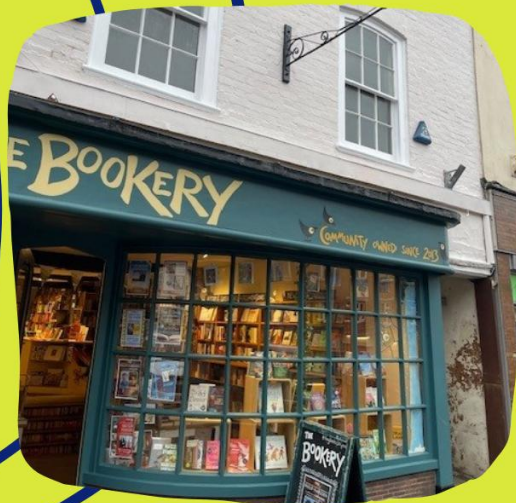


Town Centre Shopfront Refresh Grant- Scheme Guidance



July 2026

About this grant scheme

The Council has set aside money to support improvements to business premises in the town centres of Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton. To qualify, the property must be in one of these town centres, to check if your business premises is within the town centre boundaries, town centre maps, can be accessed [HERE](#).

The grant supports the upgrade, repair and refurbishment of shopfronts*, helping businesses or organisations show what makes them distinctive while maintaining or improving the historic look and feel of the town centre. This guidance explains how to apply for a grant through this grant scheme.

*A “shopfront” is defined as any part of the town centre building that is visible to the public, which could include rear and side aspects, if it is at street-level and relates to the business usage of the building.

1 Who can apply and which properties qualify

1.1 To be eligible, the property must be a business premises or a building used to provide a community service within Crediton, Cullompton or Tiverton town centre. The property must have its own Business Rates Assessment. Eligible premises include:

- Shops – including hairdressers, beauty salons, bakeries, butchers, funeral directors, greengrocers, launderettes, dry cleaners etc.
- Financial and professional services e.g. accountants, estate agents, solicitors etc.
- Restaurants, public houses, cafes and food takeaways.
- Buildings that are being used to provide a community service.

Other cases will be considered on their merits.

1.2 Applications for upper-floor or basement premises will only be considered if the works are clearly visible from the street or directly improve how the frontage looks or its state of repair, and where the works relate to the business use of the building.

1.3 Vacant business premises may be considered where applicants show evidence that the property is currently being marketed for business use, such as particulars from a commercial estate agent, and provide details of the new tenant who is currently discussing a lease or licence (a grant offer in these circumstances may be conditional upon the lease or licence being entered into).

1.4 Eligible applicants are small businesses*, registered charities and social enterprises.

Applicants must have a business or organisation bank account in the name of the business or organisation.

**For the purposes of this Scheme, a small business has fewer than 50 employees and an annual turnover of £10.2 million or less and a balance sheet total of £5.1m or less.*

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1.5 Applicants must either be the freehold owner or hold a commercial lease or licence to occupy with a fixed term length clearly stated in the agreement and at least two years remaining. Tenants or licensees must provide written landlord permission. Tenants of Council-owned premises are eligible where the proposed works are not the responsibility of Mid Devon District Council as landlord.

1.6 Provided each property meets the eligibility criteria, there is no limit on the number of properties owned by a single landlord, or on the number of properties in a street or town centre area, which may receive grant funding. Each application for a separate shopfront unit will be assessed on the details of that application.

1.7 To help support as many separate shopfront units as possible, repeat applications by the same business or organisation for the same shopfront unit within three years of a previous shopfront grant award will be decided by Mid Devon District Council on an individual basis, based on the circumstances and nature of the works.

2 Eligible Works

2.1 The Scheme supports improvements to shopfronts where the works enhance the appearance of the town centre, are sympathetic to the Conservation Area, and use good design, materials and workmanship that suit the age, style and proportions of the building. Proposals should retain and repair existing traditional features where they survive, and should avoid visually intrusive, over-scaled, cluttered or unsuitable modern additions.

Eligible works may include but are not limited to:

- **Repairs:** Fixing or replacing broken gutters, downpipes, windows, doors, stonework, brickwork and masonry.
- **Facade (external surface) improvements:** Repainting and redecorating the shopfront in an agreed colour scheme.
- **Signage:** Repairing fascias or removing signs that are unsuitable or placed too high and installing new, high-quality, non-cluttered alternatives. Repair of existing hanging signs.
- **Blinds and canopies:** Retention and refurbishment of existing historic box blinds or roller canopies.
- **Traditional features and materials:** Repair, reinstatement or sensitive replacement of features such as pilasters, corbels, cornices, stallrisers, fanlights, timber or metal-framed windows, tiled entrances, painted timber fascias, traditional lettering and discreet hanging sign brackets, where appropriate to the building.
- **Works unlikely to be supported:** Oversized fascias, excessive or repetitive wording, large images on fascia signs, plastic or acrylic signage, projecting box signs, internally illuminated fascias or projecting signs, solid external shutters, visually prominent roller shutters, glossy or balloon-style canopies, and bright or garish colour schemes, particularly on listed buildings.

2.2 Applications for work already started or completed are not eligible for funding under this Scheme. Works will be treated as started if the applicant has placed an

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order, paid a deposit, entered into a contract, started the works or completed the works before a grant decision has been issued.

2.3 The decision as to whether any proposed works are eligible for grant funding will be decided by Mid Devon District Council.

3 Amount of Grant

3.1 The maximum grant is 70% of eligible costs, up to £2,500 per property, whichever is lower.

3.2 Eligible costs must exclude recoverable VAT. Statutory fees, such as planning application fees, are not eligible for grant funding. Applicants may include statutory fees in the total project cost for information, but these fees will not be used to calculate the grant award.

4 Application for Grant

4.1 Applications must be completed online via the [Council's Let's Talk Mid Devon web portal](#).

4.2 Applicants must provide the following supporting documents, where applicable.
Please have these documents ready electronically before starting the online application, as the form will allow you to upload them.

- Evidence of property ownership, tenancy or licence.
- Landlord permission (if this applies to you).
- Recent clear photos of the building/area to be repaired and/ or improved.
- A list of proposed works (work schedule) (if applicable).
- Quotes/prices from each contractor/ supplier (as applicable).
- Copies of any required planning permission listed building consent or advertisement consent. Where appropriate, the Council can provide guidance.
- Other information as applicable i.e. marketing details relating to business premises that are vacant.

4.3 Applicants must show best endeavours to achieve value for money. For quotation/price requirements, the value is the total quotation/price from a single supplier, including VAT. The minimum requirements are:

Total quotation/price from a single supplier, including VAT (if applicable)	Requirement
Below £10,000	Applicants must show best endeavours to achieve value for money. Three written quotations are not required where all the following conditions are met: 1. The applicant provides one formal, itemised written quotation/price from a qualified commercial contractor or

	supplier that is independent from the applicant, business or organisation. 2. The quotation/price clearly separates and specifies the costs of materials and labour or installation. VAT must be shown separately (if applicable). Applicants are encouraged to use local suppliers, contractors, and service providers where this represents best value and meets the required quality standards. The Council may reject a quotation/price if it differs significantly from standard local market rates.
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If you expect a single quotation/price to be £10,000 or above, please contact BusinessGrants@middevon.gov.uk for guidance.

5 Decision on the Application

5.1 Mid Devon District Council will not be responsible for any agreement or cost entered into by an applicant before a decision on their application has been issued.

5.2 The town centres of Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton are within Conservation Areas. All applications for shopfront refresh grant works will be referred to a Conservation Officer for feedback as part of the approval process. Applicants are responsible for identifying and obtaining any required planning permission, listed building consent, advertisement consent or Building Regulations approval. We will not decide your application until all necessary permissions, approvals or consents have been obtained. Where a proposal involves repainting and redecorating, signage, lighting, shutters, security measures, canopies or changes to traditional shopfront features, applicants may be asked to amend the design so that it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the building and the wider street scene.

5.3 Once a complete application, including all required supporting documents and consents, has been received, applicants should receive a funding decision within 28 days. Submission of a complete application for an eligible does not mean you will automatically receive a grant. Any decision to award grant funding is decided by Mid Devon District Council.

5.4 Successful applicants will receive a grant approval based on the quotes provided. The final grant award will be confirmed following receipt of invoices for the completed works, as set out in Section 7.

6 The Work

6.1 All grant awards are conditional on the works being completed to a standard accepted by Mid Devon District Council. The works must be carried out in accordance

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with the work schedule approved by Mid Devon District Council, where applicable, including any conditions attached, and within the period specified by the Council.

6.2 Council officers may inspect approved works at all reasonable times, both while the works are being carried out and after completion.

6.3 The applicant and its contractors must ensure that all works are carried out in accordance with current health and safety legislation.

7 Payment of Grant

7.1 The grant will only be paid after the works have been completed to a standard accepted by Mid Devon District Council.

7.2 After completion of the eligible works, the applicant must submit a Completion of Works Certificate, contractor invoice(s), receipts, photographs of the completed works and any other evidence required by the Council before payment can be made.

8 Subsidy Control

8.1 Grants will be provided under the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) exemption of the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022. You must declare all public funding received over the current and past two financial years. The total must not exceed £315,000. Further guidance is available on the [UK Government's subsidy control pages](#)

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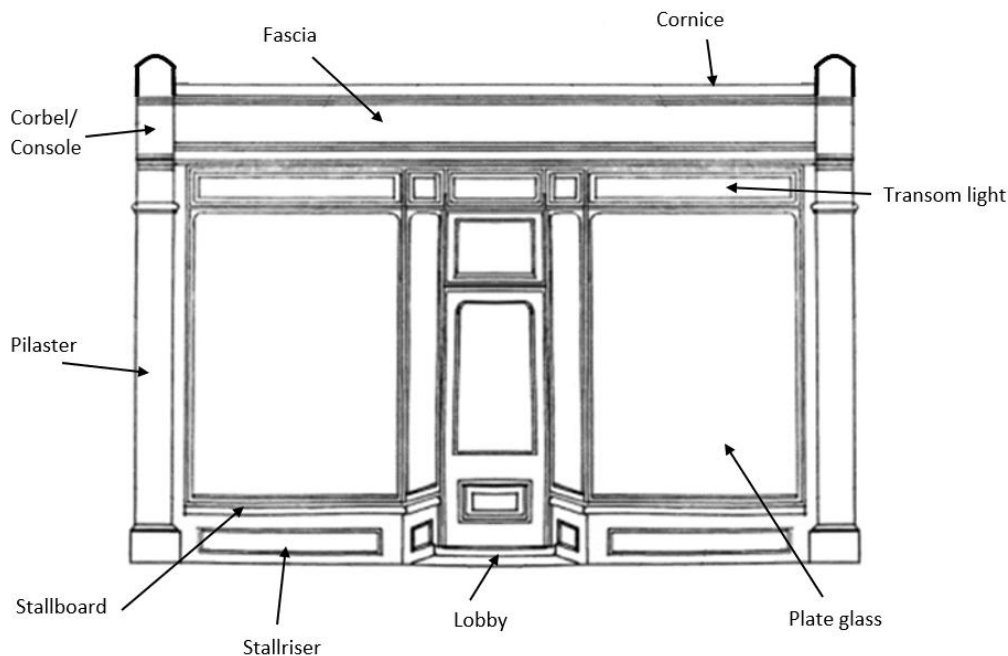
Design Guidance for Eligible Shopfront Works

Eligible works

Although few complete historic shopfronts remain in Mid Devon, many retain traditional features. Where original features exist, the Scheme seeks to reveal hidden details, support appropriate repairs, encourage refurbishment and repainting, and promote good-quality traditional signage.

Where modern shopfronts exist in historic buildings, replacement with a more appropriate design may also be eligible for grant funding.

See drawing below for elements making up a typical shopfront



Stallrisers

Stallrisers are usually masonry, either rendered or with a decorative finish such as natural stone, tiles or timber panels, depending on the age and style of the shopfront. Appropriate repair or reinstatement may be eligible for grant funding.

Windows and doors

Traditional windows may be framed in timber or ornate cast iron with transoms and mullions to match. Glass is normally clear but may incorporate stained glass panels above the transoms. Doors will normally be timber with a glazed panel and reflect the proportions of the stallriser to window with a fanlight above in line with any transom.

Repair of existing traditional elements, and replacement of later inappropriate alterations, may be eligible for grant funding.

Lobby

Mosaics of coloured tiles, and other decorative tiling, are a particular feature of recessed shop entrances in the town centres. Where repair or refurbishment is needed, these works may be eligible as part of wider shopfront refresh grant works. Where a recessed entrance does not currently include tiling, a tile mosaic in the local style may also be considered for grant funding.

Pilasters and corbels

Pilasters and corbels are normally timber, with decorative detailing such as fluting. The base of a pilaster can suffer from rot caused by surface water, blocked gutters or broken downpipes. Repair or like-for-like replacement of these traditional features may be eligible for grant funding.

Fascias

Fascia boards should be in scale with, and respect, the other architectural features of the shopfront. The grant supports the removal of later fascias made from inappropriate modern materials, such as vinyl or acrylic, and internal illumination, or those that do not reflect traditional detailing, and supports the restoration of fascia details that are in harmony with the shopfront's features and proportions. Fascias should not conceal corbels, consoles, cornices, blind boxes or first-floor window details, and signage should normally be limited to the business name and, where appropriate, the street number.

Blinds and canopies

Where historic box blinds or roller canopies exist, their retention and refurbishment may be eligible for grant funding. Eligible works may include new canvas fabric, overhaul of the mechanism, and repair of the box or housing. The colour and finish should sit comfortably with the shopfront and wider street scene. Installation of new blinds may also be considered where they replace inappropriate modern blinds, but balloon canopies, glossy materials, excessive lettering or canopies that obscure architectural features are unlikely to be supported.

Signage including brackets for hanging signs

Good-quality signs can make an important contribution to the vitality of shopping areas. Signwriting on painted timber fascias, or suitable individual lettering applied to the fascia, may be eligible for grant funding. Signs should be well-proportioned, uncluttered, and designed to complement the building rather than dominate it. For hanging signs, repair of existing historic metal brackets may be eligible. New hanging signs may be two-sided hand-painted timber signs or three-dimensional signs that reflect the type of business, provided they are appropriately sized, normally limited to one per business, and fixed in a position that respects the shopfront and neighbouring buildings. Projecting box signs, internally illuminated signs and plastic or acrylic signs are unlikely to be supported in Conservation Areas or on listed buildings.

Other

Other shopfront refresh grant works may also be considered where they improve appearance and are sympathetic to the Conservation Area, even where they do not reinstate historic features.

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Security measures, lighting, alarms and other fixtures should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible. Internal grilles, security glass and discreetly located alarm boxes are generally preferred to external shutters or prominent security equipment. External grilles or shutters will only be considered where a clear need is demonstrated, and the design does not obscure traditional shopfront features or harm the street scene.

All proposed works will be referred to a Conservation Officer for feedback, which will be shared with applicants.

For enquiries about the Scheme, contact the Economic Development team via:

BusinessGrants@middevon.gov.uk