

Subject: Town Centre Shop Front Improvement Scheme

Report to: EMT 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Economic Development Committee 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Report by: Kate Watts, Transformation Programme Manager

Members are recommended to approve

- The outline Town Centre Shop Improvement Scheme as detailed in this report
- Earmark £60,000 funding from the Town Centre Initiative Reserve to be used for the delivery of this scheme
- Recommend that officers build criteria for the scheme, to include reviewing existing planning shop front design guidelines and liaise with partner organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund to investigate any potential expansion of the scheme/additional funding
- To add to the forward plan a final report for members to consider to formalise launch and start administrating the scheme in October 2016

## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Town Centre Initiative (TCI) was launched as part of the February 2015 budget and aims to initiate opportunities to increase footfall through the town centre, enhance the economy and stimulate growth.

The TCI is currently developing a Master Plan for the Town Centre which will aim to deliver sustainable options for the future. This work is a long term project and will take time to complete.

The TCI is also looking to identify and recommend potential opportunities which can be introduced and monitored in the short term which will add benefit to the overall Master Plan for the future. One of the options being recommended for consideration relates to a Town Centre Shop Front Improvement Scheme.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Many Town Centres have adopted shop front improvement schemes using the £100,000 High Street Innovation Fund awarded by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of the Portas Pilot's package. Alongside this Councils also run independent schemes.

Researching a number of schemes that currently operate, it has been identified that most Council's cover a grant of up to 75% to a maximum value of £3,000 per property.

Shop owners are required to apply for funding and as part of the application they need to include details of any relevant planning permissions that are required, a schedule of works, three quotes from contractors, a programme of works including timelines and written permission from the landlord if the property is rented. Applications are then considered with decisions to award funding being based on merit.

An example payment for such applications is detailed below

Project Example: Item	Description	Cost £ (exc. VAT)	Grant %	Grant £
1	Signage	<b>800</b>	75%	<b>600</b>
2	Lighting	<b>2,000</b>	75%	<b>1500</b>
3	Painting	<b>1,000</b>	75%	<b>750</b>
4	Planning & Agents Fees	400	0%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>4200</b>		<b>2850</b>

## 3. SCHEME BENEFITS

Shop Front Improvement Schemes aim to enhance the image of towns with grants usually covering shop front renovation and decoration, new signage and replacement of historical features including lighting.

The main objectives of such schemes are to improve business frontages including shops, commercial businesses and social enterprises, enhance the appearance and appeal of the town to visitors, customers and the local population, to preserve and enhance the special characters of the Conservation area, it's listed buildings and other buildings of public importance, assist towards encouraging further inward investment and stimulate business and consumer confidence.

#### **4. PROPOSAL FOR A GREAT YARMOUTH TOWN CENTRE SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

Appendix 1 provides an outline of the area this scheme would cover in terms of businesses being able to apply. This is in line with the area currently being considered as part of the master planning process.

Each business would need to complete an application form and can apply for funding up to a maximum of £3,000 at 75%. Funding could only be used for improvement of business frontages, new signage and replacement of historical features which could include lighting.

Application forms would be evaluated by the Economic Development Committee based on agreed criteria. Businesses will be provided with feedback from officers if they are successful (or not), with all successful applications being required to submit progress updates.

It is suggested that this initiative is administered by the Council's Economic Development Team. It is recommended that an initial funding pot of £60,000 is committed from the Town Centre Initiative ring-fenced reserves, and that spend and progress against this funding is reviewed by Economic Development Committee on a quarterly basis.

There may also be opportunities to engage with other partner organisations such as the heritage lottery fund to build on this scheme and or to receive additional funding opportunities.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Alongside the TCI progression with the master plan, this shop front improvement scheme provides an opportunity for a shorter term project which will bring a number of positive benefits to Great Yarmouth's Town Centre.

Members are therefore recommended to approve

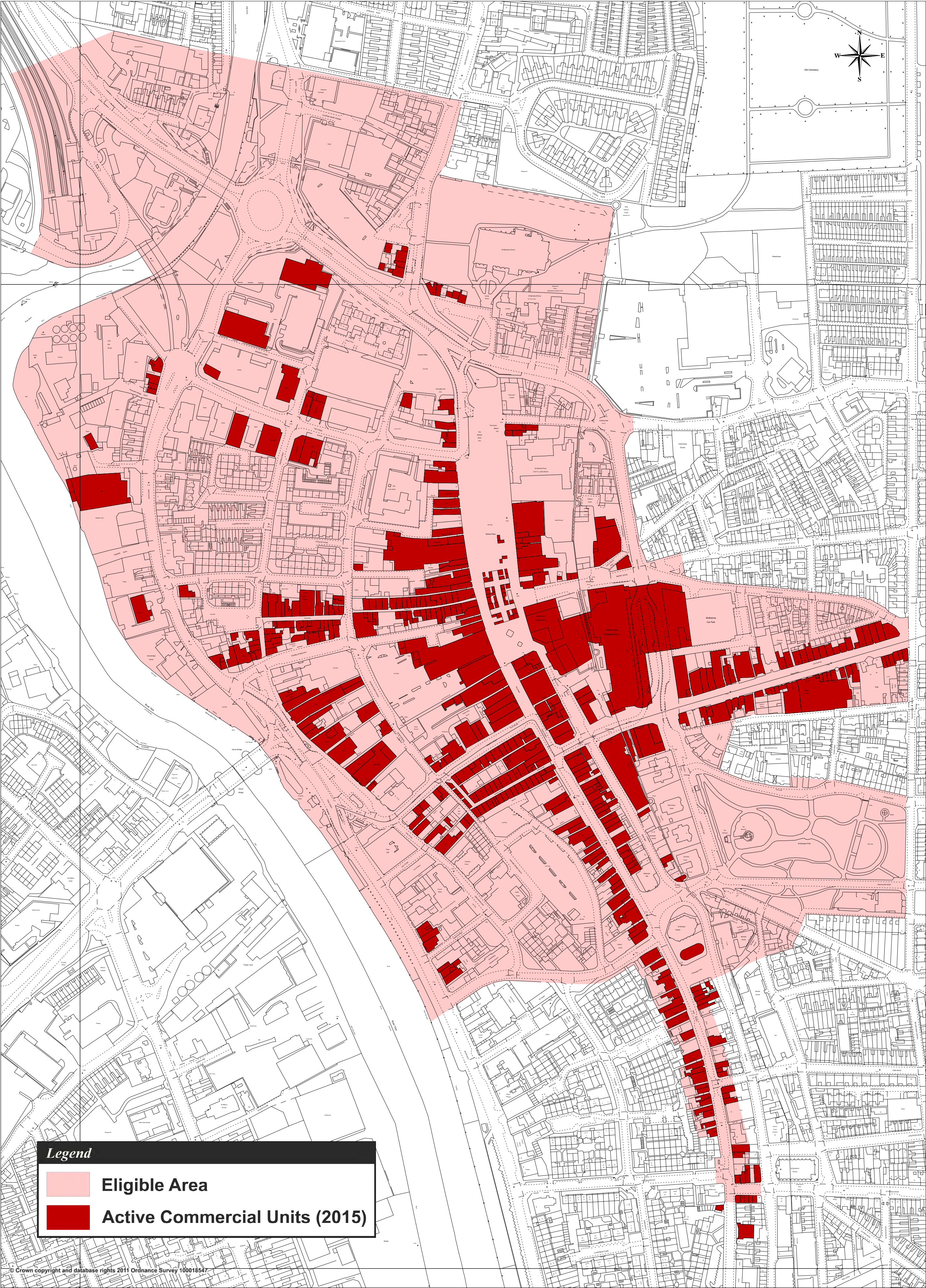
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<b>Area for consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	N/A
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan
Financial Implications:	Yes
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	N/A
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Every Child Matters:	N/A



Shopfront Improvement Scheme: Eligible Area



**Legend**

**Eligible Area**

**Active Commercial Units (2015)**

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**GREAT YARMOUTH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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