

REPORT FROM: Planning, Economic Development & Regulatory Services

TO: Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee

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Barrowford Premises Improvement Grants: 2020/21 Summary

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Barrowford Premises Improvement Grants Scheme in 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee note the summary of the Premises Improvement Grant scheme.
- (2) That the Committee agree to slipping the funding allocation of £3000 for 2020/21 into the 2021/22 financial year.
- (3) That the Committee agree to nominate 2 Grant Panel members for the year.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To allow Members of the Committee to see the outcomes of the Premises Improvement Grants scheme in the 2020/21 financial year.
- (2) To allow the Premises Improvement Grant programme to continue.
- (3) To allow Grant Panel members to be decided by the Members of the Committee.

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.

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) Premises Improvement Grants are promoted, targeted and administered by Economic Development staff. The Economic Development Team supports the applicants throughout the application process.
- 3) 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 2021/21

- 4) It is requested that the budget of £3000 from 2020/21 be continued by slipping the existing budget into the Premises Improvement Grant scheme for Barrowford for the 2021/22 financial year.
- 5) There were no grants paid out last year. We currently have 1 enquiry for Barrowford. The carrying forward of the £3000 could have the potential to be allocated to this 1 enquiry.
- 6) All towns will continue to be targeted through our digital newsletter in a recent promotion and the Economic Development team have received a number of enquiries for Barrowford.
- 7) 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.

APPENDICES

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS