

## APPENDIX 2

# Investing in Vibrant District Centres – A Framework for Business Support and Premises Improvement for A62 Failsworth corridor

## Delivery of Town Centre Business Support and Premises Improvement

### 1 Background

- 1.1 On 15 December, Cabinet approved £100k from the Capital programme to deliver the capital eligible elements of this framework. The funding is intended to enable the provision of building improvement grants to eligible businesses within a defined area. The overall objectives of the framework are as follows:
- i. Improving the area's identity and distinctiveness;
  - ii. Attracting new uses to the Failsworth corridor to widen the Retail and Leisure economy;
  - iii. Strengthening the connectivity between visitor destinations, improving the built environment and maximising the impact of the previous public realm investment in the A62 corridor.
  - iv. Improving visitor experience and dwell time.
  - v. Providing support to existing SME and start-up businesses in the targeted area.
- 1.2 This report describes the delivery framework for implementation of the grant scheme.

### 2 Delivery Approach

#### 2.1 Creation of a Single Front Door Approach

##### 2.1.2 Delivery

Delivery of the initiative will be led by the Strategic investment Team, with all enquiries and applications directed to the 'Invest in Oldham' telephone number and email address to create a 'single point of entry' for businesses.

The initiative will not, however, be delivered in isolation and a number of teams will be involved to ensure a comprehensive package of support is offered utilising the relevant skills:

- Strategic Investment Team – overall co-ordination, work allocation, enquiry handling, data and record management.

- Unity Partnership – programme and project management, liaison with applicants, processing of grant applications and preparation of applications for approval.
- Economy & Skills Team - embedding Get Oldham Working, assessment of business support needs, signposting to existing business support provision, assessment of business plans, revenue grant applications and liaison with Oldham Enterprise Trust.
- Corporate Communications – publicity and promotion, production of marketing materials, communicating key milestones and successes.
- Planning – support and advice on planning matters, signage and shop front design.
- District Partnership Team – promotion of grant initiative, local liaison with business owners/landlords

### 2.1.3 Businesses will be allocated an Account Manager

Account Managers will come from within the Unity and District Partnership Teams. It is anticipated Account Managers will not, however, operate in isolation and will draw support from relevant colleagues.

The role of the Account Manager is as follows:

- Act as single point of contact for a particular business.
- Identify business needs and involve relevant officers/organisations to meet those needs.
- To signpost to other relevant services and monitor progress to ensure that the needs of the business are met.
- To actively promote Council services and initiatives, with particular emphasis on Get Oldham Working.
- Guide the business through any grant application process, update on progress and chase any outstanding information.
- Maintain regular contact through the process and continue to act as a single point of contact beyond this to monitor progress, identify and seek to address any issues on-going affecting business sustainability or growth.

## 2.2 Building Improvement Grants

### 2.2.1 Delivery of a Building Improvement Grant

In providing such a grant the Council would link the assistance into ensuring that only Independent Businesses were supported and that the use of the building complemented the Council's aspirations for the area. Assistance provided by the Council would introduce terms around use, appearance and landlord/occupiers contributions.

It is proposed that the Grant is administered as follows:

- (a) Location: Grants will be made available within the geographical area contained at Appendix 1.
- (b) Grants would be aimed at only Property Owners and Occupiers which provided Independent Businesses and uses that complement the district centre and enhance the vitality of the area.

- (c) Eligible Works: Include external improvements and décor to the external façade, shop fronts, signage, and on a discretionary basis internal fit out costs could be considered.
- (d) Grants would be provided to either:
  - (i) Building owners who agree to market or use the building for those uses that enhance the vitality of the area; and / or
  - (ii) Independent Businesses who occupy premises within the defined boundary and have a formal occupational agreement.
- (e) Amount: Grants of up to a maximum of £3,000 could be provided.
- (f) Applicant's contribution: The applicant would need to fund a minimum of 50% of the building costs. In discretionary circumstances the applicant's contribution could be lower. At the discretion of the Review Panel this contribution could be lowered to 10%. The Grant would not cover non-building costs eg fees etc.. We would consider the introduction of claw back provisions from building owners were it was feasible to introduce and the provision did not deter Start-ups from applying.
- (g) We set out in Appendix 1 a draft pro-forma and guidelines.
- (h) Applications received for Building Improvement Grants would be reported on with recommendations on a regular basis to the review panel for Approval.

## **2.7 Promotion of the Business Support Programme**

- It will be essential that this Framework of Support is effectively communicated to the business community and attracts interest from new and Established Independents and Entrepreneurs:
- Extensive marketing in Print, Presentations, On-line and in Social Media will be undertaken.
- Direct marketing to start-ups through promotion of this framework will take place.
- Direct targeting of relevant established Independents who are located outside of the town centre will be undertaken.
- The Council's Communications and Marketing team will be commissioned to prepare an appropriate promotion plan for the Programme.

## **2.8 Formation of a Review Panel for Recommending Approval of Building Improvement, and Equity Assistance Grants**

It is recommended that the District Executive nominates 3 local Ward Members to act as a review panel for grant applications. The Review Panel will recommend approval with any appropriate conditions or refusal of the application. The recommendation will be reported to the relevant Portfolio Member for decision.

A report will be prepared quarterly detailing the progress of the scheme. These reports will be referred to the Portfolio Holder and will be used as a basis for discussions between the District Executives and the Portfolio Holder about take up and scope for any improvements

## **Guidance Notes for Failsworth A62 Corridor Premises Improvement Grant Scheme**

### **1 Introduction/ General Information**

This document intends to give further information and guidance to organisations completing Oldham Council's Building Improvement Grant Application Form.

If you need any further guidance, advice or support on completing this application form, please do not hesitate to contact the Investment Team on 0161 770 2077 or [invest@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:invest@oldham.gov.uk) who will be happy to discuss your application or arrange an appointment.

#### **Please note the following:**

- Use black ink or complete your application form electronically and print and send it to **Oldham Council**. Please only return your form once it has been signed;
- Please be as concise as possible, using bullet points if you prefer rather than full descriptions, but we will accept any additional information on separate A4 sheets if need be;
- Your application will be assessed by a scoring system. All questions will contribute to the final score but particular attention will be given to how question 11 is answered and how it meets the aim of the fund. Your application will be checked first and then determined by Council officers.
- There is no right of appeal against the decision.

The aim of the Failsworth A62 Corridor Building Improvement Scheme is to ensure that the Borough offers an attractive business environment for Independent Businesses by supporting the physical improvements of the exterior façade of buildings and the appearance of empty premises and assisting with fit out costs all aimed at assisting Independent Businesses within the defined area.

The Building Improvement Grant Scheme is a discretionary scheme, available from 15 December 2015, aimed at providing funding for improvements to the exterior of town centre building frontages to include signage, fascias, shop frontages and the external facade.

#### **1.1 Who can apply?**

The applications are open to two sectors:

- (i) We will proactively approach owners of premises to encourage the improvement of unsightly building fronts and/or empty shops/businesses within the defined area.
- (ii) Individual applications from independent businesses that are located within the defined area or wish to locate there.

Priority will be given to projects that maximise visual improvement, have a sustainable Independent business plan and are likely to attract business and where the improvement is likely to be long lasting.

## **1.2 What projects are eligible for financial assistance?**

- Initiatives to improve the external appearance or use of empty buildings;
- Restoring or replacing shop fronts in the style appropriate to the building including cleaning;
- Assistance with internal building fit out costs;

## **1.3 What is not eligible?**

- It will not be possible to fund projects that require an on-going revenue cost – should there be an on-going cost, the applicant must commit to providing that revenue;
- Uses deemed undesirable by the Grant Review Panel
- Works that have commenced or have been completed before an offer of grant has been made are not eligible for grant;
- Professional fees are excluded from the scope of the scheme (e.g. architectural fees or planning application and building regulation fees)
- Initiatives promoting a political party and
- Initiatives that conflict with existing Council policies.

## **1.4 How much finance is available?**

- Generally, grants of up to 50% of the eligible costs would be granted but up to 90% of the eligible costs could be allowed depending on the type of application, excluding any fees. Applicants are expected to fund at least 50% of the total project costs. However, only the minimum amount required to secure the implementation of the project will be approved and all applications are assessed on an individual basis.

## **2 Completing the Application Form**

### **2.1 Questions 1 to 5 – Contact Information**

Ensure you put the full name and address details. Your main contact does not have to be the person signing the application but it should be someone with authority concerning this application and who is available to be contacted during office hours.

### **2.2 Question 6 – Type of Grant**

Tick appropriate box for type of grant application, which will need to fall into one of these categories.

### **2.3 Question 7 – Address of property or area to be improved**

We need to know the actual address with postcode of the property to be improved or have a change of use (empty shop usage).

### **2.4 Question 8 – Type of business**

Please provide information on the type of business that is currently run (or most recently run) at the premises to be improved. We also need to know what the new business is going to be if applicable.

### **2.5 Question 9 – Ownership of property**

If you rent or lease the property it will be necessary to include the landlord's written consent to make the improvements. Evidence of freehold and leasehold interest may also be required in certain circumstances.

### **2.6 Question 10 – Business Rates**

An initial check will be made to ensure that business rates are not outstanding and we will review the history of your business rates as appropriate.

### **2.7 Question 11 – Planning Permission and Consents**

Applicants will have to secure all the necessary statutory consents such as building regulations, environmental health licences or planning permission prior to the submission of an application. If you are making changes to your signage, you may need advertisement consent. In conservation areas or in the case of listed buildings, there may be more checks that have to be made.

Please also note that it may be necessary to contact statutory undertakers to get necessary consent. Statutory undertakers are the various companies and agencies with legal rights to carry out certain development and highways works – e.g. gas, water, electricity, telecommunications and other 'cable' companies.

### **2.8 Question 12**

- (i) Provide a description of your proposal,
  - (ii) Why you are seeking the grant,
  - (iii) how the funding will be used, whether the funding is to contribute to a project/ fully fund a project and the benefits it will bring to the local economy;
  - (iv) including how it meets Oldham Council's Aspirations for the area
  
  - (v) how it meets the Oldham Council Corporate Plan 2013
- See link [www.](http://www.)

Please also refer to the information required depending upon your type of application, which is shown in the table in Appendix A and ensure that the benefits from completing the project

If you need to continue on a separate A4 sheet, please do so by attaching pages to the application form – please head your page question 12 and number them so it is easier to photocopy.

### **2.9 Question 13 – Drawings, plans etc**

Please list all drawings (these can be scale drawings), plan numbers (planning application reference numbers), advertisement consent applications (for signage), change of use request, plans and project documents that you are including as part of your application.

Please see appendix A for the information required based on the type of application you are making and ensure that you include these documents.

It will be necessary as part of the grant to ensure that the correct permissions in place and therefore any information that we have with the application as early as possible can help speed up the process of the application.

### **2.10 Question 14 – Total costs**

Please provide some more detailed information on the project costs, including any professional fees, which cannot be funded by the scheme and therefore will need to be excluded when determining the level of grant.

Please make sure you include budgets and quotes for the work as appropriate (outlined in Appendix A).

### **2.11 Question 15 - Funding**

Please indicate the amount of money you would like to apply for from the fund. Let us know if there are any contributions from someone else for the work – i.e. other organisations or grant schemes or individuals and then show what contribution you or your organisation/business are putting in to the project / improvement. You may wish to refer to Appendix A to verify whether or not your figures match the funding required from your contribution together with any third party contribution.

**Reserves** are pots of money which organisations have “put to one side” for either specific reasons dictated by their own future plans or by funding restrictions or for use in emergency situations. Having reserves is usually a sign of good financial planning and viability. If you have an reserves, please attach a separate A4 sheet headed “Reserves” indicating how much were “Restricted funds” – funds that can only be used for specific purposes, imposed by the funder and how much of your reserves are “Unrestricted Funds”; these are funds that are available for general use within your organisation. You will also need to indicate how much of your unrestricted funds were “designated” – i.e. those that are put aside for a specific reason and indicate why they were put aside (e.g. repairing roof) and when they will be spent.

You need to let us know if you are applying for funding from any other organisation as this might affect the amount of funding awarded. You will need to let us know if you receive any

funding from other parties whilst we are processing your application. Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of funding or a request to return any funds awarded.

### **2.12 Question 16 – Connection with councillor or officer at Oldham Council**

Please just provide full name of person and position within Oldham Council, if applicable.

### **2.13 Question 17 – Supporting information**

We do not expect all small businesses to be able to provide all of this information, but please ensure that you include either your business or project plan and audited or draft accounts where possible. If you are a start-up then projected income v expenditure and a business plan. If you are making improvements to a property then we will need to ensure you have the correct planning permission, have advertisement consent for change in signage, have met building regulations and have provided a lease/freehold document and permission to carry out works from the Landlord where necessary.

### **2.15 Question 18 - Declaration**

Please make sure you read the declaration carefully, sign the form and return it as directed on the cover sheet to the application form.

## **3 What Happens Next?**

You will receive an acknowledgement that we have received your application form by email if you provide an email address or by letter to the correspondence address stated on the application form.

Your application will be assessed against our existing criteria and scored. If applications do not meet the existing assessment criteria they will still be reviewed thoroughly to ensure an on-going review of the scheme. We will carry out checks on business rates and other payment history where relevant.

It may be necessary in some circumstances to ask for further information from the applicant and you will be contacted by email or letter.

### **Building Improvement Grants**

In addition to the initial assessment criteria, we will undertake a site visit to assess the scope of the eligible works/costs.

The application, scoring and any additional information will then be presented to the decision-making body.

Applicants will be informed of the decision in writing.

**There is no right of appeal.**



#### 4 When will the grant be paid?

Grants will normally only be made following:

- A site visit to confirm the completion of the works.
- The submission of verifiable invoices on headed paper.

#### APPENDIX A

**Table 1. Assessment Requirements**

CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE WORKS OR PROJECT	INFORMATION REQUIREMENT	ELIGIBLE COSTS
<b>Building improvements</b>		These are the minimum requirements	
Existing and empty shop and Building Frontages.  Internal Fit out costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Cleaning brickwork, stonework etc.</li> <li>▪Restoring traditional detailing</li> <li>▪Restore/replace joinery, iron &amp; stonework.</li> <li>▪New shop fronts, fascia etc.</li> <li>▪Signage</li> <li>▪Remove redundant or unsightly features.</li> <li>▪External Redecoration</li> <li>▪Internal fit out on a discretionary basis</li> </ul>	Scale drawings; Design in keeping with surrounding area; At least 2 estimates; statutory permissions; visual design of any signage and landlord's written consent.	Grants up to 50% (90% on a discretionary basis)
Short term use of empty shops	Different use of empty shops, and buildings such as pop-up displays (e.g. displaying arts and craft or student work) or pop-up shops are encouraged. Please contact the xxx Officer in the first instance to discuss an idea – these will be assessed individually.	Estimates will be required for any funding required by the applicant to enable the use of the empty shop.  Landlord written consent for use of empty shop	Grants up to 50% (90% on a discretionary basis)

**Oldham Council – Building Improvement  
Grant Scheme (BIGS)– Application  
Form**

The information to be filled out in this form is to be used for the purpose of processing an application for the CIF grant scheme and assessing the suitability of the proposed project. For more information about the scheme and how to complete this application, please read the Guidance Notes.

**1) Business/Organisation Name:**

**2) Applicant's Name:**

**3) Telephone / Fax / E-mail:**

**4) Where did you find out about BIGS?**

**5) Address for correspondence:**

**6) Type of application:**

Empty building improvement

Building front improvements

Internal Fit out cost initiative

**7) Address of Property /Description of area being improved:**

**8) Type of business**

Current purpose (e.g. baker, clothes shop)

New purpose (if changing use)

**9) If you are seeking improvements to a property do you**

- Own the premises?

- Rent the premises?\*

- Lease the premises?\*

- When will the lease/freehold run out?

- Other? (Please explain below)

\* **You** will need to include landlord's written consent for improvements or change in use of empty shop

**10) a) Do you pay business rates on this property?**

Yes / No

**b) Are your payments up-to-date?**

Yes / No

(If there are any outstanding monies this could prejudice your application being accepted – as part of the application process we will check your business rate account).

**11) Do you have Planning Permission/ Advertisement Consent for Signage changes/ Change of Use Permission /Building Control Regulations to undertake this work?**

Yes / No / Pending/ Not applicable

**If yes, please quote references:**

**12) Description of proposal, benefits and how it meets Oldham Council's Vision for Yorkshire Street Triangle and Oldham Council's Corporate Plan:**

Please continue on separate A4 sheet if necessary and attach to this form

**13) List all drawings; plan numbers; project documents etc. forming part of the application as appropriate:**

Please include all drawings, plans and project documents and attach to this form

**14) What is the total cost of the project?** Please summarise costs under the following headings:

Total Improvement Costs (excluding Professional Fees)	
Professional Fees (exclude from above)	
<b>Total</b>	

Please attach official quotes as appropriate to the work to be carried out. Please refer to guidance notes.

**15) How much is being sought from CIF?** £

**Contribution from others** £

**Contribution made by the applicant / business / organisation** £

**Reserves** £

**Are you seeking funding from other parties?** £

**Name of other organization you are seeking funding from.**

**16) Does any person connected with this application have any relationship with any Councillor or officer of Oldham Council? Yes / No**

**If yes, please supply details below:**

**17) Supporting information – please refer to the guidance notes and include as appropriate with your application:**

- Business or project plan Yes / No
- Cash Flow and Profitability Forecast Yes / No
- Bank Loan Agreement / Statement Yes / No
- Last Two Years' Audited Accounts Yes / No / Not applicable
- Bank Reference Form Yes / No
- Planning / Building Control Document Yes / No / Not applicable
- Lease / Freehold Document Yes / No
- Licence / Certificate Yes / No / Pending
- Permission from Landlord to carry out works Yes/ No / Pending

We may require further documents or information, depending on your particular circumstances. If that is the case, we will let you know by telephone or in writing as soon as possible. Please note that we may check your payment history as part of the application process.

**18) Consultation**

**Have you consulted/ informed any other parties about your proposal?**

- Other Local Business or Business Group
- Councillors
- Other

**19) Declaration**

When you have completed the application, please sign this declaration and return the completed form as directed in the cover sheet.

Name.....

Position.....

To the best of my knowledge the information I have provided on this application form is correct. If Oldham Council agrees to make a grant, this will be used exclusively for the purposes described and we agree to acknowledge Oldham Council's support in all initiatives/ literature and permanent fixtures.

I agree to inform the Council's Appointed Officer if I receive funding towards this project from other organisations and failure to do so may affect my application.

**Privacy Notice:** By signing this form the applicant agrees to Oldham Council checking business rate accounts, licensing and planning history.

Information about the project may be publicised on the Council website and in public material for publicity purposes and to increase awareness about Oldham Council's Building Improvement Grant Scheme. Personal Information will not be disclosed without the prior agreement of those concerned, unless required by law.

**Signed**

**Date**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Proposed Procedure and Terms of Reference for the Review Panel for Town Centre Building and Business Support**

1. The Panel will be made of a minimum three members one of whom will act as Chair and have a casting vote from:

- Leader, and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Projects
- Cabinet Member for Business & Town Centres
- Cabinet Member for Finance
- Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing

2. Strategic Regeneration Officers will submit a written submission outlining an applicant's Grant / Business Support Sub-mission, and provide recommendations as to whether to support, vary or reject the proposed assistance.

3. The Chair will be elected at the first meeting and have control of the procedure with the advice and assistance of Strategic Regeneration Officers.

4. The Chair will make it clear that the recommendation of the Panel is final, and is subject to the approval of the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods.

5. The Panel has the power to recommend approval to support the application, propose variations to the applicants request or recommend refusal of the application.

6. In coming to a decision the Panel will decide on the basis of the information within the applicant's submission, and with supporting information provided by Strategic Regeneration Officers.

7. Any documentation to be presented to the meeting will be provided to each member 5 working days before the meeting. Applications that become available for Panel decision less than 5 working days before the Panel meeting may be considered at the discretion of Panel Members.

8. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Assess requests for Premises Improvement and Equity Assistance which aid the objectives as outlined in the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 Cabinet Report 'Investing in a Vibrant Town Centre'.
- Provide Recommendations to the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods as to whether to
  - (i) Recommend the application and whether there should be any conditions attached to that support;
  - (ii) Applicants support to be varied from that which has been requested and/or request for additional information prior to considering further the Grant Application;
  - (iii) Reject the Grant/Support Application.

- It is noted that the Panel's Recommendations would be made to the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods who would then have the power to approve the award of the grant and for it to be documented by a delegated report.

9. Applicants will be formally notified of the decision as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event within 10 working days of the Panel meeting, and receiving the approval of the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods.

10. It is proposed that the Panel will sit monthly and if necessary applications could be heard at CIPB.