

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

**TO:** Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee

**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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## **Barrowford Premises Improvement Grants: 2019/20 Summary**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Barrowford premises improvement grants Scheme in 2019/20 financial year.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the Committee notes the summary of the premises improvement grant scheme.
- (2) That the Committee agree to maintaining a funding allocation of £3000 (Separate capital programme bid).

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To allow Members of the Committee to see the outcomes of the premises improvement grants scheme in the 2019/20 financial year.
- (2) To allow the Premises Improvement Grant programme to continue.

### **ISSUE**

#### Premises Improvement grant scheme: Background

- 1) All business premises within the defined town centre boundary were eligible for a 50% grant up to a maximum of £3000, 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 premises improvement grant. Unfortunately, though many businesses showed interest, no one applied.
- 2) 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.

- 3) Premises improvement grants are promoted, targeted and administered by Economic Development staff. The Economic Development Team supports the applicants throughout the application process.
- 4) 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 2020-21

- 5) In 2019/20 no grant spend was allocated in Barrowford. However over the last few months we have had enquiries coming in. It is requested that the 2019/20 £3000 be carried forward into 2020/21 year for the Premises Improvement Grant Scheme for Barrowford.
- 6) All towns have been targeted though our digital newsletter in a recent promotion and the Economic Development team have received a number of enquiries for Barrowford.
- 7) In light of recent circumstances of Covid-19 we would request that the money is continued to be allocated to help Economic Development Team support our town centre shops.

#### **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**