ABSTRACT: The owner of Wellbank Village Shop has applied for grant assistance to undertake further internal improvements to the premises.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agree to offer a grant of £2,370.60 being 90% of the cost of £2,634.00 for the improvements to the shop at Wellbank under the Rural Shops and Community Post Office Grant Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In August 1996 the Planning and Transport Policy Committee of Angus Council agreed to operate a joint Rural Shops and Community Post Office Conversion Grant Scheme. The scheme, originally introduced by Tayside Regional Council was to support a basic level of convenience shopping and facilities in rural areas as part of a strategy to maintain rural population levels. A copy of the eligibility criteria for the scheme is appended to this report, for information.

2.2 This discretionary scheme has assisted both existing shop keepers and new Post Masters to carry out improvements and/or adopt good business practices thus increasing the viability of their businesses. There is at present a budget of £6,000 for each financial year.

3. CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The existing owner of the village shop has benefitted on three previous occasions from grant assistance under the scheme. Firstly in 2002, Report No. 1205/02 approved grant assistance of £2,477.00 for the replacement of floorcoverings, storage heating and lighting. In 2006, Report No. 1003/06 approved grant assistance of £2,469.36 for the installation CCTV and security system and supply of glass door merchandise. Lastly Report No. 585/10 approved grant assistance of £2,639.70 for alterations to the sales counter, installation of a shelving unit and alterations to floor coverings.

3.2 There is nothing within the scheme which precludes applications for further grants.
4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The owner has applied for grant to continue to maximise the facilities following on from the previous works. The works comprise the installation of slatwall board, slatwall accessories and security mirror, together with the redecoration of some internal areas, the shop ceiling and the exterior paintwork of the premises.

4.2 Following the scaling down of the Post Office operation within the shop in 2008 to reduced hours on Monday and Wednesday to mornings only and afternoons on Friday, the owner wishes to maximise floorspace within the shop. The owner has previously installed some slatwall boards and wishes to maximise the display wall space by installing further panels, thereby improving the appearance and layout of merchandise for the benefit of customers.

4.3 The applicant meets the eligibility criteria under the above scheme. It is the only general store within the village of Wellbank. It is open for 12 months of the year and is in excess of three miles from the nearest town.

4.4 The applicant has submitted two competitive estimates for the improvements which have been forwarded to the Chief Quantity Surveyor for confirmation that the lowest quotation submitted of £2,634.00, excluding VAT is fair and reasonable.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The discretionary grant for the scheme is available up to a maximum of £3,000 or 90% of the approved works whichever is the lower. The estimated cost of the works is £2,634.00 and the grant payment of £2,370.60 (90%) can be met from the approved budget of £6,000.00 for the Grant Scheme within the Planning and Transport 2011/12 revenue budget. This would leave a balance of £3,629.40 within the 2011/12 revenue budget.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

- Sustainable business growth is achieved.
- Angus residents are well equipped for employment.
- A good quality of life is enjoyed by all in Angus.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted during the preparation of this report.
10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The owner of the Wellbank Village Shop is endeavouring to maximise the facilities and range of goods for the benefit of both the local community and wider rural area.

ERIC S LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

P&T/GWC/GEP/IAL
15 March 2011
RURAL SHOP & COMMUNITY POST OFFICE GRANT SCHEME

Eligibility Criteria

a. Food shops or general stores which provide the sole source of a range of convenience goods in a rural community, operate for 12 months of the year and are over one mile from the nearest alternative town providing an extensive range of shopping, or

b. Any one wishing to run a rural Community Status post Office. The applicant must be contracted by the Post Office Counters Ltd as a Sub-Postmaster/Mistress to issue pensions and allowances, sell stamps and postal orders and handle posting and telephone account business.

Eligible Works

c. Essential physical improvements to the interior and exterior of the property associated with increasing the viability of the business, making the shop more attractive to potential customers and complying with Environmental Health and Food Hygiene Regulations, or

d. Essential physical alterations to an applicant’s premises which must be carried out to satisfy Post Office Counters Limited’s operational requirements

Grants Available

Discretionary grant up to a maximum of:-

1) £3,000 or 90% of approved works, whichever is the lower, or
2) £2,500 or 90% of approved works, whichever is the lower if the shop is less than three miles from the nearest provision

Infrastructure Services, Planning & Transport Division
Angus Council
County Buildings, Market Street,
Forfar, Angus,
DD8 3LG

If further assistance required please telephone Regeneration & Countryside Planning on 01307 473334

Conditions of Grant

Grant will be based on the lower of two written quotations and the work must be executed by the Contractor submitting that offer unless authorised in writing.

No work can commence before written approval of grant is issued.

The Council may, in agreeing to the payment of grant, impose conditions on the works to be carried out or on the operation of the shops.

All necessary statutory consents must be obtained prior to application for grant.

Payment of grant will be made on the satisfactory completion of works and submission of receipts confirming that expenditure has been incurred.

In the event of the applicant disposing of the shop or discontinuing its use within three years of its date of payment, Angus Council may require repayment of all, or part of the grant —100% in Year 1, 75% in Year 2 and 50% in Year 3.

Freestanding equipment purchased under the grant scheme shall not be disposed of without the written consent of Angus Council, Angus Council reserves the right to require repayment of all, or part of the grant.

Where the business consultant identifies the need for further training and/or counselling, payment of the grant will be made subject to:-

the applicant agreeing to undertake the appropriate training
the applicant completing the training to the satisfaction of the business consultant

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