

REPORT FROM: HEAD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

TO: BARROWFORD AND WESTERN PARISHES COMMITTEE

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PREMISES IMPROVEMENT GRANT SCHEME 2024/25

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the progress made on the Barrowford Premises Improvement Grant Scheme in the 2023/24 financial year and request that the criteria in relation to quotes be reviewed. This item had been deferred from the last meeting of this Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members note the summary of the Premises Improvement Grant Scheme.
- (2) That Members note that £3,000 of funding allocated from this Committee's 2023/24 Budget has been carried forward to fund the Scheme in 2024/25.
- (3) That Members agree to nominate a minimum of two Grant Panel members for the year and also to review the criteria in relation to quotes.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To allow Members of the Committee to see the outcomes of the Premises Improvement Grant Scheme in the 2023/24 financial year.
- (2) To allow the Premises Improvement Grant programme to fund future projects in 2024/25.
- (3) To allow for all existing approved grants to be given to businesses within a reasonable timeframe.
- (4) To allow Grant Panel members to be decided by the Members of the Committee.
- (5) To allow Members to make decisions that support the ongoing Regeneration of Barrowford Town Centre.

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 £3,000, for improvements to their premises.
2. 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 administered by the Economic Development team and promoted via the Council website and within its digital newsletter.
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 2023/24

1. Barrowford has received three enquiries in 2023/24. One of which was eligible but had unfortunately already carried out the work, the grant is not given retrospectively. One was ineligible and the final enquiry wished to carry out work that did not match the criteria.
2. The carried forward funding allocation of £3,000 will support one application based on the maximum grant amount of £3,000 for each applicant in 2024/25.
3. So far in 2024/25 Barrowford has received two enquiries, at the initial stage of enquiry so no costs are known yet.
4. Barrowford continues to show moderate interest in the Grant scheme, if more enquiries are received than expected and more funding is required due to further applications in the next year of 2024/25 the Economic Development Team will then provide a further report request such.
5. That Committee agree to amending the criteria to allow two quotes for item of work rather than three. Applicants are struggling to always achieve three quotes for each item of work, and this can result in delayed applications.

Barrowford will continue to be targeted through our digital newsletter in promotions.

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 Barrowford 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:

Appendix 1 - Premises Grant Criteria

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS: None.

Financial Assistance

Town Centre Premises Improvement Grants

These grants are made to help with expenditure on eligible buildings.

The type of expenditure which these grants are to help with would:

- a) enhance the property significantly and/or
- b) extend its life and/or
- c) add value to the property

The grants are for improvement. They are NOT repair grants, or to do with any expenditure that would be generally regarded to do with the day-to-day running of a business

Eligible buildings are:

- occupied by commercial users and are located within the Borough of Pendle and lying with the town centre boundaries (PBC-local Plan) or within a Premises Grant boundary as defined by that particular town's Area Committee
- redundant commercial properties located within and immediately adjacent to the Town Centre Planning Boundaries

All applicants must meet **at least one of the five criteria** detailed below:

- a) improve the town's streetscape by enhancing the appearance of the property
- b) assist in the occupation of shops that have been empty for some time;
- c) lead to the introduction of businesses that extend the range of choice of goods and services;
- d) resolve a problem affecting the future of the property or its potential;
- e) create additional jobs, other than construction jobs;

Restrictions

All works must adhere to restrictions imposed by conservation area status i.e timber must be used for shop fronts, window frames and doors. All schemes must result in a notable improvement in the appearance of the property and must be carried out in accordance with building regulations/planning permissions/advertisement consents required or approved. Applications will be accepted from tenants, provided they have a FRI lease or subject to written permission being obtained from the owner of the property.

Works should not be started until an offer has been made in writing. Applications for retrospective assistance will not be considered.

Support Available

The grant is set at a rate of up to 50% of eligible works up to a maximum grant of £3,000. The maximum in the West Craven Area is £1,500.

Eligible Items (Subject to planning consent being obtained if required)	In-eligible items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete new shop front • New windows (that cover a reasonable proportion of the frontage of the building) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-painting a property • Signs • Maintenance items, such as roofing and guttering, pointing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs and painting – provided it is part of a bigger package of improvements, including new windows, new shop front including external doors • Creation of external seating areas, including railings • Stone cleaning to enhance the appearance of a building • Items of a permanent nature which will enhance the appearance and value of the building • New items to make premises more accessible for people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal improvements – such as shop fitting, plastering, electrics, furniture, heating systems etc • Security items – such as shutters • Revenue expenditure – ie printing, marketing, websites etc • Staffing and suppliers costs • Non- permanent items such window displays • Any items at the rear of properties
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For further information please contact:

For Nelson – Currently suspended

For Earby, Colne & Barnoldswick – Mike Williams 01282 661963

For Barrowford, Brierfield– Deborah McCarthy 01282 661973

In addition to the Premises Improvement Grants in Colne only - Colne Business Improvement District (BID) is offering “Lick of Paint” Grants to eligible properties. To find out more please email manager@colnebid.co.uk