

STOREFRONT GRANT SCHEME

REPORT OF: Economic Development Officer
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Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present two applications for the Storefront Improvement Grant Scheme

Summary

2. A summary of the applications to be considered, together with officer recommendations for the level of financial assistance to be awarded is set out in the table below:

Organisation	Purpose for which award is Sought	Award requested	Award suggested
Flinders Coffee	Replacement door, signage and exterior improvements	£4,000	n/a ¹
Upmarket22	Renovation of new storefront	£4,000	n/a ¹
Total		£8,000	£8,000

¹ - Please refer to paragraph 4 for information on budget totals.

Recommendation

Members of the Panel are requested to:

- ***Consider and decide upon the recommendations for the above grant. Summaries of the grant application is attached in Appendix A of this report***

Background

3. This is the fifth meeting of the Cabinet Grants Panel to consider the 2019/20 Storefront Grant Scheme. This paper will present two applications of a new wave of applicant retailers regarding the scheme. The newly contacted retailers have either expressed interest in early promotion of the scheme or have previously taken part in independent retailers training workshops organised by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). The Economic Development Team has been working with these stores to support their application submission.
4. Given that the applications presented in this report total more than the remaining budget for the scheme, MSDC officers are currently in contact with officers at West Sussex County Council to determine whether funding can be transferred from the MSDC Micro Business Grant budget to support these applications. This additional budget is made up of both unallocated spend and grants which will no longer be claimed. Officers will provide a verbal update to the Panel on the available budget in order to inform decisions and officers suggestions on amounts to be awarded.
5. The remaining balance of the scheme is £3,710. The previously mentioned transfer of funding would be for a total of £3,013.67 which would leave a new balance of £6,723.67. With this in mind, officers have assessed both applications to be of equal

merit. Officers therefore seek that the panel make decision to either award £3,361.84 to each business, should the transfer be agreed, or alternatively £1,855 to each business using the original budget.

Assessment and Policy Context

6. The grants in this report have been considered by the Council's Economic Development Officer, William Hawkins and the Council's Regeneration and Economy Programme Manager, Mark Healy. The proposal to expand the applicant base for the scheme was agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Councillor Stephen Hillier. A summary of the application is included within the individual project reports in Appendix A.
7. All the businesses included in this paper have met the basic criteria and specific grant criteria; that is they are properly constituted independent retail businesses within Mid Sussex and provided the relevant information to support their application.

Financial Implications

8. The Storefront Grants are funded through an allocation from the WSCC Strategic Infrastructure Fund, with £204,000 to be divided proportionally between districts. A total of £21,000 was allocated to Mid Sussex District.
9. The current fund stands at:

Scheme	Original fund	Funds approved so far	Remaining budget	Funds requested in this paper	Balance (if all bids in this paper are approved)
Storefront Grant Scheme	£21,000	£ 17,290	£3,710	£8,000	£0

10. Following the decisions made by the Panel on the presented applications, the total budget will likely be completed allocated. A decision is expected to be taken in April 2020 regarding whether there will be future funding allocated to the scheme.
11. As previously noted officers will provide a verbal update to the Panel regarding the current budget available.

Risk Management Implications

12. The main risk associated with the successful implementation of the decisions arising from this report is the inability of the funded organisations to carry out the services, activities or equipment purchase for which funding had been awarded.
13. To minimise this risk, the decision has been taken to only pay out the grants following proof, from the applicant, that the project in question has begun, or equipment has been purchased. This could be in the form of receipts, invoices and other related documents

Equality implications

14. All of the businesses whose bids are included in this report were assessed to be in compliance with the requisite policies/legislation.

Legal Implications

15. The Council is not obliged to provide grant funding, but by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, it is able to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. This includes incurring expenditure, giving financial assistance to any person (or organisation) and entering into arrangements or agreements with any person.

Background Papers

16. Grant applications and associated documentation for the Storefront Grant Scheme are held in the Economic Development Team.