



## TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

### REPORT TO THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

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<b>Date</b>	<b>8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Grant Application for Tourist Information Centre</b>

#### PURPOSE:

1. To present to Members a request for a Grant of £22390.84 to be made to the Tourist Information Office (TIC)
2. To advise Members that in the 2020/21 budget provision of £19,000 (reflecting last year's grant award) has been made.
3. To inform Members that in view of the uncertain position facing any business with a retail presence, it has been agreed between the Town Clerk and Cynthia Murray, that any grant, if awarded, would only be release in quarterly tranches, with each drawdown subject to an update report regarding its future need.

#### BACKGROUND:

4. The TIC has received Grant awards from Todmorden Town Council for a number of years.
5. The TIC employs one permanent part time member of staff, and other casual part time staff, with the TTC grant historically funding the majority of these costs.
6. Recent increases in the minimum wage for casual staff and therefore also the appropriate remuneration level of the Manager, cumulatively cost £22,390.84 and hence the reason for this amount being sought.
7. Volunteer hours are estimated to be 1516 per annum, which applied at our Grant Criteria amounts to £15,160 of equivalent cost in volunteer time.
8. In addition to Staff Costs there is also the need to meet rent, utility and occupational costs of the premises.

9. During this period of closure affecting also leisure venues that they sell tickets for on a commission basis, there only means of income would be through driving up web site sales.
10. Under Covid 19 options, the government could meet 80% of costs if staff members were furloughed (not working, but retained in employment). The Town Council could take the view as the main funders, that whilst wishing to continue this support, this could be on a reduced basis of only meeting 20% of these costs during this period.
11. The TIC does however foresee a need to continue for the next three months in terms of: -
  - a. Working on the newly launched web site.
    - i. Developing the site further - <https://www.visittodmorden.co.uk/todmorden-information-centre.html#/>
    - ii. Increasing local business directory presence
      1. Potentially establishing a future income stream for featuring local business advertising
    - iii. Encouraging new business to set up Internet presence for online sales.
  - b. Assisting with Age Concern as an information hub and some administrative assistance
12. After three months, the operational need to keep these staff working as opposed to being on furlough will be reviewed ahead of any further tranche of grant funds released.
13. New Grant conditions of support indicate that we would be looking for a reduction of 20% in subsequent years for grants above £6,000 per annum, in line with our policy towards seeking applicants to become more self- sustainable in future years.
14. For the majority of applicants seeking up to £3,000 per annum, this is likely to be a challenge but achievable, but for the TIC, which faces likely annual staffing cost increases , this may be too much of challenge and therefore some leeway may be required in terms of reducing year on year reliance by 10%.
15. Taking into account living wage increases, if TTC were to maintain a level of £19,000 support for 2020/21, the TIC is in practice having to finds more for other resources to compensate.
16. The recent change in policy towards making grant applicants more sustainable longer term, and less reliant on TTC funding, is one aimed at spreading out what limited funding we have to a wider audience of voluntary organisations and therefore it may be appropriate that if awarding a grant this year, the TIC are advised of anticipate reduction of at least 10% per annum going forward.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

17. Budget provision has been made in the 2020/21 budget for up to £19,000 to be awarded.
18. Given the Covid 19 implications on the viability of any retail type business with a high street presence and the current uncertainty regarding future staffing, payment of any grant awarded will only be made on a quarterly basis.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

19. That Members of the Emergency Committee consider whether to award this grant and if so at what level.
20. That quarterly payments are made in respect of any grant awarded, and that subsequent quarter's payments are made only after receipt of an update report justifying future need and the agreement of the Resources Committee to do so.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

21. Agreement of the Emergency Committee is required to approve this potential level of Grant Award.
22. To manage the risk of future financial exposure should the TIC place staff on furlough and or cease business.

**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:**

23. These are unprecedented times for both the TIC and TTC and a pragmatic but risk-based approach needs to be adopted towards this historically large beneficiary of TTC Grant funds.
24. The TIC provides a valuable service for Todmorden but as with any beneficiary of TTC funding there is an expectation to move towards more self-reliance in sustainability.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

25. New Grant Policy guidelines.

**DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:**

26. None

**SUPPORTING PAPERS:**

- Appendix 1 - Application Form
- Appendix 2 - Background Information
- Appendix 3 - Constitution
- Appendix 4 - Salary Breakdown
- Appendix 5 - Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet

FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Colin Hill