

## Delegated Officer Report

**Decision Maker:** Cllr Sean Fielding, Council leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise

**Date of Decision:** Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive, People & Place.  
20 December 2019

**Subject:** Award of a Business Improvement Grant in Lees district centre

**Report Author:** Liz Whitehead, Principal Regeneration Officer

**Ward (s):** Saddleworth West & Lees

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**Reason for the decision:** The purpose of the report is to seek approval to award a Business Improvement Grant in Lees 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 Lees District Centre. Discretionary grants of 50% of the costs of improvements, up to a maximum of £8,000, are available.

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

**Lees Bacaro Ltd, T/A Milan Bar, 13 Elliott Street, Lees.**

The building is in a prominent location on Elliott Street and is in use as a bar, restaurant and function venue.

The grant application seeks funding towards the refurbishment, alteration and improvement works to the toilet facilities within the venue. They wish to add a baby changing facility, disabled toilet and enhance the existing toilet facilities. This would involve new stud walling, internal rearrangements, flooring works, new ceiling, electrics and decoration. The business is aware that Building Regulations approval is required, and this will be a condition of any grant offered.

The works to the premises would enable wider opportunities for the business and allow a greater number and variety of functions to be held. The current lack of baby changing and disabled facilities is limiting the range of functions that can be accommodated, as well as restricting the use of the premises by some people, and the venue have lost a number of potential bookings as a result. The business estimates that with these new facilities, additional bookings would be made and the growth in business would result in additional employment opportunities for bar, service and kitchen staff. They are in discussions with Get Oldham Working regarding employing an apprentice.

The applicant is registered and up to date with their Business Rates. Milan Bar has been awarded a Food Hygiene Rating of 5 (Very Good) following an inspection on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019.

The applicant has submitted 3 quotes with their application and based on the lowest quote – the works come to £17,024.68 exc VAT. The applicant is therefore applying for a maximum grant of £8,000.

The Lees Grant Advisory Panel is made up of at least 2 of the 3 ward councillors for Saddleworth West and Lees. They were consulted via email dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019, and all three councillors have responded and recommend approval of this application especially because of all the community work that Milan Bar does.

***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 Lees District Centre would be delayed.
2. Approve the award of the Business Improvement Grant. Business Improvement Grant applicants will enter into a contract 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 2 of the 3 ward members for Saddleworth West & Lees 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 sent to the three members of the Lees Grant Review Panel by email on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019, whereby all three have responded, recommending approval.

**Recommendation(s):**

Approve a max award of £8,000 Business Improvement Grant to:

- Lees Bacaro Ltd (t/a Milan Bar) in respect of 13 Elliott Street, Lees

**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 Lees District and shows the financial impact of the approval of the £8,000 award contained in this report. Consequently, there would be funds of £40,428 still to allocate.

	£
Total Business Improvement Grant – Lees	100,000
Previous approved grant allocations	(51,332)
Marketing costs	(240)
<b>Total remaining grant</b>	<b>48,428</b>
Approval to allocate above recommendation	(8,000)
<b>Grant Remaining for Allocation</b>	<b>40,428</b>

Approval of this award of £8,000 would increase the value of grants allocated to £59,332.

It should be noted that of the £51,332 allocated for Lees prior to the consideration of this report, £35,545 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 Economy 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)


<i>What are the <b>legal</b> implications?</i>	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 and conditions which will include the requisite building regulations approval which together with the relatively low amount of the grant make the grant a low risk transaction. (Elizabeth Cunningham-Doyle)
What are the <b>procurement</b> implications?	N/A
<i>What are the <b>Human Resources</b> implications?</i>	N/A
<i><b>Equality and Diversity</b> Impact Assessment</i>	N/A
<i>What are the <b>property</b> implications</i>	Improvement of privately owned businesses will contribute towards the achievement of a vibrant Lees District Centre. (Bryn Cooke)
<b>Risks:</b>	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 up to date with payments. The grant is only payable on satisfactory completion of the works.
<b>Co-operative agenda</b>	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 cop-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 a number of 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.

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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**

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
Cllr Sean Fielding, Council leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise	
<b>Date:</b>	20/12/19

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



Signed :

Date:20 December 2019

