

## **Retail Support Initiative Grant Application – White Horse, Wincanton (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 £2,500 as a 47% contribution to The White Horse, High Street, Wincanton, towards exterior pointing and re-decoration:

- £1,500 from the Community Development budget revenue element ring-fenced for the RSI
- £1,000 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 and subject to a visual inspection to confirm completion
- (c) Awards are subject to feedback being supplied within 12 months
- (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%

For this application there is an additional requirement for the paint colour to be agreed with the Conservation Officer ahead of commencement.

## Background

This application is being considered under the scheme's operating criteria agreed in June 2016, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1. The premises are one of a number of vacant units in Wincanton which are eligible for an additional 'top up' of £1,000 in addition to the standard Area wide Retail Support Initiative grant of £1,500

The White Horse is a Grade II\* historic coaching Inn built around 1733, which is on Historic England's 'At Risk Register' with a condition listing of 'poor'. The deteriorating state of the building had been a source of concern for several years prior to it ceasing to trade in May 2015. The building was then marketed and sold to the present owners in July 2016.

## Current application

Since acquiring the premises the new owners have started an ambitious programme of repair and renovation, which is likely to cost in excess of £300k once all phases are completed. The owners are working in close liaison with the District Council's Conservation Officer. Their intention for the building is a combination of living accommodation on the upper floors with two distinct areas for dining on the ground floor. Once fully operational they expect to employ up to 10 people.

This request for funding is to assist with refurbishment to the front of the building over all three floors and includes re-pointing and re-decoration. The application has been assessed using our standard criteria and we are therefore recommending our maximum grant of £2,500.

## 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 2016/17	£4704	£1212	£8424

## Corporate Priority Implications

The awarding of grants meets the following corporate aims:

To increase economic vitality and prosperity

## Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications

This project does not cause any changes to carbon emissions.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

**Background Papers:** None

## **Retail Support Initiative**

### **Operating criteria 2016/17**

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

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

Area-wide grant levels: **£1,500 to a 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 viability of towns/villages

#### **Wincanton top-up**

In addition to the area-wide scheme the 'top-up' scheme for Wincanton also offers:

- Maximum grant £1,000 for businesses wishing to move into one of the units currently empty units listed below:

6 High Street – Digital Error  
24 High Street – formerly Green Dragon  
36 High Street – formerly Alldays  
4 High Street – formerly the White Horse  
New Unit corner of Carrington Way  
15 High Street – formerly HSBC

Eligible units which are now occupied:

59 High Street – formerly Nanny Jacks #  
3 South Street – formerly Thomas Property Sales#  
3 Market Place – The Red Lion#  
13 Market Street – formerly Boots Chemist#  
6 High Street – formerly Chicken Grill/Yummy Yummy#  
1-3 High St – formerly Brocks#

Grants are only available to proprietors/owners with one business/premise and will not exceed 50% of project cost

## **Process**

Applications for Grants are assessed 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 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;
- If, within three 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 two – 75%, year three – 45%.