

Report Statement

Report Purpose:

To consider the introduction of a Shop Front Grant programme called 'Glow Up Grants' to assist the independent local businesses in the town.

Author:

Town Clerk

Background

The Macclesfield Town Council Planning Committee have worked hard over the past year and have commissioned and been highly involved with the production of:

- A Conservation Area Appraisal for the Town Centre, which has been adopted by Cheshire East Council and can be found here.
<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/environment/conservation-areas/macclesfield.pdf>
- A Character Assessment.
- A Macclesfield Shop Front Design Guide – which aims to help local businesses work to improve their shop fronts.

This work was undertaken to ensure that Macclesfield preserves its character and uniqueness, and many residents were involved and contributed their views.

Proposal

The ethos for this proposal is to aid local independent businesses and help the regeneration of the town. It is to introduce a grant, available to local independent SME's to help them improve their shop fronts, using the design guide we have produced to enhance the look of their businesses and make them stand out as gems on our high street and in our town.

The initial amount for the fund would be £15,000 which would be taken from the Covid Recovery budget.

Businesses could apply for up to £1,000. They would be eligible from this grant fund once.

The initial criteria would be as follows:

- Local independent business
- Situated in one of the Macclesfield Wards
- Is an SME

Consideration could be given to potential new businesses to help them open.

There would be an application process which would be reviewed and subject to approval by a panel of MTC Councillors and Officers.

Plans and costs would be part of the application process and the Macclesfield Shop Front Design Guide would aid this process. The Design Guide contains information about when planning permission is required and advice on the principles of good design, artwork and improvements to signage and shopfronts.

Applications may include:

- Repainting
- Artwork for the windows
- Towards costs of awnings (subject to approval from CEC)
- New Signage
- Blooms e.g. hanging baskets

If approved by Council, the grant programme will open in May/June 2023.