



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Stiúrthóireacht Forbartha Eacnamaíochta,
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh,
Ceanncheathrú Chorparáideach
Cé n gCeannaithe,
Luimneach.

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16th November 2022

To: The Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City & County Council

Re: Limerick City & County Council Retail Economic Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property

The new Limerick City & County Council **Retail Economic Incentive Scheme** offers an incentive to retailers to encourage and develop certain retail uses in our city and town centres. The new scheme is designed to combat increasing vacancy in the core retail area of Limerick City Centre and our main towns.

In the Metropolitan District, this pilot scheme will be made available to 13 new businesses per annum meeting the criteria, opening in the designated City Centre streets of Ellen Street, Denmark Street, Cruises Street, William Street, Thomas Street, Catherine Street, Little Catherine Street, Foxes Bow, Cecil Street, Roches Street, O'Connell Street, Patrick Street, Bedford Row, Sarsfield Street, Henry Street, Shannon Street and Nicholas Street within Limerick City Centre. The area marked town centre in the zoning maps of the towns of Castleconnell and Patrickswell will also be eligible in the Metropolitan Area.

The scheme will also be made available to 12 new eligible businesses per annum opening in the County, as follows: 4 businesses in the centre of towns within each of the three Municipal Districts of;

1. Adare–Rathkeale,
2. Cappamore-Kilmallock and
3. Newcastle West.

The eligible towns will be level 2, level 3 and level 4 towns as set out in the settlement hierarchy and the eligible areas within these towns will be the area marked town centre in the zoning maps for the town.

The **Start-up Grant** relief provided by the Scheme is as follows -

A maximum of €6,000 Start-up Grant to be provided over two years on a step back basis to contribute towards fit out and overheads. The grant will be paid each year on production of proof of expenditure and subject to the applicant continuing to trade.

Year one – €4,000

Year two - €2,000

Applicants availing of the **Retail Economic Incentive Scheme** may also be eligible to claim the Small and Medium Business Enterprise Support Scheme if they meet the qualifying criteria.

2. Purpose of the Scheme

It is intended to ensure that any incoming retail and defined use will respect and enhance the multifaceted character of the area and will allow and encourage a diversity of uses to increase its overall attractiveness for shopping and leisure purposes. There will be a strong presumption in favour of grant-aid for higher order comparison retail outlets including fashion outlets –both multiple and independent stores, ‘lifestyle stores’, flagship stores, niche and specialist retailers such as home furnishings, beauty products, jewellers and bookshops.

a) Eligible categories of business

It is Limerick City & County Council’s policy to support economic growth within the City and County and the aim is to attract a variety of retail and defined businesses that will create opportunities for all citizens.

Therefore, the following businesses would be considered eligible for the scheme:

- Cosmetics / beauty products specialist Health Food shops
- Shoe shops
- Toy shops
- Hi-tech / High-end electronics
- Music shops
- Specialist (hobby) shops
- Artisan / Craft Shops
- Giftware/Interiors
- Fashion businesses and shops
- High end retail - globally scaled
- Shops offering a unique experience

Specifically defined use:

- Cinema
- Theatre

b) Ineligible businesses*

- Amusement arcades/ bookmakers/ betting shops
- Catalogue shop
- Discount shop

- Fast food outlet/ cafe/ restaurant/ takeaway
- Mobile phone/ Internet shop
- Newsagents/ convenience store
- Off licence
- Night club/ pub
- Head/ Grow Shop
- Vape Shops
- Tattoo Parlours
- Adult shops
- Hair dresser/ Beauty salon/nail bars/ tanning studio/eyebrow shops
- Supermarket
- Fuel Stations/Forecourt Shops.
- Shops in indoor shopping centres
- Pop-Up Shops

In addition, the following factors will be taken into account in the consideration of Grant Aid:

- The number and proximity of similar outlets/ services already operating in the area
- The scale of the proposed outlet
- The physical impact of the proposed use on the internal structure of the building in which it will be located
- The quality of the shop front design and associate signage, which should be of high quality and be in accordance with the guidelines produced by Limerick City & County Council

d) Limerick Medieval Quarter

In addition, location specific supports will be considered for Limerick Medieval Quarter (LMQ). Preference will be given to applicants that support the production and retail of arts, crafts and creative / cultural enterprises; and which incentivise the community of LMQ to showcase their production methods as well as selling products.

e) If the maximum number of grants available has not been taken up by the end of September in each year, then the grant may be transferred to another district that has excess valid applications meeting the criteria.

3. Use of property

- a) In addition to Limerick City Centre, the eligible towns will be level 2, level 3 and level 4 towns as set out in the settlement hierarchy
- c) Proposals will be restricted to area zoned as city/ town/ village centre use as set out in the relevant development/local area plan.
- b) Applicants for the scheme should establish and demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with any grant of planning permission on the property/unit.
- c) Shops must be street fronting

4. Status of property to qualify for Economic Incentive Scheme for vacant property

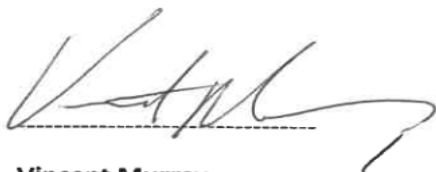
- a) In order to qualify for this scheme the property must be vacant for at least one month on the day the application form is submitted.
- b) Businesses relocating to a similar sized premises within the eligible areas will not qualify for grant relief under the scheme, however, businesses opening a second store will be considered. The operation of the Retail Economic Incentive Scheme for vacant properties shall not result in the displacement of a business from one property to another and/or from the same property. However should a proposed business or retail use type be able to adequately demonstrate that they require a larger premises that will have a positive economic impact, consideration will be given to the inclusion of such a proposal under the terms of this scheme.
- c) The business must be located within the designated areas.

Decisions

All applications will be considered in relation to the criteria set out above. Applicants should note that there are a limited number of Grants available each year and each of these will be assessed on its merits. Not all applicants may be successful. An appeal of a decision in relation to refusal of an application may be made to the Director of Service (Economic Development) stating why they believe the decision made does not comply with the criteria set out above. The decision of the Director of Services is final.

This new Scheme provides a positive framework for addressing the issue of retail vacancy in our city and town centres and a mechanism of improving the retail offering in the designated areas.

I recommend that the Retail Economic Incentive Scheme as set out above be adopted for the year 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.



Vincent Murray

A/Director of Services

Economic Development & Enterprise