TOWN CENTRE SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANT

GUIDANCE NOTES

What is the Shop Front Improvement Grant?

The Shop Front Improvement Grant is a fund operated by Rushcliffe Borough Council that can offer financial support towards the improvement of shop fronts in the town areas of:

- Bingham
- West Bridgford (incl. Melton Road)
- Radcliffe on Trent
- East Leake

The fund has been created following a retail study being carried out in the above three areas. This identified improvements in those areas which included the need to visually improve the frontage of some of the shops.

The fund is available to businesses operating in both the retail and service sectors that wish to make visible improvements to the ground floor appearance of their shop.

The fund can assist by providing grants of up to £5000 for the renovation and/or improvement of shop fronts. Applicants must contribute at least 50% towards the cost of the work and will need to demonstrate that there is a real need for the improvement.

What can I get assistance towards?

Grant assistance is geared towards expenditure on professional painting and decorating services, repair and/or replacement of fascias and signage.

A proven need for improvement to the shop front must be demonstrated – a change of colour scheme, repainting or new sign for an otherwise well-presented and maintained shop will not qualify.
Successful applications will be determined by assessing the completed application form, photos of the shop front, relevant plans and estimates for improvement and by visiting the applicant’s business premises if required.

So what do I have to do next?

The primary objective of the Shop Front Improvement Grant is to help visually improve the identified town centre areas. It is open to all retail and service businesses in the town areas of Bingham, Radcliffe on Trent, East Leake and West Bridgford (including Melton Road) which meet the eligibility criteria (see below). Applicants should refer to these criteria before completing the application form.

Please note that significant changes to shop fronts may be subject to relevant planning and/or building consent for which there is a charge. Before submitting an application for a grant you should contact developmentcontrol@rushcliffe.gov.uk and buildingcontrol@rushcliffe.gov.uk with a brief description of the intended improvements and you will be advised if planning and/or building consent is required.

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for the Scheme:

1. The business must be located in the town areas of Bingham, Radcliffe on Trent, East Leake and West Bridgford, including Melton Road (See Appendix). Grants are only available to independent businesses working in the retail and service sectors.
2. Applicants will be required to:
   - complete an application form outlining the need for a grant
   - provide photographic evidence that support is needed to repair, renovate, or improve the shop front
   - provide 2 written quotations for the work. Applicant who use local traders will be viewed favourably
   - provide proof of contact (email or copy of letter) with development and building control to confirm if consents are required – please see contact details above.

The Council will require applicants to fund at least 50% of the total cost of the improvement from their own resources.
3. Applicants must not have any outstanding planning or building enforcement action against them. Grants will not be given to any applicant with outstanding enforcement issues.
4. Applicants must not be subject to an undischarged bankruptcy order. Grants will not be given to any applicant with outstanding debts due to the Council from the applicant for any service whatsoever.
5. There is no automatic right to financial assistance, and no right of appeal against a decision.
Regulations

Any offer of financial assistance is subject to the following conditions:

1. Where relevant, any work carried out must have planning permission, listed building consent, advertisement consent and building regulations. The work must also adhere strictly to the approved details.
2. The applicant must give at least one week’s notice of commencement of work to the Economic Development officer (contact details below).
3. Payment of grant will be made after all improvements have been completed and upon receipt of before and after digital photos of the works have been supplied. Receipts will also be required as proof that the money has been used for the purpose intended.
4. The Council has the right to inspect the work in progress and upon completion.
5. The applicant will take appropriate steps to meet health and safety requirements.
6. Please note that where a business is VAT registered the net amount will be paid up to the maximum grant of £5000.
7. The grant will not cover any work undertaken prior to the date of the offer letter.
8. Unless otherwise agreed, the grant must be taken up within 6 months of an offer being made.
9. The applicant will provide ‘before’ and ‘after’ photographs as evidence.

IMPORTANT

It is Council policy not to give grants to persons who have currently defaulted on debts to the Council.

There is no automatic right to financial assistance and the Council will not fund items already purchased.

The Council reserve the right to make any changes to the criteria at any time.

The decision of the Rushcliffe Borough Council is final.

Please contact Catherine Evans on 0115 9148 552 or econdev@rushcliffe.gov.uk if you require any further information.
West Bridgford – Melton Road