

HM Government

## REVITALISING OUR Hi!STREET

Historic England



### CULLOMPTON HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE



### Structural and Historical Reinstatement Works - Grants Scheme Guidance

## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Cullompton High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is a Historic England initiative to breathe new life into the town centre. It will aim to make Cullompton a more desirable place for businesses, visitors, investors and local people, including by restoring and enhancing the historic local character of the town centre area.
- 1.2 Jointly funded by Historic England and Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), the Structural and Historical Reinstatement Works Grant Scheme (Grant Scheme) provides an opportunity for property owners and lessees with repairing leases to invest in the repair and restoration of their properties. The Grant Scheme seeks to improve physical and structural condition of the properties along Fore Street, as well as the reinstatement of historical and architectural features on the frontages.
- 1.3 To be eligible for grant funding, buildings must be located in the Fore Street area of Cullompton and inside the Conservation Area. See the accompanying map for the extent of the core heritage grant eligible area. Two types of grants are available under this scheme:
- Structural Works Grants; and
  - Historical Reinstatement Works Grants.
- 1.4 Grant applications will follow a two-stage process: an initial Expression of Interest followed by a full application.
- 1.5 The Grants Scheme is open from 17th May 2021, and will close to new applicants from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, to enable grant funded work to be completed and claims submitted by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, when the scheme finishes. Grant claims not processed by this date will lose grant funding eligibility. There can be no funding extension beyond this date.
- 1.6 All grant funded work must be completed and claims made within 12 months of the date of the Grant Offer Letter, or by March 2024, whichever is earlier.
- 1.7 The Cullompton HAZ Project Officer at MDDC will administer the programme and provide support to applicants. See section 7 for contact details.

## **2. Overview of the Grants**

- 2.1 There is a total available allocated structural works grant fund of £174,000, and historic reinstatement works grant fund of £66,000. The funding available is limited and will be administered on a first come, first served basis.
- 2.2 In order to encourage early applications, successful applicants in the first year of the scheme can benefit from a grant contribution of up to 70% of the cost of the works, up to a maximum of £28,000 for the structural grants scheme and £14,000 for the historic reinstatement grants scheme. This later reduces to a 60% contribution in the second year, and 50% in the final year.
- 2.3 The funding offered will be kept under review over the course of the scheme, and MDDC reserves the right to change or lower the available grant contribution offered at its discretion.



- 2.4 For significant projects combining historic reinstatement and structural work, a combined grant can be awarded.
- 2.5 A 'Building Priority Matrix' will be maintained by the project team at MDDC to determine which buildings and properties in the eligible area are of particular architectural or historical merit, and for which more extensive building works may be required.
- 2.6 Building and specific projects as identified on this matrix may be eligible for additional grant funding in addition to the above schemes, as well as the possibility for a higher proportion of the overall costs to be recoverable. There is a total available allocated fund of £280,000 for these projects.

### **3. Eligibility and Assessment Criteria**

- 3.1 The first stage of the application process is the Expression of Interest (EOI), which will allow proposed fundable work to be checked for eligibility. Following submission of your EOI the HAZ Project Officer will contact you to discuss your proposals further.
- 3.2 Following an approved EOI, the applicant must complete a formal application form. Applicants must demonstrate how the work they are seeking funding for complies with the criteria set out below.
- 3.3 The MDDC Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration will make funding decisions in liaison with the Cullompton Town Centre Regeneration Partnership Group, convening at least quarterly. As a discretionary grant scheme there will be no right of appeal for unsuccessful applications, and in all cases the decision as to whether any works or costs proposed are eligible for grant shall be at the sole discretion of Mid Devon District Council and/or Historic England.
- 3.4 Each grant application will be assessed based on the following criteria:
- The property must be in need of repair and/or restoration;
  - The work must have a positive effect on the wider Cullompton Conservation Area, town centre and particularly the high street frontage;
  - The work should improve living or working conditions for existing or new tenants and/or residents;
  - The work should create new, or safeguard existing, jobs;
  - The schedule of work should address as far as practical all eligible work considered necessary;
  - The work should bring back under-utilised or vacant spaces, and / or creating new commercial or residential spaces.
- 3.5 The Grants Scheme will take a '*whole building*' approach to funding eligible work, whereby grant funding will only be awarded where the proposed schedule of work addresses all repair work considered necessary to maintain the building in good condition (as far as considered practical). This will be assessed by relevant MDDC Officers following the EOI stage.
- 3.6 The property's status on the 'Building Priority Matrix' will also be reviewed in determining applications, in order that grants are allocated to properties considered most in need, taking into account condition and historic/ architectural merit.



3.7 Appendix A sets out a list of eligible work that can be grant funded.

3.8 Appendix B sets out the application process in more detail.

3.9 Appendix C sets out standard terms and conditions.

#### **4. Conservation and Heritage Principles**

4.1 The Grant Scheme will emphasise high-quality, traditional materials using an appropriately qualified and skilled design team. For overall works costing £20,000 or more in total, you must employ the services of a suitably qualified professional advisor<sup>1</sup> (the cost of which is eligible for grant funding). For overall works costing less than £20,000 the use of a suitably qualified professional advisor is encouraged but not required.

4.2 Where appointed, the professional advisor would be expected to:

- Analyse the site;
- Help plan and specify the works;
- Inspect the work while in progress;
- Inspect and certify the work after completion;
- Sign-off the works to release the grant payment.

4.3 All grant funded work, whether overseen by a competent professional or not, will need to be signed off by relevant MDDC Officers, including the HAZ Project Officer as well as Conservation and Private Sector Housing Officers as necessary.

4.4 The current Cullompton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be referred to for further information on the area character, as well as current Shopfront Design Guidance. These documents will provide important information regarding the design of proposed works. Please refer to the website for latest documents, or contact the HAZ Project Officer.

#### **5. The Work**

5.1 A schedule of work will be submitted by the applicant to be approved by MDDC Council Officers. This document will form the basis of the tendering process. Where works eligible for funding are combined with ineligible works (see Appendix A) a grant will only be able to support the eligible works.

5.2 Applicants will need to seek at least two written tenders for all works costing less than £5,000, and at least three written tenders must be obtained for any works costing more than £5,000.

5.3 Contractors selected and invited to tender must have appropriate experience and expertise. Each contractor's quotation must be itemised to allow for each item of work, with VAT shown separately.

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<sup>1</sup> The advisor must be an architect, chartered building surveyor or chartered architectural technologist with conservation accreditation. See <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/training-skills/heritageskills-cpd/conservation-accreditation-for-professionals/>



- 5.4 For projects anticipated to cost in excess of £50,000, a different tendering and advertising process will be required. Please speak to the HAZ Project Officer in these circumstances.
- 5.5 Standard Terms and conditions can be found in Appendix C. Please read carefully before applying.
- 6. Payment of Grant**
- 6.1 Payment for works will be retrospective and in whole once completed. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to arrange interim payments at pre-agreed stages. Any decisions on this would be made on a case-by-case basis and based on individual circumstances. Due to funding restrictions, if work is unlikely to complete before the end of the financial year in which it was offered then applicants must advise the HAZ Project Officer to ensure that this can be rolled over to the following financial year.
- 6.2 For the exceptional circumstances where interim payments are made the aggregate of instalments paid before completion must not exceed 70% of the amount of grant awarded. Each interim payment will require an inspection of works claimed for.
- 6.3 Prior to any payment being made the work needs to be signed-off by the professional advisor (where appointed) and MDDC Council Officer(s).
- 6.4 Applications for payment from MDDC will always be retrospective and will reimburse costs incurred. All project debts, including payment of the contractor and professional project team, must have already been settled ahead of the grant claims. All claims for payment will need to be accompanied by original invoices and receipts to demonstrate this, with reference made to the building address and the grant reference number (included on the offer letter).
- 6.5 For joint applications between the lessee and owner, the funding would be paid to whomever has responsibility for paying contractors.
- 6.6 All grant funded work must be completed and claims made within 12 months of the date of the Grant Offer Letter, or by March 2024, whichever is earlier.
- 6.7 There will be no later increase in grant if the cost of the project exceeds the agreed tender price.

**7. Contact Information**

- 7.1 Completed forms and the required documents should be emailed to the HAZ Project Officer at [CullomptonHAZ@MidDevon.gov.uk](mailto:CullomptonHAZ@MidDevon.gov.uk), or can be posted to: Cullompton HAZ Project Officer, Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6PP

**Privacy Notice**

The Privacy Notice for the project can be found here:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/cullompton-high-street-heritage-action-zone/>



## **Appendix A: Eligible works**

Structural Grants – eligible works could include:

- Making properties structurally sound;
- Consolidation and reinforcement of the existing structure;
- Selective dry rot removal and timber preservation;
- Measures to manage rising damp where this is damaging the fabric or contents of the building and improved ventilation, if considered essential, such as providing surface water drainage, lowering ground levels (where not damaging) and improved ventilation;
- Repair and restoration of windows using traditional materials and methods;
- Repairing or replacing elements set in walls, such as panels, windows and doors, including their frames, glazing, ironmongery and other fittings;
- Repair and restoration of roof structures, eaves, verges and ridges;
- Repair of roof coverings using natural materials and traditional methods;
- Repair or restoration of chimneys and pots to historic heights and profiles;
- Repair or restoration of lead work and weathering;
- Repair and restoration of rainwater goods / dispersal systems in suitable traditional materials;
- Repair of external stonework and brickwork using traditional materials and methods;
- Repair of external render and stucco using traditional materials and methods;
- Selective rebuilding of stonework and brickwork;
- Selective renewal of render using traditional methods and materials;
- Selective removal of render and masonry paint;
- Repair or restoration of historic windows and other external joinery;
- Works to bring under-utilised or vacant building back into use;
- Repair or restoration to external walls, including work to their structure, surfaces, decorative elements on the surface and wall coverings or claddings;
- Non-electric physical pigeon barriers to prevent a build-up of damaging droppings, where these can be provided in a visually acceptable way without using chemicals;
- Other internal improvements which may be recommended by the Private Sector Housing Team (to be considered on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with Historic England).

Historic Reinstatement Grants – eligible works will reinstate elements of the exterior fabric of the building that are essential to their character and that contribute to the character of the building and the town centre (provided the reinstatement is to the original size, pattern, detail and material), including:

- Historic shopfront reinstatement work;
- Internal or external reinstatement alterations;
- Repair or restoration of external decorative features e.g. ironwork, railings, tiling, timber signs, etc., and ornamental masonry, including sculpture, stucco and applied finishes;
- Repairing or replacing existing external features, such as balconies, canopies, bargeboards, shutters, where these contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the building;
- Repair or restoration of applied details e.g. cornices, stringcourses, architraves etc.;
- Conversion of buildings into alternative uses that better meet the demand of Cullompton town centre (subject to Historic England approval);



- Removal of non-historical features, the absence of which will enhance the overall character and appearance of the building;
- Repair or restoration to external walls, including work to their structure, surfaces, decorative elements on the surface and wall coverings or claddings.

The following supporting work may also be grant funded to support works for either Grants Scheme:

- Any necessary planning application costs;
- Permanent access, such as installing hatches, handrails or cables, fixed ladders or crawl-boards to improve access for maintenance and inspection, where difficult access has prevented proper maintenance in the past;
- Enabling works costs, such as scaffolding, hoardings, contractors' facilities and vehicle access;
- VAT where it cannot be recovered by the grant recipient;
- Conversion of buildings (with specific Historic England approval) from economically unviable to viable uses, where this can be specifically demonstrated and where this supports the future conservation of the building to reduce the number of further harmful changes made;
- Professional advisor services, including:
  - Surveys of the structure(s) or site and its condition, including survey drawings and plans;
  - Research, analysis and archaeological investigation of the fabric likely to be affected;
  - Preparation of a detailed specification and drawings for the necessary repairs, or recording of the fabric;
  - Getting competitive tenders and providing a tender report, and arranging contract for the work;
  - Regular inspections and valuations of the work on site until it is completed;
  - Full contact with the local authority on the technical details of both the application and the work for which a grant has been awarded.

Reinstatement works will only be funded if the building is in otherwise good structural repair, or will be repaired to an acceptable standard as part of a structural grant funding application.

Eligible and non-eligible work can be undertaken at the same time, but costs must be identified separately and made explicit in the schedule of work. Where eligible and ineligible works are combined in a single project, a grant will be offered towards the cost of eligible work only.

Items not eligible for grant funding:

- Building services works, such as drainage, electricity, gas, photovoltaic panels or water is not normally eligible;
- Conjectural reinstatement of historic features;
- Free-standing maintenance or minor repairs;
- Routine maintenance, redecoration, or internal repairs such as cleaning rainwater goods, checking of flashing and roof coverings and removal of plants (unless the works are necessary for the reinstatement of historic features or for structural integrity);
- Routine modernisation unless integral to the conservation repair works;
- Demolition work;



- Work started without prior written consent and before a written offer of grant has been made and accepted by the individual building owner;
- Providing a damp proof course simply because the existing structure was built without one;
- Cleaning brickwork or stonework for cosmetic reasons.

Grant applications may also be referred to Historic England. Written approval is always required from Historic England for any scheme that involves:

- A property owned by an elected member of local government (defined as the Town Council, District Council or County Council), an employee of local government, a family member, co-habitee or business partner of a member or employee of local government, or corporate body with which the member or employee of the local government is associated, of which the local government authority is aware;
- A contribution from Historic England that would exceed £50,000;
- Funding stand-alone reinstatement of lost architectural features;
- Temporary building works costing more than £5,000;
- Any unforeseen, novel or contentious issues;
- Funding public realm works;
- Using High Street HAZ funds to pay for management costs;
- Works involving the conversion, alteration or adaption of buildings; and
- Works to Grade I or Grade II\* listed buildings.

**In all cases the decision as to whether any works or costs proposed are eligible for grant shall be at the sole discretion of Mid Devon District Council and/or Historic England.**



## **Appendix B: Application Process**

1. **Submit Expression of Interest** – this should provide an overview of the proposed work.
2. **Officer Site Visit** - the HAZ Project Officer, Housing Officer and/ or Conservation Officer will visit the property as considered necessary to assess the proposed works and ensure the agreed schedule of work takes a ‘whole-building’ approach (as far as practical), taking into account any Covid-19 restrictions or limitations at the time.
3. **Apply for Necessary Consents** – applicant to ensure other necessary consents are applied for ahead of application. Grants may be offered provisionally where these consents have not been confirmed ahead of grant decision. These costs can be included on the grant application. Successfully securing these consents in no way guarantees the grant application would be approved. Failure to secure consents could jeopardise later grant payment.
4. **Complete Application Form** – applicants must submit an application form with the necessary supporting documentation, (inc. itemised schedule of work with price estimate).
5. **Validation and Consideration** – the MDDC Conservation and HAZ Project Officers will undertake a technical appraisal of the proposals and submit a summary recommendation to the Partnership Group for approval. This will be reviewed by MDDC based on the criteria in 3.4 and 3.5. The application details may also be referred to Historic England for approval (see Appendix A).
6. **Approval** – the MDDC Director of Place (or other senior officer with delegated responsibility), in liaison with the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership Group, will approve, refuse or defer any proposal.
7. **Grant Offer Letter** – if the application is approved the applicant will receive a Grant Offer letter stating all terms and conditions, to be returned to the Council within one month if accepted with a detailed schedule of eligible work and costs. No work will be funded that was started without full prior approval and without an agreed Grant Offer Letter in place. All tendering following the grant offer letter must follow procurement rules.
8. **Before Works Commence** – prior to works commence, the grant recipient must submit for written approval. 1. A final priced copy of the schedule of work and specification based on the lowest tender (or on the tender which the grant recipient proposes to accept subject to approval). 2. An overall evaluation summary of the tenders received (in accordance with procurement as set out in sections. 5.2 – 5.4).
9. **Work to commence** – work must commence within 6 months of the Grant Offer Letter, and conclude within 12 months (or by 4th March 2024, whichever is earlier). Any delays could result in a withdrawal or reduction in grant funding.
10. **Inspections & Sign-off of work** - by appropriate MDDC Officer.
11. **Submission of receipts** – along with other requested information by applicant to trigger payment of grant. Payments made in arrears and upon satisfactory receipt of invoices and certification.
12. **Monitoring** – building to be maintained in good order for grant condition period of 5 years.

## **Appendix C: Standard Terms and Conditions**

The following conditions will apply to the grants awarded (project specific Terms and Conditions will be provided in the Grant Offer Letter).

- a) The applicant must own the freehold of the property, or hold a repairing lease with an unexpired term of at least 5 years without a break clause. Applicants must be over 18 years of age;
- b) If the property or land is held on a lease for less than 5 years, is not a repairing lease, or if it contains a break clause that may terminate the lease within 5 years, the landlord must join in the grant application and agree to be bound by the grant conditions if a grant is awarded. Permission for the works must be sought from every person with a freehold or leasehold interest in the property, and the applicant is responsible for obtaining these;
- c) For overall works costing £20,000 or more in total, you must employ the services of a suitably qualified professional advisor;
- d) Grant recipients will make available any financial records the Council reasonably requires in respect of the works;
- e) Mid Devon Project Officers shall have the right, at all reasonable hours, to inspect any work that has been approved for grant assistance during the time that the work is being carried out and after it has been completed for the grant condition period of 5 years;
- f) VAT will only be paid if the grant recipient is not entitled to any refund on the VAT, and that if the grant recipient becomes entitled to a VAT refund they must pay the relevant amount to the Council. Grant recipients must certify that they are unable to recover any of the VAT payable;
- g) The terms of the grant will last for 5 years from the date of the payment of the final instalment of the grant.
- h) The grant recipient will repay the grant if the property or land is disposed of within 5 years<sup>2</sup> from the date of the payment of the final instalment of the grant, subject to the provisions in the following conditions i) and j). For clarity, property or land is disposed of where –
  - a. the freehold interest is sold;
  - b. a long lease of not less than 21 years is let where the lessee assumes full responsibility for the maintenance and condition of the property or land in respect of which the grant has been paid; or
  - c. some other leasehold or other arrangement is entered into where the grant recipient ceases to be responsible for the maintenance and condition of the property or land in respect of which the grant has been paid.
- i) Where the property or land is disposed of, the following conditions apply:
  - a. for disposals within 5 years of the date the last payment of the grant was made to the grant recipient, the grant is repayable in full;
  - b. in all cases, the grant recipient must give written notice of the disposal to MDDC no later than 14 days prior to any proposed disposal and in addition, on the exchange of contracts for a disposal, including details of the purchaser/lessee and a copy of the disposal documentation.
- j) Unless repayment has been made prior to or on disposal of the property or land, repayment will be made in accordance with the terms set out in an invoice issued by MDDC, including interest on late payment. For the avoidance of doubt, where condition h) applies, MDDC will

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<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the clawback is to ensure that any property value uplift redeemed by the grant recipient within the first 5 years of the grant can be reinvested in the town centre as part of future funding schemes.

- be entitled to issue an invoice at any time in the period of 5 years from the date of last payment of the grant, regardless of whether condition i)(b) has been complied with.
- k) Grant recipients must fully insure the property or site for its full reinstatement value while the works are being carried out and following their completion. In the event of loss, theft or damage, the property or site must be made good;
  - l) Grant recipients must ensure that the property or site is maintained in good repair when the works have been completed throughout the grant period of 5 years from the date of the payment of the final instalment of the grant.
  - m) Work must be started within six months from the date of the Grant Offer Letter, and concluded within 12 months, or by 4th March 2024, whichever is earlier.
  - n) Grant offers will be withdrawn, or fully repayable, if the grant recipient breaches any of the terms of the offer or as set out in this document, or if the grant recipient has behaved fraudulently or misleadingly in connection with its grant application or in carrying out and completing the works or activities;
  - o) Applicants will be responsible for ensuring that necessary public liability insurance is in place, and that all work is undertaken in accordance with all relevant Health and Safety legislation;
  - p) It is up to grant applicants to ensure their works meet all requirements in relation to Listed Building Consent, Planning, Building Control, and any other consents;
  - q) All contractors will be expected to follow and reference Historic England technical guidance in the course of their work<sup>3</sup>;
  - r) Grants cannot be transferred;
  - s) The District Council shall not be bound by any commitment entered into by an applicant prior to the notification of a decision on the application;
  - t) Notwithstanding the fact that an application for grant is made correctly and in respect of an eligible building, the District Council shall not be under any obligation to make a grant and any decision to make a grant shall be entirely at the discretion of the District Council;
  - u) The District Council and Historic England reserve the right to publicise the offer of the Grant at any time.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/>

