

HM Government

REVITALISING OUR Hi!STREET

Historic England

Mid Devon
DISTRICT COUNCIL

CULLOMPTON HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE



Shopfront Improvement Grants – Grant 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 local character of the town centre area.
- 1.2 Jointly funded by Historic England and Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), the Shopfront Grant Scheme provides an opportunity for property owners, leaseholders and tenants to improve the condition of the shopfront of their properties. Applicants must be the owner or a lessee with a repairing lease. Short-term tenants without repairing leases can apply jointly with the owner.
- 1.3 The Shopfront Grants Scheme is open from 17th May 2021, and will close to new applicants from 30th November 2023, to enable grant funded work to be completed and claims submitted and processed by 4th March 2024, when the scheme finishes. Grant claims not made by this date will lose grant funding eligibility. There can be no funding extension beyond March 2024.
- 1.4 All grant funded work must be completed and claims made within 12 months of the date of the Grant Offer Letter, or by 4th March 2024, whichever is earlier.

2. Eligibility for Grant Funding

- 2.1 Buildings eligible for grant assistance from the Council are commercial buildings that are situated within the Cullompton High Street Heritage Action Zone area (see accompanying map for the extent of the Cullompton High Street HAZ eligible area), and within the designated Cullompton Conservation Area, as designated under Section 69 of the 1990 Act. Proposed works should contribute to an improvement in the overall historic character and quality of the frontages of Fore Street and High Street.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Works that include full reinstatement of traditional shopfront features or more substantive works may be eligible for funding under the Structural and Historic Reinstatement Grant schemes – please refer to separate guidance. Where works eligible for funding are combined with ineligible works (see Appendix A) a grant will only be able to support the eligible works.



2.4 Appendix A sets out a list of eligible work that may be grant funded. The Cullompton HAZ Project Officer will be able to discuss eligible works with you.

3. Conservation, Heritage and Good Design Principles

3.1 Please refer to the current Shopfront Design Guidance for appropriate design principles to follow in the development of your shopfront improvement project.

4. Available Grant Funding

4.1 The scheme will offer grants of up to 50% of the total eligible estimate, up to a maximum of £2,000 per property. The value of the works must be such that the Council's contribution shall be no less than £250.

4.2 The total value of the available allocated grant fund is £30,000. The funding available is limited and will be administered on a first come, first served basis. The funding available will be kept under review over the course of the scheme.

4.3 At least two written tenders must be obtained for all works costing less than £5,000 (excluding VAT). At least three written tenders must be obtained for any works costing more than £5,000 (excluding VAT). The contractor's quotation must be itemised to allow for each item of work, with VAT shown separately.

4.4 All grants must be approved in advance of work starting. Work cannot be funded retrospectively.

5. Application Process

5.1 The application process is set out in more detail in Appendix B.

5.2 The application for Grant must be made using the form supplied by MDDC. Completed application forms will need to be accompanied by the following:

1. An itemised schedule of the proposed work;
2. Two itemised estimates;
3. Recent detailed photographs of the building/ item to be repaired;
4. Plans showing the proposals (where appropriate);
5. Copy of any required planning permission, listed building consent or advertisement consent.

5.3 Only one application may be made per property during the lifetime of the scheme. 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 MDDC and/or Historic England.

5.4 Standard Terms and conditions can be found in Appendix C. Please read carefully before applying.

6. Payment of Grant

6.1 Grants will be paid retrospectively, upon successful completion of the works. 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). 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 Prior to any payment being made the work needs to be signed-off by an MDDC Council Officer, including the HAZ Project Officer or MDDC Conservation Officer.
- 6.3 All claims for payment will need to be accompanied by original invoices & receipts, with reference made to the building address and the grant reference number (included on the offer letter). There will be no later increase in grant if the cost of the project exceeds the agreed tender price.
- 6.4 For joint applications between the tenant and owner, the funding would be paid to whomever has responsibility for paying contractors.

7. Contact Information

- 7.1 The Shopfront grants scheme will be administered by the Cullompton HSHAZ Project Officer at Mid Devon District Council.
- 7.2 Completed forms and the required documents should be emailed to the HAZ Project Officer at 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 Work

The scheme aims to enhance the overall Conservation Area by improving the overall shopfront appearance of buildings. Eligible works include:

- Rainwater disposal system minor repair or replacement (lead and cast iron systems replaced like-for-like);
- Repairs or restoration of lead work and weathering;
- Roof repairs;
- Repairs or replacement of elements set in walls, such as panels, windows and doors, including their frames, glazing, ironmongery and other fittings;
- Repairs or restoration to external walls, including work to their structure, surfaces, decorative elements on the surface and wall coverings or claddings;
- Repairs to external features such as balconies, canopies, bargeboards and shutters, where these contribute to the special architectural or historic interest;
- Removal of non-historic features, the absence of which will enhance overall character and appearance;
- Repainting & redecorating to make good other works;
- Fascia repairs;
- Signage improvements;
- Enabling works costs, such as scaffolding, hoardings, contractors' facilities and vehicle access;
- 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;
- Any necessary planning application and/ or legal costs required for the work;
- Temporary usage of vacant units
- Professional advisor services, including surveys, plans, research, inspections etc.

Shopfront 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 the proposed works or another grant funding application. Please also refer to the Structural and Historic Reinstatement Grant Scheme for more substantive works.

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 Works. 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:

- Conjectural reinstatement of historic features;
- Routine modernisation unless integral to the repair works;
- Demolition work;
- Routine maintenance and minor repairs such as cleaning rainwater goods, checking of flashing and roof coverings and removal of plants;
- Work started without prior written consent and before a written offer of grant has been made and accepted by the individual building owner;
- Cleaning brickwork or stonework for cosmetic reasons;
- Building services;
- Redecoration cannot be grant funded unless it is to make good after other repair works, or where new work (e.g. joinery) requires a painted finish.



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. **Informal Discussion** – contact the HAZ Project Officer for an informal discussion about your proposals.
2. **Officer Site Visit** - the HAZ Project Officer and/ or Conservation Officer will visit the property as considered necessary to assess the proposed works, 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** – applicant to submit an application form with the necessary supporting documentation.
5. **Validation and Consideration** – the Conservation and HAZ Project Officers will undertake a technical appraisal of the proposals. The application details may also be referred to Historic England for approval (see Appendix A).
6. **Approval** – the Chair of the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership Group will review the application with MDDC Officers (including the Economic Development Team Leader and Director of Place (or other senior officer with delegated responsibility),) to approve, refuse or defer the application.
7. **Grant Offer Letter** – if your application is approved you 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.
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 MDDC Conservation or HAZ Project Officer (or other appropriate MDDC Officer) following submission of claim form by applicant.
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.

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 3 years without a break clause from the date of any offer (and until at least March 2024). Applicants must be over 18 years of age;
- b) If the property or land is held on a lease for less than 3 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 3 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 3 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 3 years¹ of the date of the payment 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 3 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

¹ The purpose of the clawback is to ensure that any property value uplift redeemed by the grant recipient within the first 3 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 3 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 3 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 work²;
 - 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.

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/>

