



Haverhill Area Working Party 22 October 2009

Queen Street Shop Fronts Grant Scheme: Process for Assessment of Applications and Approving Grant Funding

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the process by which applications submitted by businesses located in Queen Street, Haverhill for grants towards shop front improvements are considered in accordance with the approved Queen Street Shop Fronts Grant Scheme.**

2. Background

- 2.1 On 6 May 2009, the Working Party approved the details of the design and delivery of the Queen Street Shop Fronts Grant Scheme (Paper Z687 refers).
- 2.2 As part of the approved scheme it was agreed that to assist with the initial design costs, a partnering arrangement between the Borough Council and three local shopfitting companies would be arranged, whereby the three companies would absorb the costs of any unsuccessful design work, but would be guaranteed the work for any successful bids with which they were involved. A working group of Councillors Cox, McManus and Mrs Richardson and appropriate officers was established to devise criteria to enable the selection of three local shopfitting companies to work in a partnering arrangement with the Borough Council.
- 2.3 Although a number of companies were invited to apply to work in the partnering arrangement, there was no positive response to the invitation and the Shop Fronts Grant Scheme was launched without the partnering arrangement on 3 August 2009 with a deadline for the submission of applications on 2 October 2009.

3. Present situation

- 3.1 A total of 10 grant applications (including one application for two adjacent properties) have been received within the deadline period of 2 October 2009. A further application has been received outside the deadline period.
- 3.2 It has become apparent during the process that the lack of a partnering arrangement has led to difficulties for some businesses in obtaining the necessary expertise to submit their applications. At a recent meeting of the Queen Street traders, concern was expressed that should an application be generally acceptable, but fail due to an unsatisfactory element, they would like the opportunity to be

made aware of the situation and withdraw that element. It is also apparent that the time period for the submission of grants has proved problematic for some applicants who at the time of submission were still awaiting quotations. Consequently, a significant proportion of the applications were submitted without the cost of the proposed works being known.

- 3.3 Accordingly, it has not been possible to present a final list of eligible applications to this meeting in accordance with the assessment criteria detailed in Report Z687 to enable Members to make appropriate decisions.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 Having regard to the application submissions, it is suggested that a working group comprising three Members, supported by officers, be set up to assess the submitted applications and make recommendations to the next meeting of the Working Party on 10 December 2009. In the interim, officers will continue to liaise with applicants to ensure that all necessary information is available to enable them to be properly assessed by the working group and recommendations made for the final decision by the Working Party.

5. Recommendations

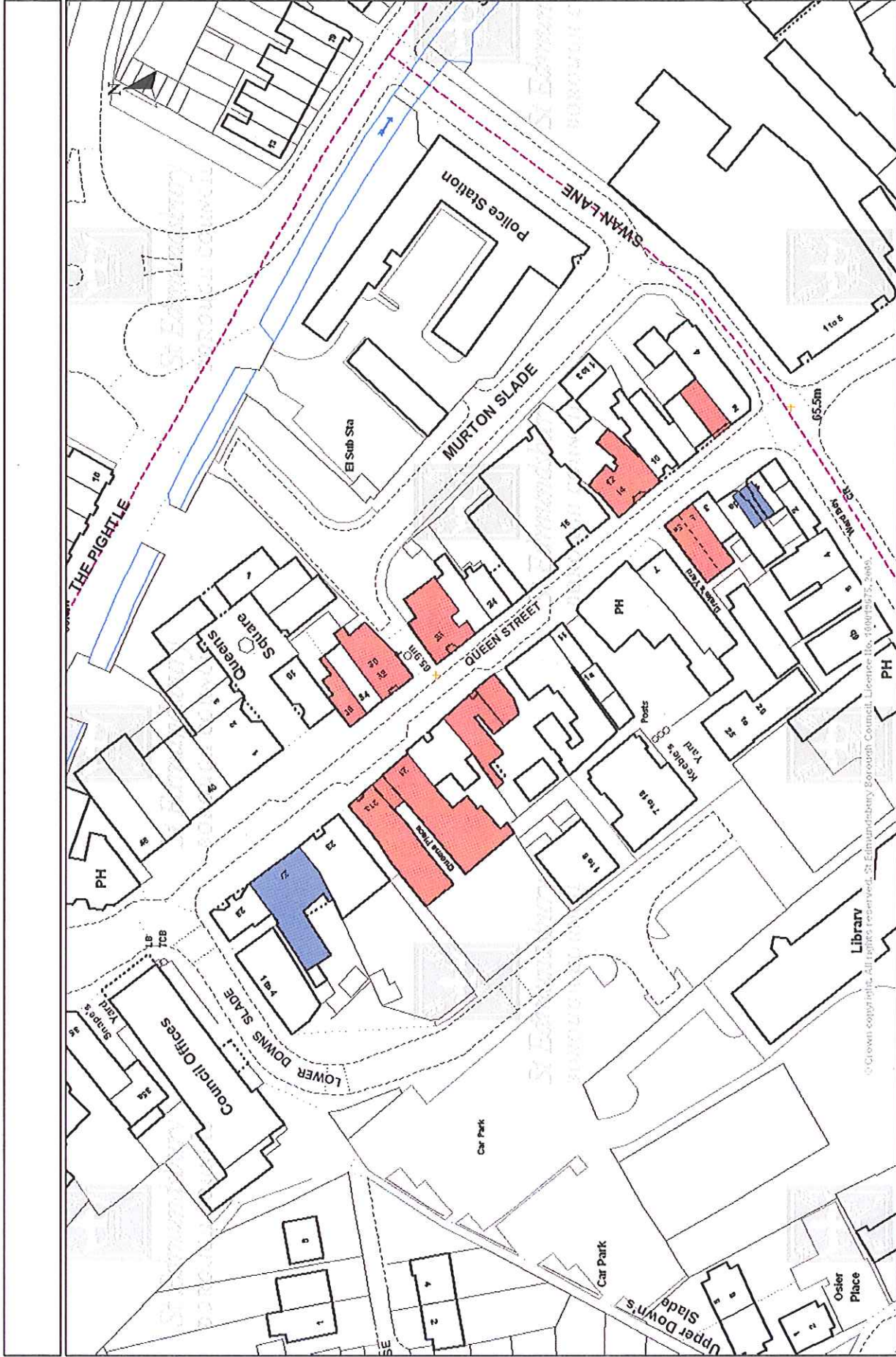
- 5.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (1) following receipt of all necessary information, a working group comprising three Members, supported by officers, be established to assess the submitted applications against the agreed criteria contained in Appendices A to D of Report Z687; and
- (2) details of all the submitted applications for a shop front grant, together with recommendations of the working group, be presented to the next meeting of the Haverhill Area Working Party on 10 December 2009 for determination.


For further information, please contact:-

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