



# Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Shop Front Improvement Grant

## Contents

1.	Who can apply? .....	1
2.	How much is the grant for? .....	1
3.	Design guidance .....	1
4.	What will the scheme fund? .....	1
5.	Will I need planning permission? .....	3
6.	How do I apply and what do you need? .....	3
7.	How is the decision made? .....	4
8.	Fraud or financial irregularity .....	4
9.	Post Assurance Checks .....	4
10.	Taxation and the provision of information to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC).....	4
11.	Data Protection and Use of Data .....	5
	Appendix A – Terms and conditions .....	6
	Appendix B - State Aid Regulations .....	9

## 1. Who can apply?

The Shop Front Improvement Scheme is available to both existing independent businesses and owners of vacant units (where a minimum of a 3 year secured lease can be evidenced) which are located within the Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres and other local shopping areas.

The scheme is open to all freehold owners and leaseholders who are named on their lease and tenants of premises with commercial/community services shop-frontages within the Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres. Tenants must have the building owner's prior written approval.

**The grants are discretionary and subject to the availability of funds.**

The inclusion of a building within the eligible area does not give any automatic entitlement to a grant.

The scheme will support works that are carried out following grant authorisation.

**Funding cannot be given for works undertaken prior to the receipt of your grant authorisation confirmation.**

If you are unsure of whether your business will qualify for a grant you should contact Town Centres Team on [towncentres@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk](mailto:towncentres@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk)

## 2. How much is the grant for?

Businesses can apply for a grant towards the external renovation or improvement of ground floor, upper floor shops and for hospitality businesses improvements to outside space, subject to having current pavement licenses.

**The grant will cover 100% of the eligible costs up to a maximum of £1,500.**

**Please note that grant availability is subject to funding and is available for a limited period only, and the Council reserves the right to end the scheme without prior notice.**

## 3. Design guidance

The scheme aims to encourage the use of good quality materials, appropriate detailing, sympathetic signage, sensitive security features and access for all that respects the character of the building overall and its contribution to the wider appearance of the area.

## 4. What will the scheme fund?

Not all improvement works will be eligible for a Shop Front Improvement Grant.

**The grant will only fund "eligible works."**

The following generally will be considered as eligible for support:

- New shop fronts.
- Repair and reinstatement of all or any part of a shop front fixture that is visible from the street, including the upper floors of premises where they are used for retail or commercial activities.
- Repainting of shop fronts in suitable colours.
- Re-pointing, repair and cleansing of external stonework and brickwork at and below fascia level.
- Fascia signage in keeping with the character of the building.
- External lighting.
- Internal security grilles and/or security glazing.
- Alterations to doors and level entry to permit access for people with disabilities.
- Fabric roller blind awnings and canopies.

The scheme generally **will not** fund the following:

- Lighting within window displays.
- Window display equipment.
- General pedestrian access improvements.
- Re-pointing, repair and cleansing of external stonework and brickwork above fascia level.
- Repair and reinstatement of guttering and down pipes.
- Externally mounted security features.

Hospitality business with valid pavement licenses, the scheme will fund:

- External canopies
- Seating
- Café barriers
- Planters

Please note these items **MUST** be removable and **NOT** permanent fixtures

Businesses which have more than 3 outlets nationally **will not be eligible** to apply.

## 5. Will I need planning permission?

Most alterations to shop fronts within Nuneaton and Bedworth will require permission under the Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations or both, and work carried out without consent may result in enforcement action or prosecution.

Planning permission is required for works that involve a material change to the external appearance of a premises. Such works include alterations to the fascia, the windows or the doorway, changes to the materials used or the installation of blinds/awnings or security shutters.

The complete or partial demolition of an unlisted building within a conservation area will require conservation area consent. This includes the removal of features which give the shop front character, such as stall risers, fascia's, or window frames.

Any alteration which affects the special historic, artistic, or architectural interest of a listed building (including character and appearance) will require listed building consent. Such works include alterations to architectural details, alterations to the interior, the installation of shop front security measures, and in some cases the repainting of a shop front.

Advertisement consent is required for the display of certain types of signs in particular locations, notably illuminated signage.

Please note that it takes the **approximately 6 weeks to determine a planning application**, advertisement consent or other statutory consent. This consideration should be built into the project timetable.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council can be contacted prior to making a grant application, if there is any uncertainty about permissions required for the proposed work.

## 6. How do I apply and what do you need?

In order to consider your application, we require the following:

- Completed application form including the full detailed schedule of works to be carried out and any supporting evidence.
- Proof of ownership/lease - the applicant will either need to provide proof of ownership or if the property is leased, the applicant will need to provide proof in writing that they have permission from the owner to carry out the works .
- If leased, the building owner must countersign the application to show that they have given permission for the works to be carried out.
- Details of the permissions that will be needed to carry out the work and proof that the permissions have been granted. If the grant application has been submitted prior to receiving the permissions, a copy of the permission should

be submitted as soon as it is received. Please note that until this has been provided, funds will not be released.

- Cost estimates including quotes and fees - evidence that you have obtained **three quotes from contractors**. You should state which of the three contractors you would like to employ and why. Please note that any grant offer will usually be based on the lowest quotation.
- A current photo of the shop front and any available visuals of what it will look like after the improvements have been completed.
- If applicable, evidence that you cannot reclaim VAT.

## **7. How is the decision made?**

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a grant agreement with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. This will explain when a project can start and all terms and conditions including any project specific conditions.

Payment will be made upon receipt of appropriate legal or financial documentation, the details of which will be agreed with the applicant as part of the assessment process.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council reserve the right to withhold, vary or reclaim funding if any information supplied through the application and approval process proves to be inaccurate, misleading, or incomplete.

## **8. Fraud or financial irregularity**

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, corruption, and other forms of financial irregularity. It will take any necessary steps where fraud is suspected, for example, full recovery of costs and/or referral to the police.

## **9. Post Assurance Checks**

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council will undertake due diligence checks on information provided in support of applications, for example, for the prevention of fraud.

If it is established that any award has been made incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

## **10. Taxation and the provision of information to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC)**

The Council has been informed by Government that all payments under this scheme are taxable. The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to

an applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.

All applicants should note that where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.

## **11.Data Protection and Use of Data**

All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices. These are available on the Council's website.

## Appendix A – Terms and conditions

Businesses/organisations accepting grant offers from the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Shop Front Scheme will be required to abide by and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. The approval or refusal of a grant is at the absolute discretion of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and there will be no right to appeal process.
2. Grants will not be given for expenditure incurred prior to the grant offer being made and the contract signed.
3. The grant is not payable to an un-discharged bankrupt.
4. The grant must be used for the purpose intended as outlined in the Grant Offer letter – this will be supported by producing original invoices for the grant claim.
5. In the case of tenants, payment of the grant requires the building owner's approval and providing proof of a minimum of five year lease for the building.
6. If the business/organisation ceases trading/operating within 12 months of the payment of the grant or the building is sold, the applicant must notify Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council within 14 days and in such circumstances the council may require the applicant(s) to repay, in whole or part of the grant paid.
7. The grant must not be used for improvements to residential property, structural repairs including re-roofing, internal repairs and alterations, external security features, CCTV systems or recoverable VAT.
8. If the applicant is registered for VAT this must be declared on the application form. If at any point the organisation/business becomes VAT registered, the applicant must inform Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and discuss repayment of VAT expenses claimed.
9. The grant will only be paid to proposals which have been granted planning permission if required.
10. Nothing in the agreement or negotiation of the grant will affect Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough decision over planning permission. An offer of agreement in principle will be made until planning permission has been granted. Only then may a Grant Offer letter be issued and works commence.
11. All works are to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the specification and schedule of works agreed with the council.
12. The council's written approval must be obtained in advance of any amendment to the approved specification and schedule of works. Amendments include the omission or variation of the agreed works and the



execution of additional works. Failure to comply with this condition may invalidate the grant offer even if the additional work is not grant aided.

13. Representatives of the council must be allowed access to the property to carry out interim inspections of the works in progress, by appointment at any reasonable time.
14. There is no obligation upon the council to increase the grant if the cost of work increases, or if any additional work is undertaken.
15. A proportional reduction will be made in the grant if the actual cost of the eligible work proves to be less than estimated. If at any point the organisation/business becomes VAT registered, the applicant must inform Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and discuss repayment of VAT expenses claimed. Payment will be made in arrears upon the production of the grant claim form along with supporting documentation – for example, paid invoices.
16. The grant will only be paid against proposals that have been granted planning permission, if required. Nothing in the agreement or negotiation of the grant will affect the council's decision over planning permission. An offer of agreement in principle will be made until planning permission has been granted – only then may a Grant Offer letter be issued and works commence.
17. The applicant must inform Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council of any changes to the business or changes of business address and telephone number.
18. The grant is made on the condition that the property will be maintained to a satisfactory standard for a minimum of three years.
19. Any grant must be taken up within the period stated in the Grant Offer letter.
20. Payments of grants to successful applicants will be made in arrears, in one sum on the receipt by the council of evidence that the applicant has incurred the expenditure. A supporting statement should show how the expenditure relates to the individual items in the approved schedule of works.
21. Expenditure must be incurred using a debit/credit card or cheque and evidenced through a bank statement. Payments of grants will not be made towards expenditure incurred using the payment method of cash.
22. Grants are dependent on applicants being required to complete a short questionnaire evaluation 6 months after the receipt of the grant.
23. The council reserves the right to publish illustrations, photographs or other details of your project in promotional literature and other documents associated with council grant schemes.
24. Applicants will need to sign the contract within 4 weeks from the date offered otherwise the offer will be withdrawn.

25. If the applicant undertakes any work that, in the opinion of the council, significantly alters or removes any elements of the grant-aided work, the council shall have the right to recover such proportion of the grant as it sees fit. This condition shall apply for a period of three years starting on the day on which the final grant payment is made.
26. Under s58(4) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, if any grant condition is contravened or not complied with, the council reserves the right to recover the grant, or such part of it as the council sees fit.

## **Appendix B - State Aid Regulations**

Your project must comply with the new UK Subsidy Control Regime.

Any grant is given as aid under the Temporary Framework for State Aid Measures, to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak published on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This means that businesses receiving support under these provisions can receive up to €800,000 in aid over the preceding three years (being the current year and the previous two years).

Any grant awarded is required to comply with the EU law on State Aid. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other de minimis State Aid or Aid provided under the EU Commission COVID-19 Temporary Framework.

Applicants must therefore declare how much public sector funding (including consultancy support) they have received under the De Minimis Regulation within the last three years. This may reduce the amount of grant available to support your project.

The State Aid declaration is included within the Grant application.