North East business struggling to beat the odds

Wednesday 2 April, 2014

A Company based in County Durham offering a unique junk mail and spam calls blocking service has been refused any form of grant funding or support from three key North East councils.

Durham, Sunderland and Newcastle Councils were named by government and Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) as having failed to correspond with UK Doorstep Choice Ltd regarding its plan to set up headquarters in the northeast, leaving the company without access to public grant funding, support or subsidised business premises to operate from.

CEO Mr Paul Gibbon said:

"The failure of the councils to engage with us over a business project of this scale with such huge positives for consumers, the economy and the public purse have left us in the lurch on what should have been the final furlong for the project."

"The situation we have been left in is a disgrace when you consider that these councils are screaming out daily for enterprise and growth and yet they choose to ignore opportunities for just that. Proper evaluation of the national format business model revealed that this start-up could be proven to create tens of thousands of new sustainable jobs and create a surplus profit funding stream that could total billions of pounds annually for UK-based good causes and charities."

"Because of our status and position we are unable to access standard routes to finance via banks, so grant funding would have been ideal given the fractionally small launch costs involved (£3,000). Even with the government's regional growth fund in the northeast acknowledging that it could be made public news at zero cost."

"What I think is most damning is that Durham County Council had originally drawn up a 'Be Enterprising' business plan over six months that could have assisted in funding the launch of the service. On completion of the plan the council wrote to say they could not fund the plan as I did not live in an eligible area to receive grant funding."

"Despite protesting and lobbying, Durham County Council wrote to court saying that I did not have a business plan and that they were prepared to spend £10,000 of taxpayers' cash defending their decision not to fund the plan which would have cost £3,000."

NOTES TO EDITOR:

UK Doorstep Choice Ltd was set up after extensive trials and development to offer its unique "pennies per day" services to householders fed up with unsolicited calls and junk mail. The company has the support of the Office of Fair Trading, The Institute of Trading Standards and the Charity Commission of England and Wales to offer its 3p-a-day service and to use its surplus income to fund UK-based good causes and charities.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Director, Mr Paul Gibbon: Tel. 0795 518 1843

Operation Director in role designate, Mr Alan Joynes: Tel.: 0745 510 0366

If you wish to investigate this matter further, these contact details may prove useful.

Enquiries to HM Treasury: Tel. 020 727 04558

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Head of News at the Department for Business Innovation and Skills 0207 215 5000

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