

Shop Front Improvement Grants Guidance for Applicants and Terms & Conditions

GUIDANCE TO APPLICANTS

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cumberland Council recognises that in order to support our high streets and businesses, organisations need the confidence to invest in their properties. To support investment, Cumberland Council is offering Shop Front Improvement Grants to businesses and landlords looking to improve their frontages. This fund supports our high streets by making them more attractive places to visit, encouraging investment and stimulating growth.
- 1.2 This is a scheme for the financial year 2025/2026 and is funded through the governments UK Shared Prosperity Fund, under the Communities and Place priority.
- 1.3 This is a limited fund with applications opening on the 9th June 2025 and closing on the 1st August 2025. We reserve the right to close applications early if there is a high volume of applications. All works need to be completed by 31st December 2025.
- 1.4 This is a capital grant of up to a maximum value of £5,000 or 50% of costs (whichever is the lower) for businesses or landlords to enhance the frontage of their premises, within the defined boundary areas listed in section 2.2.

2.0 Eligibility Criteria

- 2.1 The applicant must hold a legal interest in the property i.e. be the freehold or have a formal lease agreement. Where the property is occupied under a lease the applicant will need to provide landlord/owners approval for the works to be carried out.
- 2.2 The property, or the part of the property to which the works are being carried out, must lie wholly within one of the town/city centre boundaries of the areas covered. The areas covered are Aspatria, Brampton, Carlisle, Cockermouth, Cleator Moor, Dalston, Egremont, Keswick, Longtown, Millom, Silloth, Whitehaven, Wigton and Workington. The town centre boundary maps can be found at [UKSPF 2025/26 Cumberland Council](#). Applications from

businesses outside of the defined areas will not be considered for this stream of funding.

- 2.3 The property must not have been the subject of a building grant from the council or one of its predecessor councils, under a previous facelift or building improvement scheme, in the last 6 years.

3.0 Eligible Works

- 3.1 Improvements to or reinstatement of all or any part of a ground floor shop front. Upper floors to properties can also be improved if the ground floor is included in the works.
- 3.2 Replacement doors and windows (see 4.1 below for material exceptions).
- 3.3 Re-pointing, repair and cleaning of stonework.
- 3.4 Physical improvements to a shop entrance to improve disabled access.
- 3.5 New or replacement signage, as long as advertisement consent has been granted where required.
- 3.6 New or replacement awnings or blinds would be acceptable if their style has been approved by the Conservation and Design Officer and, if required, planning permission has been granted.

4.0 Ineligible works

- 4.1 Replacement doors, windows or rainwater goods made from uPVC/LRP or similar materials that have not been approved by the Council's Conservation officer.
- 4.2 Works relating to any externally mounted security features, such as shutters, CCTV or lighting.
- 4.3 General cleaning of gutters or frontages (except if stone).
- 4.4 Roof repairs.
- 4.5 Any works that are not undertaken by a professional contractor.
- 4.6 Any elements of work that have already been completed or commenced.

5.0 Further Information

- 5.1 If required, you must have relevant planning permission in place or submitted before applying. Please note that by applying you agree the information within your application can be shared with the planning department.
- 5.2 The award of the grant is subject to an appraisal process. This is a discretionary grant and the decision to award a grant is entirely at the council's discretion. There is no right to appeal and the decision of the council is final.
- 5.3 Any financial arrears to Cumberland Council will be taken into account, as will any previous financial assistance provided by the council to the applicant or linked businesses.
- 5.4 We require the use of the funds to be fully transparent and traceable, therefore all works funded by the grant must be undertaken by a professional company with quotes for works provided alongside the application. We require the applicant to provide two quotes for the works, to ensure value for money. If the works are to be split into several packages and let to different contractors (i.e. joinery, painting and scaffolding), we require two quotes for each package of works.
- 5.5 Applicants will need to be able to cover all the costs of the project in the first instance. When submitting a claim, you will need to show that all invoices have been paid by providing official receipts or copies of bank statements showing the payments. The Council will then, by bank transfer, reimburse 50% (up to a maximum of £5,000) of the costs.

6.0 Application Process

- 6.1 Application forms are available on our website at [UKSPF 2025/26 Cumberland Council](#). Please ensure your form is returned with all sections answered fully, truthfully and accurately and with **ALL the relevant documents attached**, we will be unable to consider incomplete applications. If the council suspects any business is attempting to fraudulently claim the grant, it will investigate accordingly.

Please return your application to:

highstreetgrants@cumberland.gov.uk

6.2 Applicants will be informed whether their application has been successful as soon after the closing date as is practical. No works should be undertaken before you have been informed of the decision.

6.3 Decisions on approving the grant applications for payment are made by the Director of Thriving Places or such other officer nominated by the Director.

7.0 VAT

7.1 If applicants are VAT registered and able to reclaim VAT, grant will only be paid on the net costs of any works.

8.0 Subsidy Control

8.1 The council is a public body and subject to the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

8.2 By accepting the grant, the applicant confirms that they have not received more than £315,000 in financial assistance for the period elapsed of the current financial year, and the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year and are within the subsidy allowance for this period.

9.0 Data Protection

9.1 We will use your information to assess your application for financial support. We may confirm information about you and your account from referencing agencies to confirm account validity and your identity. If you provide false or inaccurate information, we will record this and a grant will not be awarded. All personal information will be processed in accordance with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation. For full information on how any personal information we gather will be processed, please visit our privacy notice at <https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/your-council/data-protection-and-privacy/privacy-notice>

10.0 Right to update our policy

10.1 The council reserves the right to update or change this policy without notification or prior warning in the event that the government updates or changes its guidance to us or in the event of an error or omission.

11.0 Publicity

- 11.1 From time to time the council will publicise its grant schemes and its successes, which may include details of projects that have been completed, including grant amounts, company names and before and after photographs. By accepting the grant, you will be agreeing to take part in such activity.
- 11.2 Applicants wishing to undertake publicity directly must get any content relating to the grant approved prior to publication.
- 11.3 Please note The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 requires the council to publish information regarding all transactions with a value over £500.

12.0 Terms & Conditions

- 12.1 The grant will be subject to the Terms & Conditions set out below.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- 1. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have branding and publicity requirements in place for all projects funded through UKSPF. It is a requirement of this grant award that any publicity or advertising material connected with the Project acknowledges UKSPF/Levelling Up as well as Council's support. Any publicity in relation to the works undertaken using the grant, must be approved in writing by the Council in advance.
- 2. You will participate in monitoring and evaluation activities to provide information on deliverables that have resulted from this fund. This will be bespoke to your project and the specific evidence provided to demonstrate outputs and outcomes will be decided in collaboration with the High Streets Grant team and communicated to you from time to time.

3. All works must be completed by 31st December 2025. Grant will only be paid on evidence of completion of the works and defrayment of invoices being supplied to the Council on or before 31st January 2026. Any part of the Grant which remains unspent on that date will be forfeited unless agreed in writing with the Council prior to this date.
4. You shall effect and maintain with a reputable insurance company a policy or policies in respect of all risks which may be incurred by You, arising out of Your performance of the Project, including employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance for death or personal injury, loss of or damage to property or any other loss and provide copies of such insurance to the Council on request.
5. By providing You with the Grant the Council is proposing to give to You a subsidy by way of minimal financial assistance. By accepting this Grant you are confirming that You have not received more than £315,000 in financial assistance for the period elapsed of the current financial year, and the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.
6. It is the Council's intention that the Grant will be paid to You in full on completion of the project. However, without prejudice to the Council's other rights and remedies, the Council may at its discretion withhold or suspend payment of the Grant and/or require repayment of all or part of the Grant if:
 - a. You use the Grant for purposes other than those for which they have been awarded;
 - b. the Council considers that You have not made satisfactory progress with the delivery of the Project;
 - c. You, in the reasonable opinion of the Council, are delivering the Project in a negligent manner;
 - d. You provide the Council with any materially misleading or inaccurate information;
 - e. You cease to operate for any reason, or You pass a resolution (or any court of competent jurisdiction makes an order) that You will be wound up or dissolved (other than for the purpose of a bona fide and solvent reconstruction or amalgamation);

- f. You become insolvent, or are declared bankrupt, or placed into receivership, administration or liquidation, or a petition has been presented for your winding up, or You enter into any arrangement or composition for the benefit of your creditors, or You are unable to pay your debts as they fall due; or
 - g. You fail to comply with any of the terms and conditions set out in this letter and fail to rectify any such failure within 30 days of receiving written notice detailing the failure.
- 7. The Grant shall only be used for the works set out in your application form and offer letter.
- 8. The Grant shall not create any partnership or joint venture between the Council and You, nor any relationship of principal and agent, nor authorise any party to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other party.
- 9. You shall keep all invoices, receipts, and accounts and any other relevant documents relating to the expenditure of the Grant for a period of at least six years following receipt of any Grant monies to which they relate. The Council shall have the right to review, at the Council's reasonable request, your accounts and records that relate to the expenditure of the Grant and shall have the right to take copies of such accounts and records.
- 10. You shall comply and facilitate the Council's compliance with all statutory requirements as regards accounts, audit or examination of accounts, annual reports and annual returns applicable to itself and the Council.
- 11. You acknowledge that the Council is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). You shall therefore;
 - a. provide all necessary assistance and cooperation as reasonably requested by the Council to enable the Council to comply with its obligations under the FOIA and EIRs;

- b. transfer to the Council all requests for information relating to this agreement that it receives as soon as practicable and in any event within 2 working days of receipt;
 - c. provide the Council with a copy of all information belonging to the Council requested in the request for information which is in its possession or control in the form that the Council requires within 5 working days (or such other period as the Council may reasonably specify) of the Council's request for such information; and
 - d. not respond directly to a request for information unless authorised in writing to do so by the Council.
12. Cumberland Council may seek to reclaim some or all of the grant within three years of the award should the applicant's business close or relocate out of the council area. If the freeholder receives the grant and then sells the property, the council may also seek to reclaim some or all of the grant. This will be done on a pro rata basis as follows:
- 100% repayable within 12 months from payment of grant
 - 60% repayable within 2 years of payment of grant
 - 30% repayable within 3 years of payment of grant
13. If requested the council shall be granted access to inspect the property prior to and on completion of the works and at other reasonable times, subject to prior notification.