

REPORT FROM: Planning, Economic Development & Regulatory Services

TO: Colne and District Committee

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For Information
Colne Premises Improvement Grants: Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Colne premises improvement grants Scheme in 2020/21 financial year.

ISSUE

Premises Improvement grant scheme: Background

1. All businesses within the Colne town centre boundary are eligible for a premises improvement grant. 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. All business premises within the defined town centre boundary are eligible for a 50% grant up to a maximum of £3000, for improvements to their premises. Premises improvement grants are administered by Economic Development staff. The Economic Development Team supports the applicant throughout the application process.

Completed Premises Improvement Grants

1. An Architects practice received a grant of £2,124 which much improved the frontage of the property, including new paint work, new window frames, and new signage and tiling. The number of jobs created by this business in the first year is 2.5 FTEs and it is hoped for 10 FTEs over the first three years.

2. A business responsible for helping vulnerable adults and in a prominent position on the main street received a grant of £3,000. The grant helped toward the installation of new wooden window frames in keeping with the Conservation Area. The total cost of the project was £12,550 and two jobs were safeguarded.
3. A performance venue run by a Community Interest Company received a grant of £1,395 towards a stair lift in the premises which will increase accessibility. 5 jobs are safeguarded at this project.
4. A centre for tuition received a grant of £2,070 to clean the brick frontage. The grant did not include signage. The grant helped to bring a previously vacant building back into occupation.

Premises Improvement Grants 2020-21

1. The Economic Development Team were very proactive and contacted everyone on a targeted list of businesses to encourage grant take up and also a press release and Social Media messages were sent out. This generated a good number of initial enquiries. Twelve in total, but unfortunately no one has yet completed an application form.
2. The current balance on the budget is £14,347. After the pandemic and the re-opening of the high street, it is hoped that there will be an improved take up on Premises Improvement Grants in Colne. The Economic Development Team will again go out to businesses in the coming months to encourage applications in order to assist in the re-invigoration of the high street and its businesses.

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