

Business Network Support Fund - Guidelines

In 2014 Hambleton District Council published its Economic Strategy 'Hambleton A Place to Grow' identifying a number of priority themes to assist in supporting sustained growth of the local economy and its businesses. Within the Business Support Priority Theme, the need to strengthen local business networks has been identified as a key area of work.

With almost 4,000 businesses in our area, across many different sectors, business networks are vitally important. They not only provide an opportunity for introductions, mutual support and collaboration, but also a vehicle for providing useful information to businesses which they can sometimes miss. The purpose of the Business Network Support Fund is to further support the development and effectiveness of the networks, improve resilience and increase business confidence.

Eligible Activity

The Fund can be accessed to support a range of activities however, each application must demonstrate added value to what you are already doing. The following are examples of eligible activities:

- Work to increase membership of the network
- Communicating to a wider audience, targeting new audiences
- Marketing and promotion to improve the profile of the network, through website, social media etc.
- Making links to other networks
- Developing the network to the next stage in its development

The Fund will not support new networks brought together to apply for this support, you must be an established or developing network and show us evidence that the network exists, is active and engaged in its local community.

Grants Available

The Fund is available from April 2017 and will operate over two financial years (2017/18 and 2018/19) Grants of up to a maximum of £4,000 per business network are available. This could be for a one off project or to support on-going costs. A business network can make multiple applications to the Fund but the total amount of grant requested should not exceed £4000. For grants over £1,000, the Council would expect to see a financial contribution made towards the project from the network themselves, this should be a minimum of 20% of the total project costs. Please note that there is a limited amount of funding for this support.

How can we apply?

Interested networks should complete and return the application form to Julie Hutton. Forms and guidance are available at hambleton.gov.uk/business or by contacting the Business and Economy Team on **01609 767058** or from Julie.hutton@hambleton.gov.uk who can also provide further information and advice.

Your application will be reviewed by a panel and we may be in touch to discuss your application if further information is needed. Once approved, you will receive a formal offer letter and acceptance form and you are ready to get started with your project.

The network should have its own bank account. However, if the organisation/network is very small or new it may be acceptable for other arrangements to be made. Please contact us to discuss this further.