

Delegated Officer Report

Decision Maker:	CLlr Sean Fielding, Council leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive, People & Place.
Date of Decision:	20 November 2019
Subject:	Award of a Business Improvement Grant in Shaw district centre
Report Author:	Liz Whitehead, Principal Regeneration Officer
Ward (s):	Shaw & Crompton

Reason for the decision: The purpose of the report is to seek approval to award a Business Improvement Grant in Shaw District Centre.

Summary: The Council recognises the important role that independent businesses play in sustaining the vibrancy and vitality of our high streets and has developed a Business Improvement Grant scheme for Shaw District Centre. Discretionary grants of 50% of the costs of improvements, up to a maximum of £8,000, are available until 31st December 2019.

An application has been received and for which approval is sought.

Sports Physio (Shaw) Ltd, 41B Market Street Shaw

This business is an existing physiotherapy clinic established for 7 years in Shaw Town centre occupying a mid -terraced property on Market Street.

The business would like the grant to improve the visual appearance of the premises and improve access into it by:

- Replacing the old fascia and shutter signage with a new single fascia sign which will cover the shutter box.
- Adding an electronic push button door mechanism to the front entrance to help with assisted access into the premises
- Replacing the existing solid shutters with powder coated perforated electronic shutters.

The business state that the existing shutter has been on the premises for over 20 years and is very noisy to lift up/pull down, as well as being solid and unsightly. The new shutter will be electronic so much quieter and the perforated design and modern powder colour coating will be a significant improvement. The new signage will help to screen the shutter box as well as contributing to the overall modernisation of the appearance of the business.

The business has investigated the potential to remove the stepped entrance, but the implication to the internal layout and the significant costs of these works means that this is not a viable option for the business. They have a portable step which minimises the height of the step into the building but are wanting to add a power assisted door to improve access into the building.

The business owns the premises and are also registered for business rates and currently receive Small Business Rate Relief.

The business has obtained three quotes each for the signage and shutter, but due to the lack of suppliers locally for the power assisted door, they have only managed to obtain one quote for this aspect.

Based on the lowest quotes, the cost of the works comes to £5,849.98 and the business is therefore applying for a grant of £2,924.99.

The Shaw and Crompton Grant Advisory Panel made up of the 6 ward councillors for Shaw and Crompton were consulted by email on 5th November 2019 and all 6 Councillors responded recommending approval of the application.

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

1. Do nothing. If the Council chooses to adopt this approach then the Council's regeneration aspirations for Shaw District Centre would be delayed. There is potential that the appearance of these premises and Shaw District Centre could decline.
2. Approve the award of the Business Improvement Grant. Business Improvement Grant applicants will enter into a conditional grant agreement with the Council, to ensure that works are being undertaken satisfactorily with claw back arrangements for non-compliance. Funding takes place once the contract is completed and the works completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.

A local grant review panel consisting of at least 3 of the ward members for Shaw and Crompton has been set up to review grant applications. The panel provides recommendations as to whether to approve, vary or reject the grant applications with the actual decision to award the grant being made by the relevant Cabinet member.

This application was considered by the Shaw Grant Review Panel via an email sent on 5th November 2019, to which all 6 responded recommending approval.

Recommendation(s):

Approve a Business Improvement Grant award as follows:

- £2,924.99 to "Sports Physio (Shaw) Ltd in respect of 41b Market Street, Shaw

Implications:

What are the financial implications?

The Lees & Shaw District Centres Business Support (Neighbourhood Developments) Project was awarded £200,000 for Business Improvement Grants in the districts of Shaw and Shaw, with £100,000 earmarked for each district.

The table below details the full budget and allocations to date for Shaw District and shows the financial impact of the approval of the £2,925 award contained in this report. Consequently, there would be funds of £4,306 still to allocate.

	£
Total Business Improvement Grant – Shaw	100,000
Previous approved grant allocations	(92,529)
Marketing costs	(240)
Total remaining grant	7,231
Approval to allocate above recommendation	(2,925)
Grant Remaining for Allocation	4,306

Approval of this award of £2,925 would increase the value of the grant allocated to £95,694.

It should be noted that of the £92,529 allocated for Shaw prior to the consideration of this report, £84,942 has been drawn down by the successful applications, as the conditions of grant state that the recipient has up to 12 months to draw down the grant following the approved offer.

Marketing costs of £480 have been apportioned equally to both districts (£240 each) prior to any grants being awarded. All costs will be charged to capital code M0550, as both districts are funded through this.

It is important that colleagues in the Economic Development team, with the assistance from Finance, maintain an understanding and record of claims so that an accurate forecast can be completed.

It is unlikely that every grant awarded in 2019/20 will be drawn down in the same financial year as the conditions of the grant allow the recipient up to 12 months to draw down the grant following the approved offer. (Jamie Kelly, Accountant)

What are the legal implications?

The grants will be made subject to the Council's standard terms for Business Improvement Grants that provide for the grant to be paid after the works have been completed to the satisfaction of the Council's surveyor. There will be claw back provisions for non-compliance with the grant terms which together with the relatively low amounts of the grants make the grants low risk transactions. As long as the grant applications meet the Council's requirements and have been assessed in accordance with the Council's procedures Legal Services has no further comments to make. (Elizabeth Cunningham-Doyle)

What are the procurement implications?

N/A

What are the Human Resources implications?

N/A

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

N/A

What are the property implications

Improvement of privately-owned businesses will contribute towards the achievement of a vibrant Shaw District Centre. (Bryn Cooke)

Risks:

Each applicant is checked for Business Rates registration and that they are up to date. The applicant is registered for Business Rates at the premises and is currently receiving relief. The grant is only payable on satisfactory completion of the works.

Co-operative agenda


Business Improvement Grants are available to any independent business or property owner within the eligible areas. The grants can be the catalyst for local business to carry out improvement which they would not otherwise be able to afford or consider doing. Working with independent businesses is particularly important to our co-operative agenda and our District Centres as they help to create a strong sense of local identity and customer loyalty and trust. District Centres are often the location for family businesses that have been trading for long periods of time – many of them for several decades. Improvements to the exterior of key buildings including fascia's and shop fronts can both uplift an area and the visitor's perception of the District Centre and assist in attracting new independents.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

There are no background papers for this report

Report Author Sign-off:	
Signed:	
Cllr Sean Fielding	
Date:	

In consultation with Helen Lockwood, Executive Director Economy, Skills and Neighbourhoods

Hlockwood.

Signed :

Date:20 November 2019