

Retail Support Initiative Grant Application - Wincanton and Wincanton 'Top Up' (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

For Members to consider the Retail Support Initiative (RSI) grant request detailed below.

Public Interest

Supporting and helping to improve the retail offer in the towns and villages across Area East.

Recommendation:

To consider an award of up to £1689.31 as a 50% contribution to Bootmakers, 5 Market Place, Wincanton, towards shop front improvements and signage, which includes an additional top up to assist with business equipment. The breakdown being as follows:

- £1,453 from the Community Development budget revenue element ring-fenced for the RSI
- £236.31 from the Community Development budget, Wincanton top-up, revenue element ring-fenced for the RSI

All awards to be subject to the following standard conditions:

- (a) The grant award may be used by SSDC for promotional/publicity purposes
- (b) Grants are paid for approved works/purchases on production of receipted invoices
- (c) Awards are subject to an interim report (within 9 months) and final report being submitted
- (d) Applicants will normally be expected to draw down the grant within 6 months of the offer
- (e) That appropriate consents are obtained
- (f) Works requiring listed building/planning consents or building regulations will be required to be signed off by the appropriate officer prior to the release of funds
- (g) If, within 3 years of a grant award, the business ceases to trade, the District Council reserves the right to reclaim the grant on the following basis: year one – 100%; year 2 – 75%, year 3 – 45%

Background

This application is being considered under the scheme's operating criteria agreed in July 2014, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1.

Current Application

This is the first application to be considered for this property on the Market Place, Wincanton. As it is an application for Wincanton an additional 'top up' is available to assist with business improvements and marketing initiatives. On this occasion some of the additional £300 has

been requested to enable the purchase of equipment to improve the business. The application meets the criteria of both the basic RSI and the Wincanton 'top-up'.

The amount requested is £1689.31.

Grant details

Bootmakers, 5 Market Place, Wincanton

'Bootmakers' is a community based creative workshop and café aimed at all ages, re-using and upcycling everyday materials. The aim is to create a self-sustaining business which actively encourages people from other local towns and villages into the town.

The building is being restored in a sympathetic manner to echo the original occupant, Edwin Harris, Bootmaker in the early 1900's.

Shop front improvements and the purchase of equipment.

❖ Total Project Cost – £3378.62

❖ Amount requested – £1689.31

Other funding – the remaining funding for this project will come from the businesses' own fund.

Assessment score is 64 out of a max of 100.

This figure exceeds the minimum level score (50) required for grant assistance to be considered

Observations - Prominent unit in Wincanton Market Place in need of redecoration to improve exterior and to give the property a new identity. This unit has been vacant since November 2013. The recommended grant award of £1689.31 includes £236.31 from the Wincanton 'top up'.

Financial Implications

If Members choose to award this grant, the unallocated budget for Retail Support Initiative will be as follows:

	Revenue element	Capital	Wincanton 'top-up'
Unallocated budget 2015/16 as at April 2016*	£8547	£1212	£9763.69

Corporate Priority Implications

Awarding of grants meets the corporate aim: To increase economic vitality and prosperity

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications

This project does not cause any changes to carbon emissions.

Background Papers: None

Retail Support Initiative

Operating criteria

Percentage contributions cannot exceed 50% of costs and no retrospective applications are eligible (i.e. in respect of works which have already been commissioned/started).

Applications over £1000 will be considered by Area East Committee on a monthly basis since the Community Regeneration Sub Committee quarterly meetings ceased. Amounts up to £1000 may be considered at any time as a delegated grant in consultation with the Chairman and Ward Member(s).

Grant levels:

Maximum 50% of project costs as follows:

Eligible costs:

Shop-front improvements, if they enhance the High Street.

Business rates assistance – a contribution to the amount payable for new businesses (which do not compete with another business) in their first two years of trading.

Exceptional projects which add to the viability of towns/villages.

Process

Applications for Grants are accessed and recommendations made on the basis of a fully completed application form and two 'like for like' quotes. Self-help/DIY schemes may complete the application form and supply a project budget with supporting information.

All grant recipients must accept that the grant may be used for publicity purposes by the District Council. Payment of the grant is done retrospectively, for a completed programme of works on the basis of receipted invoices. Exceptionally officers, in consultation with the Chairman, may release partial payments where there is clear justification for doing so.

The District Council will continue to claw back grants from businesses which cease trading on the following basis: 100% in year one, 75% in year two, 45% in year three.

The existing assessment and current scoring mechanism favours businesses:

- employing more than 2 people
- in prominent places
- key rural stores/Post Offices
- retailers

The award is subject to the following standard conditions:

- The grant award may be used by SSSC for promotional/publicity purposes;
- Grants are paid for approved works/purchases on production of receipted invoices;
- Awards are subject to a summary of the benefit of the scheme being supplied;
- Applicants will normally be expected to draw down the grant within six months of the offer and if not will have to inform us of the reason(s) for the delay. If there is a valid reason, officers can provide a 6 month extension, but beyond this the grant would either be withdrawn or referred Area East Committee to be re-affirmed;

- That appropriate consents are obtained - works requiring listed building/planning consents or building regulation consent will be required to be signed off by the appropriate officer prior to the release of funds