

Area East Community Planning Sub-Committee – 25th June 2008

8. Retail Support Initiative Grant Applications (Executive Decision)

Head of Service: Helen Rutter, Head of Area Development (East)
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Purpose of the Report

For Members to consider seven RSI grant requests.

Recommendations

- (1) That officers write to the beneficiaries of grants which have not been drawn within the award period indicating that the grant offer will be withdrawn if claims are not forthcoming by the end of July.
- (2) That the following grants be awarded from the Regeneration Budget, ring-fenced for the Retail Support Initiative:
 - (1) Bruton House, Bruton - £1,000 (47% of total scheme costs) towards catering equipment.
 - (2) Packhorse Bridge Stores, Bruton - £3,000 (46% of total scheme costs) for IT system to improve accounting and stock control.
 - (3) Glades Ilchester - £2,326 (23% of total scheme costs) for shopfitting, marketing and training.
 - (4) Truffles, Bruton - £376 (50% of total scheme costs) for catering equipment.
- (3) To provide 'in principle' support, under the current scheme, to the following applications subject to Area East Committee agreeing to top-up the Retail Support Initiative element of the Regeneration budget at its July meeting. The decision to be delegated to the Head of Service – Area Development East in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Ward Member(s).
 - (5) Wheathill Nurseries Milborne Port - £3,000 (27% of total scheme cost) request for new roofing and marketing to be contingent on marketing approach if further funds are allocated.
 - (6) Elixir, 6 High Street Bruton - £600 (50% of total scheme costs) for shop front improvements.
 - (7) Hinton Farm Shop - £3,000 (27 % of total scheme costs) for retail fittings and marketing.

All awards to be subject to the following standard conditions:

- (a) The grant award may be used by SSCC for promotional/publicity purposes.
- (b) Grants are paid for approved works/purchases on production of receipted invoices.

- (c) Awards are subject to an interim report (within 9 months) and final report being submitted.
- (d) Applicants will normally be expected to draw down the grant within six 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 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%.

Background

There have been 13 RSI awards during the year, 4 in Bruton area totalling £9,350 (average £2,337) and 9 in Wincanton town totalling £8,377 (average £930).

Funding Applications

As the RSI scheme has received wider promotion, requests have come in from Milborne Port, Ilchester and Mudford as well as from Bruton and Wincanton. The scheme has achieved successes in improving the retail appearance of Bruton and Wincanton, and has finally achieved applications from more rural areas. Details of each scheme are shown in the table below

Due to the high level of bids brought forward recommendations have been trimmed to reflect the available Budget. Recommendations for the future of the scheme are put forward at this committee in a second report.

Financial Implications

A sum of £7,195 remains unallocated in the Regeneration Budget ring-fenced for the Retail Support Initiative after deductions of two recent delegated awards. If Members agree the recommendations (1)-(4) above, there will be £493 remaining unallocated in the budget.

There are 2 grants (amounting to £4,000) awarded in February 2007 and June 2007 which have not been drawn down. Given the budget position it is suggested that officers write to the beneficiaries indicating that the grant offer will be withdrawn if claims are not forthcoming by the end of July.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

The awarding of grants meets the following corporate aims:

To increase economic vitality and prosperity

Background Papers: None

Funding Applications:

Name of business	Total Project Cost	Other funding	Grant requested/ recommended	Purpose of grant	Need identified & Assessment Score	Comments
Bruton House, Bruton	£2,126	53% own funds based on £1,000 grant	£1,000	Machine to improve productivity	82/90 Prominent unit	Previous grant awards £1,000 February 2006
Packhorse Bridge Stores, Bruton	£6,500	54% own funds based on £3,000 grant	£3,000	IT stock control and accounting system	70/90 key to viability of stores	New business owner now very active in community rationalizing to reduce competition
Glades Sandwich Bar Ilchester	£10,000	77% own funds based on £2,326 recommendation	£3,000 requested. £2,326 recommended	Refurbishment of exterior, interior training and marketing	87/90	New Business no competition and on commuting route
Truffles Bruton	£752	50% own funds based on £376	£376	Vital machine to improve productivity	79/90	Vital to keep the business in Bruton. Previous award £1,000 in May 2006
Cottage Framers, Wincanton	£315	50% own funds	£157 approved	New compressor to aid business efficiency	For information	Delegated decision approved May 2008
Moro, Wincanton	£1,476	50% own funds	£738 approved	Business relocation - assistance with interior decoration and flooring	For information	Delegated decision approved May 2008
Paraiso, Wincanton	£7,400	66% own funds	£2,500 award reduced 34% of cost to maximum of £2,000	Original award approved at March 2008 meeting.	For information	Original award reduced as a result of change in premises

Funding Applications for ‘in principle’ support:

If Members choose to support the above funding applications it will mean that the remaining budget is insufficient to cover the applications listed below. In the report at Item 9 on this agenda officers are seeking Members support for a budget top up request of £15,000 to be considered at the July meeting of Area East Committee. If Members are minded to support this, consideration could be given to providing ‘in principle’ support to the following applications as next in line, subject to budget approval of Area East Committee. This decision be exceptionally delegated to the Head of Service – Area Development East in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Ward Member(s)

Hinton Farm Shop Mudford	£11,000	73% own funds based on £3,000 grant	£3,000	Refurbishment of interior, signage and marketing	75/90	Farm shop
Elixir	£1,200	50% own funds based on £3,000 grant	£600	Refurbishment of shop front	71/90	Important step in Bruton High street improvements
Wheathill Nurseries Milborne Port	£11,000	72% own funds based on £3,000 grant	£3,000	Refurbishment of part of roof training and marketing	71/90	Key issue of priorities in project need resolution