

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY

Mark Dance
Cabinet Member for Economic Development

DECISION NO.

14/00133

Unrestricted

Key decision – Financial criteria exceeded

Subject: TIGER Loan approval

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development, I agree to implement the recommendation of the North Kent Approval Panel and grant a loan to the Company set out in the exempt report, subject to the conditions also contained therein, of £1,174,072 from the TIGER Fund.

Governance:

The Executive Scheme of Delegation for Officers set out in Appendix 2 Part 4 of the Constitution (and the directorate schemes of sub-delegation made thereunder) provides the governance pathway for the implementation of this decision by officers. In this instance, Director of Economic Development (on behalf of the Corporate Director Growth Environment & Transport) will be the lead officer seeking to ensure that all such steps as are necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision

This equity investment will enable the company to whom it is granted to buy market share, which will in turn help to accelerate growth and traction for their products and services; employ additional highly experienced and specialised big data staff; aid in the deployment of their own tech hub and scale the business beyond the launch stage. Digital Contact is an emerging technology start-up focussed on big data. The company has developed an engine that captures and curates tweets, blogs and news within a specified sector, to produce predictions relevant to that market. This is a proposal for equity investment opportunity. Big data is a new area, and Digital Contact are very much first movers in their own target sector.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation

The Equity Investment application has been considered by the appropriate advisory body in line with the TIGER fund governance requirements, approved by the Department for Business, Innovation and skills and agreed by Cabinet member decision; the North Kent Approval Panel. The advisory body has recommended that the equity investment be accepted.

All members have been given the opportunity to comment on the proposed decision before it was taken by the Cabinet Member. As a result of this opportunity a meeting was held between officers and Mr Bird and Mr Clark and various correspondence followed including comments from Mrs Dean. Members who commented were concerned about the governance arrangements in place for the approval of grants and loans from the scheme and sought various assurances in relation to the soundness of the investment and mitigation of areas of risk highlighted in the independent appraisal report. One further document was provided, to which the Cabinet Member also had access and this is published as an exempt document titled 'Further due diligence'. All members have access to the exempt documents that accompany this decision.

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee will receive, as part of its regular updates, information pertaining to grants, loans and equity investment made and performance against targets.

Any alternatives considered:

Full consideration of the application was given. The Panel received a report from an independent consultant, prepared based on the original application of the Company. The Cabinet Member further considered this information and new information provided to satisfy conditions recommended by the approval panel, when taking the decision.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper

Officer:
None

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Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Smith', written over a dotted line.

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Date

19th November 2014