



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

17 JULY 2018

TOWN CENTRE MAINTENANCE GRANT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION PLANNING AND HOUSING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING, COUNCILLOR R BEVAN

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides a review of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant which has been piloted in the Mountain Ash and Tonypany Retail Areas. The grant provides support to traders / landlords to undertake maintenance works which will improve the external front elevation of town centre properties, contributing to a positive impact on the street scene, creating a more attractive and vibrant town centre environment.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval to extend the Town Centre Maintenance Grant to the Treorchy Retail Area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The successful outcomes to date for Mountain Ash and Tonypany are noted.
- 2.2 The additional budget allocation of £36,400 is approved for proposals already in development in Mountain Ash and Tonypany.
- 2.3 The Town Centre Maintenance Grant pilot is extended to the Treorchy Retail Area with a budget allocation of £30,000.
- 2.4 The grant scheme will be rolled out across all town centres subject to ongoing evaluation and future Cabinet approval.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To build on the successful outcomes of the grant scheme achieved in the Mountain Ash and Tonypany town centres.
- 3.2 To continue to deliver on the Council's commitment to support the regeneration of town centres and encourage private sector investment in the high street economy.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In September 2017 Cabinet approved the Town Centre Maintenance Grant scheme. The scheme provides financial support to town centre traders / landlords (including vacant properties) to undertake minor improvements and maintenance works which improve the external front elevation of town centre properties. The aim of the scheme is to contribute to a positive impact on the street scene, creating a more attractive and vibrant environment, which increases retail spend and stimulates further private sector investment. Appendix 1 outlines the detailed eligibility criteria for the scheme.
- 4.2 It was agreed that the scheme would be piloted for one year in the Mountain Ash and Tonypany Retail Areas.

5. REVIEW OF DELIVERY IN MOUNTAIN ASH AND TONYPANDY

- 5.1 Officers have worked closely with the businesses in each of the town centres to promote the grant scheme and provide support with the application process. The table below summarises the take up of the grant to date across each of the town centres.

Town	No of Properties	Total Cost	Applicant Contribution	Grant Awarded To Date
Mountain Ash	20	£41,066.40	£20,400.15	£20,666.25
Tonypany	32	£47,313.26	£17,788.89	£29,524.37
TOTAL	52	£88,379.66	£38,189.04	£50,190.62

- 5.2 Demand for the scheme has been high amongst traders from across both town centres, with a further 28 applications currently in development. Due to its success, it is proposed that an additional budget of £36,400 is allocated to support these proposals. This figure is

based on each application requesting the maximum potential grant of £1,300.

- 5.3 The grant contribution is a maximum of 75% towards the eligible cost of the works, therefore the traders/owners are required to fund the balance of a minimum of 25%. This contribution is currently at an average rate of 43% as many traders/owners are undertaking schemes of a more substantial scale, which demonstrates that the grant has proved to be a significant tool in levering in additional private sector investment.
- 5.4 The total investment package is making a significant visual impact on the street scene and evidence of this can be seen in the photographs at Appendix 2.
- 5.5 The feedback from the traders supported through the scheme has been very positive, commenting on the benefit to their own business as well as the wider town centre;

Mountain Ash Feedback:

"We are delighted with the support from the Council and believe the grant will help improve the town and attract more people into the Centre. You can already start to see the improvements with the shop front that have already been completed. Officers have been very helpful in going to Mountain Ash and talking through the process so everything went smoothly".

This will help make the town more attractive to visitors and provides businesses with an ideal opportunity to improve their premises. The grant came at a good time for me as our shop front was in need of renovation and I was grateful for help with the cost of repairs. I found the grant process quick and simple".

Tonypandy Feedback:

"I am pleased to comment in my opinion that the improvements grant has been a great success. For Tonypandy businesses to have a face lift and improving the outlook of Tonypandy Town encourages shoppers to attend the area and new business ventures to open as seeing existing business premises looking good gives out a positive signal".

"When we took over the building it was an empty property in a dilapidated state as it had been unoccupied for a number of years. It required a lot of internal and external work and I knew it was going to be expensive to get the premise "business ready". I became aware that I could apply for a maintenance grant to the frontage of the property as

the Council were keen as part of the regeneration of Tonypany to make the town more welcoming".

"All in all a seamless process, that was fully supported by Council officers, with consistent communication and hopefully the visual outcome will benefit Tonypany in its regeneration journey".

6. TOWN CENTRE MAINTENANCE GRANT - TREORCHY RETAIL AREA

- 6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 "The Way Ahead" outlines that town centres should be vibrant and enticing, and need to benefit from further investment to ensure an attractive environment exists for local businesses, shoppers and residents.
- 6.2 As part of this commitment to invest in town centres, and to build on the successful outcomes of the pilot scheme, it is now proposed to roll out the scheme to independent town centre traders and owners within the Treorchy Retail Area. This will complement the work currently underway to consider the potential of developing a Business Improvement District (BID) in Treorchy.
- 6.3 The map at Appendix 3 show the eligible properties highlighted in blue, within the red line boundary of the retail area. The budget allocation for this scheme will be £30,000.
- 6.4 The scheme will open on Monday 30 July 2018 and will accept applications on a first come first served basis, subject to eligibility and budget limit, with the view that all approved grants implemented during Autumn before the onset of Winter.
- 6.5 The grant scheme will be rolled out across all town centres subject to ongoing evaluation and future Cabinet approval.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business Officer.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There are no formal consultation requirements arising from these proposals, but local traders / landlords have been engaged throughout the development of this work.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 Funding is available to support this initiative from existing resources and this includes reallocation of funds within the revenue budget of the Regeneration, Planning and Housing Service, along with existing earmark reserves.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 There are no legal implications or legislation to be considered.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The Town Centre Maintenance Grant contributes to the Building a Strong Economy priority within the Corporate Plan.
- 11.2 The scheme will contribute to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and support the delivery of a prosperous Wales, a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The piloting of the Town Centre Maintenance Grant in the Mountain Ash and Tonypany Retail Areas has demonstrated that the support to traders / landlords has contributed to a positive impact on the street scene, creating a more attractive and vibrant town centre environment. This support should now be extended to the Treorchy Retail Area as part of the ongoing commitment to provide long-term support to local towns and businesses.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers:

- Cabinet - [19th September, 2017](#)

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