Council’s innovative business support scheme helps joinery company go from strength to strength

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Cornwall Council’s Micro Business Incentive (MBI) pilot scheme has helped Launceston based Timberland Joinery Ltd to expand their workforce and fulfil their bulging order book, thanks to the Council’s innovative response to changes in business rate legislation.

MBI is open to micro businesses in the manufacturing sector in Cornwall. It effectively offers a “break” from paying business rates, in order to allow the business to invest in employing a new member of staff which will lead to business expansion and improvement.

The scheme follows changes in legislation which give local authorities more influence on business rate policy, and Cornwall Council has taken the initiative to use this to find new and innovative ways to support local business.

Alex Folkes, the Council’s Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, said “Cornwall Council is determined to support the growth of small businesses. These firms are the backbone of our local economy and are some of the biggest innovators. This scheme helps them to grow and helps boost jobs in the manufacturing sector. Even as we face tough budget pressures, we are keen to do what we can to help small businesses succeed”.

Kelvin Gay, Manager at Timberland Joinery Ltd said “This scheme has given us the support we needed to employ a new Bench Joiner who will be learning
all aspects of our business, from machining, assembling and staining windows and doors to fitting glazing and ironmongery, helping us to fulfil our already busy order book.”

Under the scheme, businesses that employ fewer than 10 people and have an annual turnover of less than EUR 2 million (approx. £1.65m) receive a “grant” of up to £5,000 to offset the costs of paying business rates. The £100,000 scheme is being delivered on behalf of Cornwall Council by Cornwall Development Company, working with the South West Manufacturing Advisory Service (SWMAS).

A variety of other companies from the manufacturing sector have already benefited from the MBI scheme, including food and drink and technology businesses and other potential applicants have until Friday 17th October to apply for the grant. Details of the application process are available from Cornwall Development Company at www.cornwalldevelopmentcompany.co.uk/mbi

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