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East Suffolk High Street Improvement Grant scheme Guidance

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE CAREFULLY BEFORE FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM.

About the fund

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

In April 2022, the Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support its Levelling Up agenda. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. For a summary of the Fund please see:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/>

High Street Improvement Programme Grant Scheme

This programme meets the 'Communities and Place' investment priority by strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural, and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.

The investment will look to improve sustainability within town centres by building quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to town centres. The overall programme will aim to reconnect local residents to the hubs of their communities. The programme will be key in supporting us to diversify our visitor economy offer and sustainable our destination towns and places which are vital to our local economy.

Grants of between £5,000 - £15,000 per application. Please note we are only able to fund capital costs. You don't have to have partnership/match funding for your project, however if you do, your application may be assessed more favourably (this could be cash and non-cash/volunteer contributions).

Priorities of the grant scheme

The following six priorities have been identified by East Suffolk Council and all applicants must ensure that their application provides evidence how it meets one or more of the priorities:

1. Town accessibility for those with disabilities and impairments
2. Improving the visitor offer in towns
3. To create visually stimulating and attractive town centres that capitalise on their individual character and assets to enhance their visitor experience through streetscape and public realm improvements
4. Enhancing pedestrian movement through wayfinding and signage improvements between key areas of the town resulting in an increased footfall to the benefit of all businesses
5. Strengthening the towns digital presence and connectivity
6. Enhancements to and within town centres as well as options for improved access by foot and bicycle to the town centre and pedestrian 'space' in the centres.



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Types of project

This fund can support the following types of projects:

Priority	Example(s)
Town accessibility for those with disabilities and impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair ramps • Access improvements to public facilities
Improving the visitor offer in towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding signage • Town maps • Interpretation boards / panels
To create visually stimulating and attractive town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape improvements such as benches, planters and bins • Bicycle racks
Enhancing pedestrian movement through wayfinding and signage improvements between key areas of the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility studies for improved pedestrian movement • Wayfinding signage • Town trails
Strengthening the towns digital presence and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media and website development • Digital trails • Extending the East Suffolk free-to-use public WiFi and Geo-Sense footfall sensors
Enhancements to and within town centres as well as options for improved access by foot and bicycle to the town centre and pedestrian 'space' in the centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility studies for improved foot and bicycle movement

These examples are given as a guide and are not exhaustive.

This grant scheme can also fund staff costs, if you can demonstrate within the application that they will directly influence or deliver one or more of the above priorities. *Please note we are only able to fund capital costs.*

Who can apply?

The fund is available to independent, place-based business associations and groups* who are located within the geographical area of East Suffolk.

This includes:

- Any constituted “not for profit” community, voluntary or business group
- Voluntary organisations or social enterprises
- Towns and Parish Councils



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Individual profit-making businesses will not be eligible to apply, however, businesses are encouraged to work with respective town/parish councils and/or business groups. Please be aware that all applicants are expected to complete the subsidy declaration within the application form. For more information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund subsidy control please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-subsidy-control-7>

The fund is available for projects and activity located within the following 12 towns:

- Aldeburgh
- Beccles
- Bungay
- Felixstowe
- Framlingham
- Halesworth
- Leiston
- Lowestoft (including the main town centre as well as the Historic High Street/ North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone area and Kirkley)
- Saxmundham
- Southwold
- Wickham Market
- Woodbridge

What we cannot fund

- Applications from individuals – **we cannot make grant payments to individuals**
- VAT: If you are able to claim back VAT then VAT is not eligible as part of the costs of your project and should not be included.
- Annual/usual organisation running costs and core staffing costs
- Projects unable to start within 6 months of the grant award date
- Activities promoting political or religious beliefs
- Payments towards endowment funds, deficit funding or loans
- Overseas travel for individuals/groups
- Sponsored or fundraising events
- Funding for trips abroad or hospitality to other organisations
- Repeat funding – i.e. if East Suffolk Council has previously provided a grant for the same activity
- Items or projects which only benefit an individual
- Retrospective costs
- Projects that will displace existing provision
- Activities that are statutory obligations

Before applying, please note that this funding cannot be used to replace lost income / profits / hardship experienced as a result of the pandemic, although it can be used help you to resume activities suspended due to Covid-19. We cannot provide retrospective funding for projects i.e. for costs already incurred.

Please ensure that your application includes information about how your project adds value to the work of existing organisations, projects and activities in your target area.



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Permissions and licenses

Applicants will need to ensure that they have the required permissions and licenses for their projects or it will be a condition on the grant to obtain required licenses before funds are released. For example, this may include licenses from Suffolk County Council Highways such as street furniture licenses. The licensing fees from Suffolk County Council Highways are generally in the region of £150 per license. Further information on Highways fees and the process for applying are on the Suffolk County Council website.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-licences>

If you are applying for any physical upgrades or improvements that will require planning permission, grants will only be approved if planning permission has already been provided or if there is evidence that planning permission is currently being sought and the grant will be awarded on a conditional basis that planning permission is approved.

To find out more about how to gain planning permission, please visit:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/>

Quotations for works and services.

As a condition of the grant, all capital (physical assets) expenditure, and services provided by another organisation on behalf of the applying organisation over the value of £4,999 will require evidence of three quotes obtained to ensure value for money. Expenditure over £75,000 will require a formal tender process. Please provide any quotations that you have obtained for the project along with the completed application form. **Please note that by three-quotes, this means that you can evidence you have tried to obtain three-quotes, it is does not necessarily mean that all potential suppliers contacted will provide you with a quote.*

This shall include adopting the following minimum procedures:

Value of Purchase	Procedure to be followed
£0 - £4,999	Direct Award (meaning you can choose who is award the works without obtaining any quotations)
£5,000 - £74,999	3 written quotes or prices sought from relevant suppliers of goods, works and / or services
£75,000 and over	Formal tender process

How to apply

If you would like to access funding through the East Suffolk High Street Improvement Grant, please complete the application form via the following weblink:

https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/High_Street_Improvement_Grant_Scheme

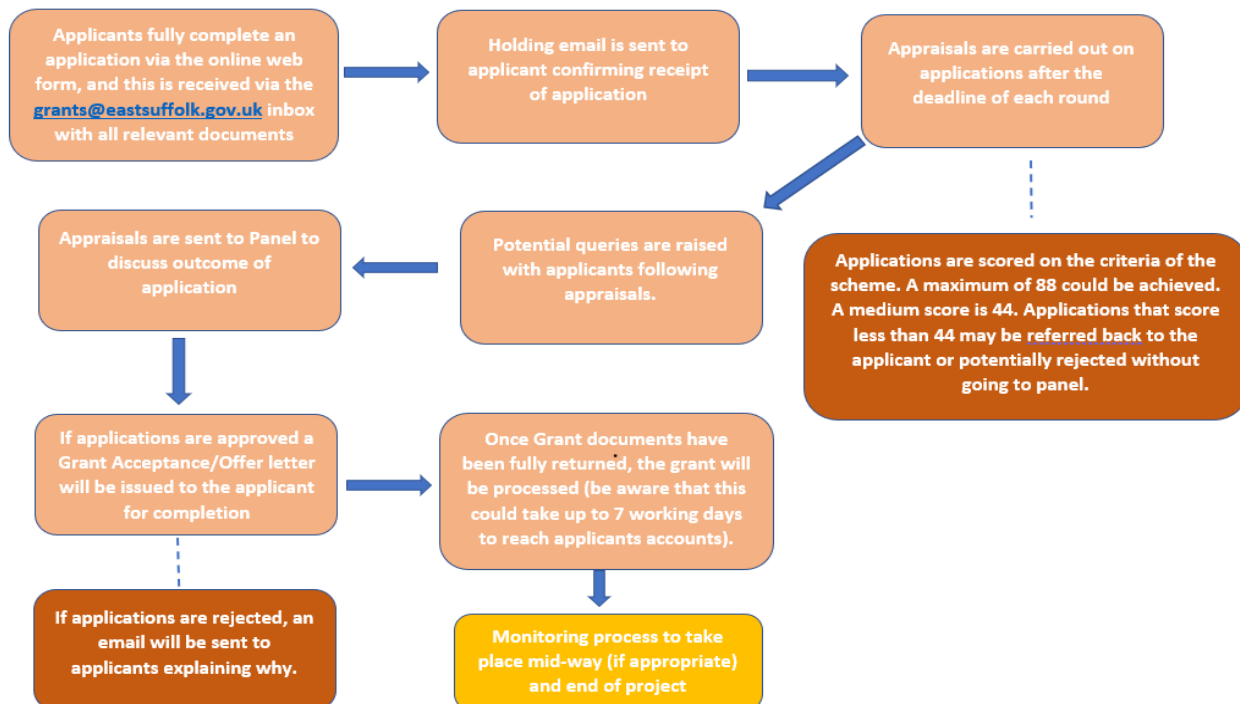


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Process

If the application is fully complete (i.e. all the required information is provided) it will be taken to a Panel Meeting which will be up to three weeks after the grant deadline below. See the diagram below for more information on the application process.



Deadline for Applications

Round	Round dates (applications open and close)	Dates of Appraisals	Panel Meeting
Round 1	3 rd January 2023 – 17 th February 2023	20 th February – 3 rd March 2023	w/c 6 th March 2023
Round 2	1 st March 2023 – 28 th April 2023	1 st May 2023 – 17 th May 2023	w/c 29 th May 2023
Round 3	30 th May 2023 – 28 th July 2023	31 st July 2023 – 16 th August 2023	w/c 28 th August 2023
Round 4	29 th August 2023 – 27 th October 2023	30 th October 2023 – 16 th November 2023	w/c 27 th November 2023
Round 5	4 th December 2023 – 26 th January 2024	29 th January 2024 – 12 th February 2024	w/c 19 th February 2024

These dates set out above are subject to change if a high number of applications is received.

If your application is successful, you will be notified of the decision through a Grant Acceptance (via email) within 5 working days of the Panel meeting.

Funds through this grant scheme **should only be spent on the items/purpose detailed in the application form and Grant Acceptance** and within **12 months** of the date of the Grant Acceptance. All funding awarded will be for a maximum of twelve months, although our contribution could be part of a longer-term project which is match-funded from elsewhere. You must indicate on your form if you have applied for or intent to apply for match funding for this project. If the grant is not spent on the approved purposes



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or there is an underspend, the Council has the authority to reclaim part or all of the grant. If you are proposing to make any changes to your approved project, please inform us as soon as possible.

An evaluation and monitoring form will be sent for completion **after 6 months** – although this period will be extended if a change in national guidance means that your project has to ‘pause’ - to ascertain the impact that the project / activity had. Returning this form to us is one of the grant conditions. ***Please keep copies of receipts and invoices related to the project / activity – we may ask to see these as part of our monitoring process as we spot check a proportion of successful applications.***

Applications will be scored as per the below scoring matrix:

SCORING CRITERIA			
	Criteria	Strong projects will have...	Weak projects will have...
A	Impact on town centre and businesses	The project will have a positive impact on the town centre and the local business community. It is led by the business community or an organisation working with the business community.	It is unclear how the project will benefit the town centre and local business community in a positive and meaningful way.
B	Clear links with the grant fund priorities	The applicant has identified how the project is linked to the priorities from East Suffolk Council’s UKSPF investment plan and the identified priorities.	It is not clear how the project is linked to the priorities from East Suffolk Council’s UKSPF investment plan and the identified priorities.
C	Evidence of Need	The applicant has demonstrated the required knowledge of the issues affecting their town center/business community.	The proposal is based on anecdotal evidence and it’s unclear whether this project is needed.
D	Evaluation and Promotion	It is clear how the project will be promoted and publicised to the target audience and/or communities. There is a clear approach and methodology to capture project outputs and outcomes in a clear and robust way.	It is unclear how the project will be promoted and how the outcomes and impact of the project will be evaluated.
E	Value for Money	The project has been realistically costed and the impact of the project is appropriate in relation to the amount of funding that has been requested.	The project is either significantly under costed or over costed which creates a risk to the project and its outcomes/impact.
F	Deliverability	The project is realistic and achievable and it is clear how and when the project will be delivered and by whom.	It is unclear what the project will do, who will deliver it, how it will be delivered and by when.



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G	Project legacy and sustainability	The applicant has considered project sustainability after the funded project has been completed i.e. it is clear how the project will continue (if relevant).	It is unclear how the project will continue after the funding has been spent and whether what has been proposed is achievable.
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Scoring Matrix

- 0** No Evidence
- 1** Poorly Met
- 2** Satisfactory
- 3** Good
- 4** Very Good

SCORING CRITERIA			
Criteria	Score Range	Weight	Max Weighted Score
A	0-4	4	16
B	0-4	4	16
C	0-4	4	16
D	0-4	3	12
E	0-4	3	12
F	0-4	2	10
G	0-4	2	6

- Groups can achieve a maximum score of 88 points
- A medium score is considered to be 44 points
- Applications that score less than 44 will be referred back to the applicant or rejected.

If you would like this document in large print, Braille, audiotapes, or translated into another language, please contact us: grants@eastsoffolk.gov.uk