

Targeted Regeneration Investment - Covid 19 Recovery Fund

Introduction

Following Welsh Government's lifting of restrictions with regards to non-essential retail and leisure and hospitality businesses, a number of town centre based businesses across the county are facing the challenges of reopening and operating businesses within the limitations of revised government guidelines.

To support those primary town centre-based businesses across Carmarthenshire the Economic development team have been lobbying key external funders for support to assist with restart and recovery and has been advised that Welsh Government have approved a regional request from South West Wales Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) group via lead body partner (Swansea) to allow the top slicing of TRI allocations for use in supporting town centre recovery. As part of that request Carmarthenshire has been advised that £75k funding can be top sliced to support each its 3 primary town centres (notional allocation of £25k per town).

Process

Guidelines and an application form for the fund have been developed and approved in conjunction with lead partner and Welsh Government. (guidance attached)

The key criteria is as follows:

Funding available to support initiatives in the following targeted towns:

- Llanelli
- Ammanford
- Carmarthen

Capital projects Only

Essential stakeholder engagement

Applications can be considered from the following:

- Local authority (direct delivery)
- BIDS / Town Councils
- Third party businesses

Funding is to be awarded at a maximum intervention rate of 80% in the case of BIDs / Town Council's and Third parties. Local authority intervention rates will need to be agreed with Welsh government on a case by case basis.

It is proposed that any application and award will have to follow the standard procedures already in place for the TRI programme which will involve:

Submission of application and supporting documentation

Assessment by Economic Development Officer / Co-ordinator

Assessment by Economic development funding panel

Political approval (EBM leader)

Ratification Lead Partner

Issue of Offer letter

Considerations

From discussions with the lead partner it has been identified that each local authority can consider whether they wish to deliver directly themselves, award directly to businesses or whether they wish to support Town Centre Organisations such as BID Groups and or Town Council to produce co-ordinated support packages. Having discussed with stakeholders in respective towns each delivery option has its own advantages and disadvantages, however it is felt that to achieve the best value for money in relation to the available grant whilst ensuring local ownership/buy in/local management, timely delivery and providing the town with a co-ordinated intervention the preferred routes for delivery are as follows:

Carmarthen – Joint application developed between Carmarthen Town Council and Carmarthen BID

Llanelli – Joint application developed between Llanelli Town Council and Llanelli BID

Ammanford – Direct delivery application developed by Carmarthenshire County Council in conjunction with Ammanford town Council and task-force and submitted by either Carmarthenshire County Council or a combination of Carmarthenshire County Council and Ammanford town Council

Due to urgency of delivery post approval at Economic panel stage consideration needs to be given to whether or not to allow applicants at risk to proceed with project delivery whilst formal political approvals are sought.

Recommendations

1. To accept WG offer to top slice £75k of TRI funding allocation to deliver Recovery Fund in Primary Town centres
2. agree process and pro-formas to be utilised for delivery of fund as above
3. to agree preferred routes for delivery as highlighted under considerations
4. To allow applicants to proceed at their risk with project delivery whilst formal approvals sought
5. In the event of applications being required to be submitted directly by Carmarthenshire County Council agreeing to fund the required capital allocation in line with required intervention rate. Funding to be made available from Transformation Strategic Project Fund.