***Westmeath County Council***

**Business Incentive Scheme**

**Business Incentive Scheme to Encourage the Use of Vacant Commercial Premises**

**Introduction**

Westmeath County Council recognises the impact of the current recession on the business community and society at large. People are struggling to make ends meet and many business are struggling to remain open. Unfortunately, many business have also closed and there are vacant premises throughout the county. These vacant premises can be visually detrimental in an area and are an untapped resource in terms of economic enterprise and activity.

The Council is keen to see these vacant premises in use for a number of reasons including:

* To provide employment opportunities
* To generate economic activity
* To improve the appearance of our towns and villages
* To improve the viability and vitality of our towns, villages and rural areas
* To generate rates income to fund local services
* To see unused assets in productive use

For these reasons, the Council has established a three year grant scheme to incentivise the reuse of vacant premises.

**Scheme Details**

Grants may be paid by Westmeath County Council to Qualifying Applicants in respect of Qualifying property as follows:

Year 1: Grant payable equivalent to 50% of rate demand for subject year

Year 2: Grant payable equivalent to 40% of rate demand for subject year

Year 3: Grant payable equivalent to 30% of rate demand for subject year

Year 4: No Grant Payable

The Grant will be paid within 4 weeks of the full payment of the annual commercial Rate Demand, **for that year,** for the property in question. The grant payable will not exceed 50% of commercial rates paid in year 1; 40% of commercial rates paid in year 2; and 30% of commercial rates paid in year 3

**Qualifying Conditions**

* The property must have been continuously vacant for a minimum of six months immediately prior to 1st October 2015.
* The property must be commercially rated.
* The property must be owned by the applicant or subject to a minimum 12 month lease.
* The property must have the appropriate permissions and consents for the proposed use.
* The applicant must have all rates, contributions and local authority charges paid in full before the grant will be paid.
* The applicant must have a current Tax Clearance Certificate.
* The property must have the appropriate planning permission for the type of business in operation.

**Supporting Documentation required with application form**

* Evidence of business registration with the Revenue Commissioners e.g. Any correspondence with Revenue
* PPSN/Tax Reference Number number and Tax Access Number to allow verification of Tax Clearance.
* Copy of signed lease agreement between the landlord and lessee.
* Evidence of premises being continuously vacant for a minimum of six months immediately prior to 1st October 2015 e.g. a letter from your landlord or letting agent.
* A short note on the type of business being set up or that has been set up.
* Evidence that the business has the appropriate permissons e.g. Food Licence where applicable.

**Review**

This scheme will be reviewed annually.

**Business Incentive Scheme Application Form**

| Applicant Details |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Name of Business |  |
| Address |  |
| Contact Telephone Number |  |
| Contact Email Address |  |
| List any commercial properties previously occupied by the applicant within Westmeath County Council administrative area. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Property Details |  |
| Address of property |  |
| Is the property owned or leased by the applicant? If leased state length of lease. |  |
| Name, address, email and telephone contact details of owner of property (if not owned by applicant) |  |
| Valuation Office ID (if known) |  |
| Length of time the unit has been vacant. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposed Use Details |  |
| What is the proposed use for the property?  Is the business already in operation at the premises and if so since when? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Financial Details |  |
| Are all local authority charges paid in full by the applicant within Westmeath County Council administrative area? |  |
| Are all local authority charges paid in full in relation to this property? |  |
| Has the applicant received any state aid for commercial purposes in the last 3 years? If so list amount and source of aid. |  |

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return completed application to:**

Bernie Ginnell

Local Enterprise Office

Westmeath County Council

Áras An Chontae

Mount Street

Mullingar

Email: [localenterprise@westmeathcoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@westmeathcoco.ie)

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