

**REPORT FROM:** Planning, Economic Development & Regulatory Services

**TO:** Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee

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## **Barrowford Premises Improvement Grants: 2018/19 Summary**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Barrowford Premises Improvement Grants scheme in 2018/19 financial year.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the Committee notes the summary of the Premises Improvement Grants scheme.
- (2) That the Committee agrees to a funding allocation of £4,500 (separate capital programme bid)
- (3) It is requested that the Barrowford Committee nominates two Members to a Premises Improvement Grants Panel

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To allow Members of the Committee to see the outcomes of the Premises Improvement Grants scheme in the 2018/19 financial year.
- (2) To allow the Premises Improvement Grants programme to continue.
- (3) To allow Members to have a greater involvement in the allocation of Premises Improvement grants.

### **ISSUE**

#### Premises Improvement Grant (PIG) scheme: Background

- 1) All business premises within the defined town centre boundary were eligible for a 50% grant up to a maximum of £1500, for improvements to their premises. All businesses within the Barrowford town centre boundary were visited and leafleted to make them aware of the assistance the Council can give, in particular how they could benefit from a PIG. Unfortunately, though many businesses showed interest, no one applied.

Despite that, the grant programme aims to improve the overall appearance of the town centre by assisting businesses to improve premises and encourage the use of vacant properties. The grants scheme is a tool used to encourage private investment in town centre buildings; the outcome of this investment is an aesthetic improvement to the town centre and in turn increases retail and public confidence in the area. The grants can encourage the use of vacant buildings as they can reduce the overall cost of changing the exterior of the building to suit the needs of the incoming business

- 2) PIGs are promoted, targeted and administered by Economic Development staff. The Economic Development Team supports the applicants throughout the application process.
- 3) In the last financial year in which businesses were assisted, ie the 2016/17 financial year, the following businesses were assisted:
  - a. Kimora, 108 Gisburn Road. This existing business has received a grant of £508.69, the funding was used to replace the existing shopfront signage, replace the cover and lettering on the shops sun canopy and repaint the existing wooden shopfront.
  - b. The Lounge, 79-81 Gisburn Road. The property was vacant and underwent extensive renovations and opened as a new business in Barrowford. The Lounge was allocated funding of £3,000
  - c. Scruples 85-87 Gisburn Road. A grant of £3,000 has been allocated to this long standing business that has been based in Barrowford for a long number of years. The grant funding was used to replace the existing wooden windows, with new timber frames and also to replace the existing external signage to the building.

#### Impact

- 4) As a result of these previously assisted businesses 15 new jobs were created and one new business was created, as well as one vacant premises given a new lease of life.
- 5) In the period 2015-17 the number of vacant premises in Barrowford has doubled from 4 to 8 vacant premises. This trend if not halted will have serious repercussions for the town. Keeping PIGs will help play its part in keeping existing businesses in the town, as well as help in filling these vacant premises.
- 6) Having financial assistance available to businesses can be a contributing factor when making a decision on their business location. This could have a positive impact on vacancy rates in a town and help fill the current vacant properties.

#### Premises Improvement Grants 2019-20

- 7) It is requested that £4,500 be allocated to PIGs for Barrowford in 2019-20 financial year. This would potentially allow for the approval of three maximum grants. It is proposed that an officer visits all of the businesses initially in the town centre and leaves a grant leaflet with all of them in order to see whether any of them require assistance.
- 8) It is requested that the Barrowford Committee nominates two Members to be on a PIG Panel. The PIG Panel will make approval decisions prior to a PIG being formally offered to a business. Panel decisions are undertaken via email, the Economic Development Team will send details of the application, prior to Members making an approval decision.

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** None arising directly from this report

**Financial:** As outlined in the report.

**Legal:** None arising directly from this report

**Risk Management:** None arising directly from this report

**Health and Safety:** None arising directly from this report

**Sustainability:** Successful delivery of this scheme will enhance the image and appearance of Colne town centre and in turn encourage the use of local town centres

**Community Safety:** None arising directly from this report

**Equality and Diversity:** grants are accessible to all businesses within the town centre.

## **APPENDICES**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**