already been established earlier in the meeting under open business that there was a need to review the imposition of CIL which would take approximately 18/24 months to complete. During this time it would be necessary to review each case on its own merits.

Members commented that they believed that a precedent was being set as if another organisation applied who met the same job creation levels it would be difficult to refuse. If it was not possible to waive the imposition of CIL then was it not possible to consider an interest free loan or alternative incentives.

Members were advised in what type of development CIL was able to be charged. It was noted that the charging of CIL endangered attracting business to the area and that the review of the charge was required. However, it was acknowledged that Members were required to consider whether during the interim period there was a willingness to look at each application on its own merits.

Members queried how successful the levying of CIL monies had been and whether any monies remained outstanding. They were informed that all payments were being made in full. It was noted that the levy had not seen the success anticipated by all parties but that the Council had introduced this in good faith.

In relation to the proposed review of CIL, Members queried whether it was possible to expedite the review. In response, they were advised that there was a due process which could not be cut short.

AGREED (by 8 votes for with 1 against) that:

- (a) the proposal to provide a grant to the business of £20,000 to assist with the creation of new jobs and apprenticeships within the new site in Newark be supported;
- (b) the Section 151 Officer determine the appropriate method of financing the grant, whilst noting the Committee's preference for the grant to be paid for through a NNDR discount;
- (c) the Committee support the review of the Community Infrastructure Levy being undertaken as soon as possible; and
- (d) the Committee be provided with a set of criteria to enable them to consider each application for funding on its own merit.