

033/24

8 March 2024

## **Business support programmes launched in East Sussex**

Two schemes providing support and training to local businesses are available in East Sussex.

The Ready to Grow and Big Ambitions programmes, which have received £447,464 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, are open to companies based in Lewes, Eastbourne, Rother and Wealden districts.

Ready To Grow is a training programme for early-stage business owners who have been trading for less than three years. The programme includes in person and online workshops, masterclasses, one to one support and networking opportunities.

Big Ambitions provides up to 18 hours of expertise for businesses who are growing and likely to employ additional staff within the next six to 12 months and includes one to one diagnostic action planning and specialist support.

Provision of the programmes, which are a collaborative project between Lewes District, Eastbourne Borough, Rother District and Wealden District Councils, is being managed by East Sussex County Council on behalf of the local authorities.

Both programmes are being delivered by Digital Islands, a specialist provider of business support services.

Councillor Keith Glazier, leader of East Sussex County Council, said: "I am delighted that we are working with our district and borough colleagues to support as many local

businesses as possible through the delivery of the Ready To Grow and Big Ambitions programmes.

“Supporting and promoting business growth across the county is vital to our local economy. These initiatives offer great opportunities to companies who are looking to grow and develop, and I urge local organisations to get in touch and find out how they might benefit from the schemes.”

Ready To Grow and Big Ambitions will run until March 2025.

Councillor Paul Coleshill, Alliance for Wealden (Liberal Democrat), and lead councillor for Climate Change and Economy at Wealden District Council, said, “This initiative is a great way for new local businesses to get expert advice enabling them to develop and grow. New businesses will be able to access a range of programmes including workshops and one-to-one advice sessions. It is easy to apply, and free to use.”

The first Ready To Grow event will be held at the Linklater Pavilion in Lewes on Wednesday, March 20 from 12noon to 3pm.

The free Content Event is an opportunity for early-stage businesses in the Lewes district to access expert marketing advice. Visit [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ready-to-grow-free-content-event-lewes-tickets-840221293507](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ready-to-grow-free-content-event-lewes-tickets-840221293507) find out more and book a free place.

More information about the Ready To Grow and Big Ambitions programmes and how to sign up can be found online at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/support/organisations](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/support/organisations).

**Notes to editors:**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. For more information, visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus).

**For further information please contact:**

Nichola Watters  
Head of Planning Policy, Economy and  
Climate Change  
Wealden District Council  
Email: [Nichola.watters@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:Nichola.watters@wealden.gov.uk)

Or Sian Killean  
Media and Communications officer  
Wealden District Council  
Tel: 07970 233231  
Email: [Sian.killean@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:Sian.killean@wealden.gov.uk)