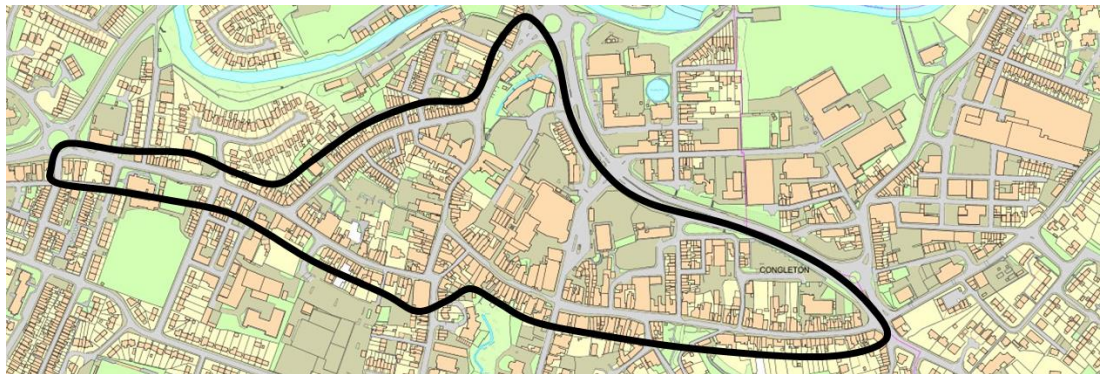


**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

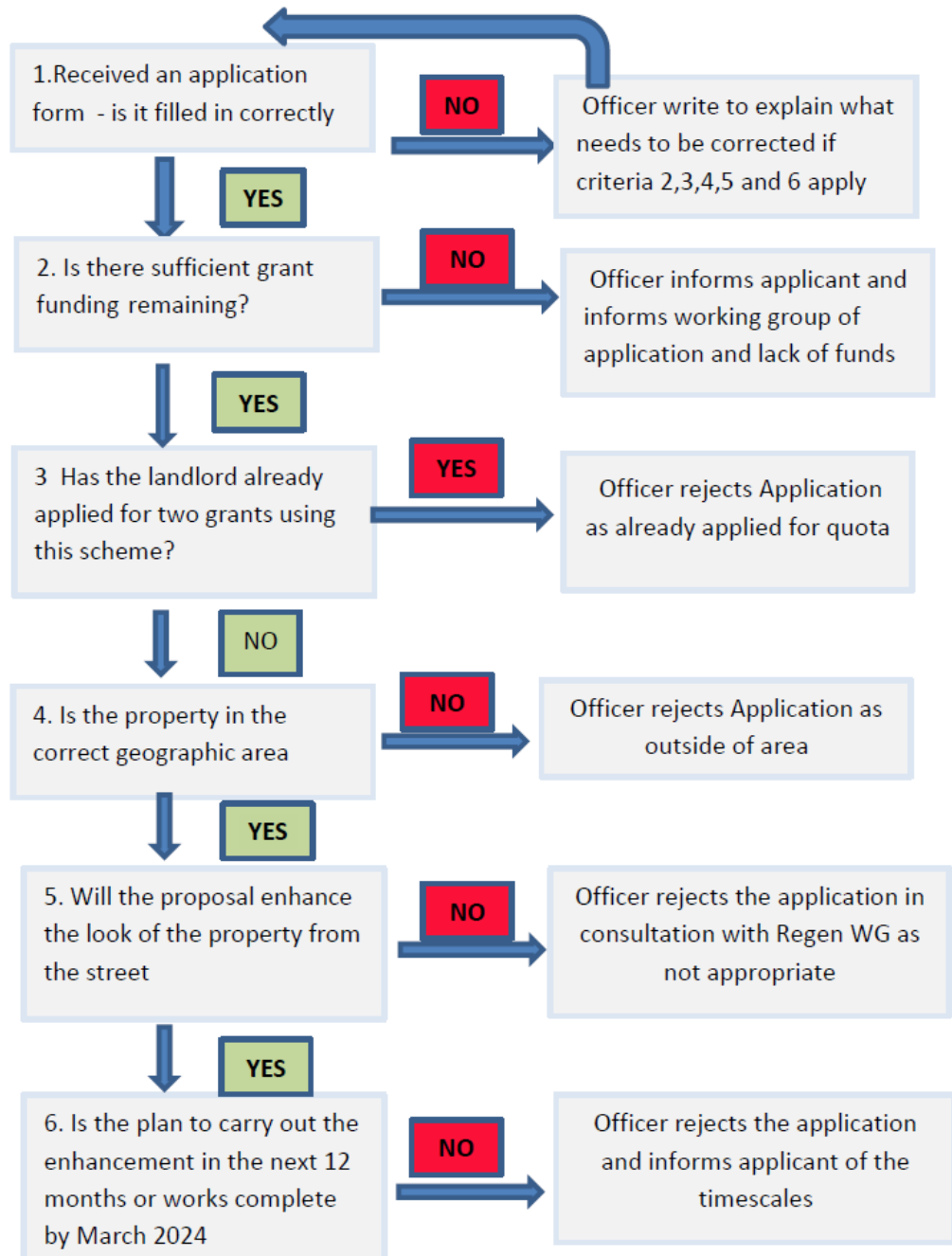
<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Policy</b>		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> January 2022</b> <b>7.00pm</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	<b>Jackie MacArthur – Communities and Marketing Manager and Deputy Chief Officer</b>		
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Congleton Regeneration Working Group - First Floor Improvement Grants Criteria</b>		
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<p>In September 2021 the Finance and Policy Committee approved the principle of a first-floor grant scheme for Congleton town centre. At Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 Council agreed to set aside £10,000 for this grant scheme, on the principle that the funds were restricted to a maximum of £1,000 per building, the funds would be released after the works were completed and that the landlord or business owner would need to at least match-fund the £1,000.</p> <p>Some questions have been raised about the criteria and process for people accessing the funds. This was discussed at the Regeneration Working Group and are set out in this report. The report is seeking approval of the detailed criteria and process and that the operational responsibility of the fund be delegated to the Chief Officer, or Deputy in their absence, to apply in consultation with the Town Regeneration Working Group. Much of the criteria is based on that which worked successfully for the ground floor shop front improvement grant run by the town council ran 2017.</p>		
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<p><b>Congleton Town Council will offer a grant of up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of £1,000 grant per property. There is £10,000 in the funding pot.</b></p> <p><b>What can be funded:</b> Works that will be funded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exterior repainting of timber or render that can be seen from the public highway.</li> <li>• Minor alterations e.g., replacement external windows, facia, masonry, rainwater goods.</li> <li>• New/ replacement high quality signage.</li> <li>• Other physical works which improve the visual aspect of the property frontage will be considered.</li> <li>• Related costs such as scaffolding, planning application fees, professional fees etc.</li> <li>• The grant cannot be used for internal works or regular maintenance.</li> </ul>		

**Who can apply for a grant:**

- The scheme is open to private landlords and business owners of commercial premises in Congleton Town Centre. The properties can be occupied or vacant.
- The grants will be limited to no more than 2 properties per landlord
- The works will not be funded retrospectively, and works must not have started prior to applying for a grant.
- The person applying for the grant must make sure that the correct permissions are sought and that the work is carried out safely. Failure to do so will result in the grant not being paid.
- The businesses must be in the geographical area shown below.



**Process**



	<pre> graph TD     Step7[7. Issue a promissory note] -- YES --&gt; Step8[8. Check licences or permissions been granted]     Step8 -- YES --&gt; Step9[9. Evidence of work complete and receipts received]     Step9 -- YES --&gt; Step10[10. Authorise payment]          Note[Check every 3 months for progress. If informed no longer going ahead remove from scheme and release funds back into pot. If not able to produce 8 (unless can show not needed) or 9 grant may not be made.]     Step7 -.-&gt; Note     Step8 -.-&gt; Note     Step9 -.-&gt; Note </pre>
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	£10,000 has been approved by the Council for this project. The grants will need to be claimed by March 2024 and any funds remaining after that date can be allocated to another project.
<b>EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The opportunity to apply for these grants will start on the 1 <sup>st</sup> February and will be allocated on a first come bases if applicants meet the criteria. The offer will be publicised ahead of the 1 <sup>st</sup> February.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	This grant is aimed at preserving the current buildings and creating a more welcoming environment in the Town Centre
<b>DECISION REQUESTED</b>	To delegate the responsibility for awarding the first-floor improvement grants to the Chief Officer, or in their absence the Deputy Chief Officer, and for them to consult with members of the Regeneration working group using the criteria and process outlined.