

Individual Member Decision Record

This form records an officer decision and is published in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

Decision Maker:	Councillor Mark Crane, Leader of the Council
Lead Officer:	Janet Waggott - Chief Executive and Iain Brown - Economy and Infrastructure Manager
Title of Decision:	Covid-19 Emergency – Support for Selby District Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Type of Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Key decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non key decision discharging (or connected to the discharge of) an Executive function <input type="checkbox"/> Specific delegation from Council or Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Grant of permission/licence <input type="checkbox"/> Affecting the rights of an individual <input type="checkbox"/> Awarding a contract or incurring expenditure which materially affects the financial position of the Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision under urgency
Details of decision:	<p>In response to the COVID-19 outbreak the UK was placed in lockdown, across the country businesses have been required to close and residents stay at home for all but essential travel. This has had a significant impact on businesses, microbusinesses and the smaller SME's which make up a significant proportion of Selby District's business stock and are in total terms the major employer in the District.</p> <p>The Government's response to support business during the Covid-19 outbreak is unprecedented both in terms of the speed and the scale of their support.</p> <p>This report is recommending additional support from SDC to compliment</p>

the Government grants and loans being put in place, with emphasis on developing a “recovery plan” for the District’s micro and small businesses as the existing restrictions on movement and trading are lifted.

It is proposed that SDC invests in a direct and specialised support package based on providing Federation of Small Business (FSB) membership to businesses where the greatest impact and the best results can be achieved, this approach will ensure that as many businesses as possible are in the best shape they can be as they enter the recovery stage.

The FSB offer to SDC is for a discounted package of business memberships in three membership categories. As SDC does not have the depth of resources to deal with the volume of requests for help at this time from businesses or the expertise to provide the specialist advice urgently needed. This proposal will therefore deliver an essential service direct to the businesses in need of support through the business recovery stage.

This package will give assisted businesses direct access to FSB legal support helpline, employment protection and HR advice e.g. for contracting with furloughed workers, all of which have been identified as critical for SME’s. FSB are able to deliver access to these benefits within 4 hours of sign up. The business gets 1-2-1 support during and after sign up, firstly from the membership advisor who signposts to the help they specifically need at the time, then through FSB customer services staff and a legal team on an ongoing basis for new queries and reassurance.

This will assist in getting fast specialist help to grassroots businesses, it will also help them navigate through the crisis and wherever possible to continue trading, backed up by all the FSB member benefits which are accessible through their website and helplines. As well as the critical legal and HR help and protections, this also includes FSB cash advance and the FSB funding platform access to aid cash flow, as well as cyber protection, standard tax protection and the FSB Care helpline. Whilst grants and other schemes are being delivered from government and put in place, membership of the FSB will provide reassurance and back up, thereby making businesses more resilient to continue to trade both through and after the crisis, the aim is to reach businesses who have no other access to specialist help or a lack the necessary in house skills themselves.

Originally, we considered delivering this proposed FSB membership package in two phases, one immediately followed by the second phase as the lock down period is relaxed. We now believe that with there being no immediate likelihood that the restricts will be lifted before early May we should concentrate on the immediate business support needs. So rather than constrain short term support and limit the potential of this

programme, we propose combining the two phases and request the intended budget (£20k) to support a target to 100 SME's. There will be checks and measures in the agreement with FSB to ensure that we only pay for the memberships issued and any over payments will be refunded in full.

We will roll the programme out with a structured approach and invite businesses to apply against a set of identified criteria that will ensure there is a balanced approach to the type of businesses, the sectors and their impact and contribution to employment, supply chain and community related priorities. This approach will allow the take up by SDC based businesses to be managed as opposed to being indiscriminate and will ensure we are able to track and further influence businesses through the recovery stage.

In parallel to this programme ED&R have launched a business health check survey to all businesses across the District, this is an on line survey that will collect and correlate critical data that will help to get a better perspective on how businesses are coping, where they see their weaknesses, levels of retained employment, numbers being furloughed and so on. It is intended to also use this generic data to help determine where the FSB membership package can best help businesses. For example, in the short term we may be better supporting businesses that continue operating albeit at a reduced capacity but may be at risk of breaking a supply chain thereby threatening other business' viability. The priorities we intend to focus on will be based on a business' ability to continue trading; to retain employees now and going forward; being part of a wider supply chain; is the business considered to be an essential service, for example providing remote home learning for children; what role does the business play in community social health and wellbeing such as community fitness and exercise groups; what level of support has the business already received through other channels such as the grant programme. Where businesses have been unable to continue trading consider their ability to recover as restrictions are lifted, their role in the wider supply chain and why an FSB membership will accelerate their recovery.

It is intended that the application for the membership will be promoted via the SDC web site, targeted social media channels and the ED&R data base. Referrals and sign up will be handled through FSB resources to validate the business details for eligibility and handle their membership needs. After which the business will have a dedicated membership advisor and full access to customer services call centre support.

Full records of signed up businesses will be fed back to SDC consistent with GDPR compliance requirements for future business engagement and audit purposes. SDC involvement in the membership process will be limited thereby ensuring vital internal resources can focus on other priorities.

	<p>RESOLVED: That as the matter is urgent, due to putting in place arrangements for Covid-19, the Leader agrees that:</p> <p>i. the Council urgently enters into a contract with a specific provider, National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses Limited, Company Registration Number 01263540 whose registered office is at Sir Frank Whittle Way, Blackpool Business Park, Blackpool, FY4 2FE (“FSB”) not to exceed £20,000, for advice services to be provided to those SME’s that meet the Council’s agreed eligibility criteria; and</p> <p>ii. delegated authority be given to the Head of Economic Regeneration to agree the eligibility criteria to be included within the Contract to seek to provide a balanced approach to the type of businesses, the sectors and their impact and contribution to employment, supply chain and community related priorities.</p>
<p>Reason for decision:</p>	<p>In the face of the global pandemic it is essential that SME’s are supported during this viral outbreak and are best equipped to come quickly through a future recovery phase.</p>
<p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>We have considered how to distribute memberships across the business community, some authorities, such as York and Ryedale have committed to distributing on a first come first served basis.</p> <p>SDC propose to follow a more targeted approach where businesses will be invited to apply against a set of business measures that seeks to provide a balanced approach to the type of businesses, the sectors and their impact and contribution to employment, supply chain and community related priorities.</p>
<p>Member Interests: (Name of any Member who has declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision and details of any dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer if appropriate)</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Legal, Financial</p>	<p>The FSB annual membership package (one year only) will cover the</p>

<p>or other implications:</p>	<p>following business groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole trader (no employees) • 1-4 employees normally • 5-10 employees normally <p>To manage this scheme the FSB will raise a pro-forma invoice for £20,000 which is the financial cap to this project and will be paid in 3 instalments, the first for £10K then two subsequent payments of £5K, as individual memberships are signed up they will be debited against the SDC account.</p> <p>For audit purposes FSB will provide a full record of the businesses signed up against SDC's agreed eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The FSB will ensure full compliance with GDPR and distance selling legislation.</p> <p>This expenditure is outside the budget and the proposed £20k costs are proposed to be met from a draw down from the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve</p> <p>The Chair of the Policy Review Committee has been consulted as it is an urgent decision outside of the Budget and Policy Framework, and the decision is subject to his agreement that it is urgent; the Chair of the Policy Review Committee has agreed that it is urgent.</p> <p>A Waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules has been completed allowing a contract to be entered into with a specific provider in the absence of competition in cases of urgency. The reasons for urgency are set out above.</p> <p>As the decision is made under urgency powers it is not subject to call-in. The Chief Executive confirms that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and is to be treated as urgent.</p>
<p>Background papers:</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Contact details for further information:</p>	<p>Janet Waggott, Chief Executive jwaggott@selby.gov.uk</p>
<p>Signed:</p>	<p><i>Signature redacted</i></p> <p>Councillor Mark Crane, Leader of the Council</p>
<p>Date of Decision:</p>	<p>17 April 2020</p>