

REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER

TO: NELSON, BRIERFIELD & REEDLEY COMMITTEE

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Report Author: Deborah McCarthy
Tel. No: 01282 6619673
E-mail: deborah.mccarthy@pendle.gov.uk

PREMISES IMPROVEMENT GRANTS: UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Nelson and Brierfield premises improvement grants Scheme in 2020/21 financial year, and request an additional funding allocation to allow the programme to continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee notes the summary of the premises improvement grant scheme.
- (2) That the Committee agree to slippage of £7798.50 from the 2020/21 year and a further funding allocation of £15,000 for Nelson making a total of £23,798.50. That the Committee agrees to slipping the funding allocation of £3000 for the 2020/21 year for Brierfield into the 2021/22 financial year.
- (3) That the Committee agree to nominate two Grant Panel members for the year for Nelson and two Grant Panel members for Brierfield.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To allow Members of the Committee to see the outcomes of the premises improvement grants scheme so far in the 2020/21 financial year.
- (2) To allow the Premises Improvement Grant programme to fund future projects.
To allow for all existing approved grants to be given to businesses within a reasonable timeframe
- (3) To allow all approved grants spend to be carried over into 2021/22.
- (4) To allow Grant Panel members to be decided by the Members of the Committee.

ISSUE

Premises Improvement grant scheme: Background

1. All businesses within the Nelson and Brierfield town centre boundaries 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 take up 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.

Premises improvement grants summary - Nelson

3. For Nelson in this financial year (2020/21) a budget of £15,000 was allocated plus underspend of £27,269 from 2019/20 making a total of £42,269 for Premises Improvement Grants. A total of 3 grants were paid out with a further 13 grants waiting to be paid out. Midway Blinds and Games@9 are two of the successful applicants of this grant scheme. Midway Blinds received £2,300 and Games@9 received £2,900. Eaton Adam Solicitors and Travel Asia are two examples of the grant applications waiting to be paid out.
4. The 13 allocated grants total £29,170.50. The Budget we have remaining is £7798.50 that we request Committee to approve carrying forward as slippage. Because we have de-allocated funding to uncompleted projects that means our remaining budget is higher than the previous report indicated.
5. We would request a budget allocation for Town Centre Premises Grants for Nelson in 2021/22 of £15,000. This would give Nelson a total budget allocation for 2021/22 of £23,798.50 (£7798.50 + £15,000)
6. There continues to be strong interest and demand from businesses in Nelson for these grants. We currently have one completed grant application ready to go to the new panel that will hopefully receive the full allocation of £3000 from Committee and have enquiries from a further 3 businesses.

Premises improvement grants summary - Brierfield

5. It is requested that the Committee allocates sufficient funding in order to make decisions throughout the year to approve funding for premises improvement grants. An initial capital funding allocation of £3000 is suggested.

6. For the 2020/21 grant year no grants were paid out. Brierfield currently has 0 enquiries. However by continuing the funding into the 2021/22 financial year we would hope to facilitate a possible 3 or 4 enquiries based on previous years' experience.

7. All towns will continue to be targeted though our digital newsletter in promotions and the Economic Development team have received enquiries across Pendle.

8. In light of the impact 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.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None