

**REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER**

TO: COLNE & DISTRICT COMMITTEE

DATE: 7TH JULY, 2022

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Premises Improvement Grants: Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Colne Premises Improvement Grants Scheme in 2021/22 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 Grants Scheme.
- (2) That the Committee agree to carry over the slippage and added to by £7,689 to make the total budget for 2022/23 year £20,000.
- (3) That the Committee agree to nominate 2 Grant Panel members for the year.
- (4) Members are asked to consider the rationale behind any changes to the Premises Grants

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To allow Members of the Committee to see the outcomes of the Premises Improvement Grants Scheme so far in the 2021/22 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 Grant Panel members to be decided by the Members of the Committee.

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| (4) | To allow Members to make decisions that support the ongoing Regeneration of Colne Town Centre |
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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.

Premises Improvement Grants summary

3. There was a budget of £17,910. Out of the remaining grants, Colne Town Hall £2,598.50 is allocated but not yet paid out, and Colne Opticians, a possible £3000, so that is £5,598.50 needed to be carried forwarded. This leaves £12,311.50 once paid out. We ask that the remainder of £17,910 is carried forward to support the ongoing applications (£5,598.50) and be added to by £7,689 to make a total allocation of £20,000 for 2022/23 financial year.
4. There continues to be strong interest and demand from businesses in Colne for these grants, currently Colne Opticians is an early enquiry of £3000.
5. All towns will continue to be targeted though our digital newsletter in promotions and the Economic Development team have received enquiries across Pendle.
6. 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.
7. It has been asked that the Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services Manager review the Premises Improvement Grant criteria with a view to –
 - increasing the level of grant funding available to two thirds of the costs, with businesses required to contribute one third
 - adding a 'repair' element to the eligible works to allow for painting and signage

It should be noted that the Grant Scheme should not be used for routine maintenance, this the responsibility of the owner/occupier of the premises.

Signs and painting are on our ineligible items list except where they are part of a bigger improvement scheme. Potential applicants are directed to apply for "The Lick of Paint" scheme in Colne if applicable.

An increase in funding for a particular town could be considered if local circumstances dictate this is required. We note that a 50% intervention rate is still a very attractive grant for businesses, but streamlining some processes, for instance the Planning process, may assist in enquiries being taken to full application. It should be noted that this is dependent on the resources to do so being available.

Members are asked to consider the rationale behind any changes to the Premises Grants.

8. To remind the Committee that at a previous meeting on 03.03.22 it was resolved that the existing boundary be extended to include those sites on important major routes into the town centre and those considered gateway sites, defined as follows –
 - From the roundabout at Whitewalls Drive, through the town centre, finishing at the Byron Road/Keighley Road roundabout
 - Skipton Road from the traffic lights at the Market Street/Keighley Road/Craddock Road junction to the roundabout at its junction with Windsor Street and Byron Road

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