



Funded by
UK Government



East Suffolk High Street Premises Improvement Grant Scheme Guidance

Contents

- [About the Fund](#)
- [Priorities of the Fund](#)
- [What will the scheme fund](#)
- [Who can apply](#)
- [What we cannot fund](#)
- [Grant funding intervention rate](#)
- [Quotations for works and services](#)
- [Permissions and Licenses](#)
- [Subsidy control](#)
- [How to apply and timelines](#)
- [Scoring criteria](#)

[Appendices](#)

- Applying for planning permission
- Relevant planning policy documents for reference



Funded by
UK Government



IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE CAREFULLY BEFORE FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM. Grants are awarded on a discretionary basis and are subject to eligibility checks and approval via a panel of officers. You should read the following to check your eligibility for support and for information on the process.

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 Premises Improvement 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.

Please note that this is a capital only fund. Capital means assets that have monetary value, such as equipment, real estate, and inventory. All revenue costs must be met by the applicant.

Grants of between £2,000 - £5,000 per application. The owner or tenant is expected to make a minimum contribution to the project of at least 50%.

PRIORITIES OF THE GRANT SCHEME

The following priorities have been identified by East Suffolk Council and all applicants must ensure that their application provides evidence how it meets these:

- *To improve the attractiveness and the local environment of our market towns and rural areas by upgrading the frontages of its shops and other commercial premises.*
- *To enhance the character and appeal of each individual property.*
- *To help encourage footfall, spend and dwell time by raising the image of the town centre amongst locals and visitors.*
- *To support the growth of local businesses and the vitality and viability of our town centres.*



Funded by
UK Government



WHAT WILL THE SCHEME FUND

This fund can support the following types of projects:

- Replacement shop front, windows and doors
- Awnings – replacement or new
- Reinstatement of traditionally styled shop fronts, sash windows and doors
- Painting of existing shop fronts and upper floors (including render) (only upper floor if it is included within retail space)
- Replacement signage / lettering
- Internal security grilles
- Energy efficiency improvements (e.g. lighting / illumination)
- Accessibility improvements – e.g. level and width access to premises, handrails on steps, nosing on steps marked / painted and portable ramps and signs to indicate this is available.
- Restoration of heritage features on buildings

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

WHO CAN APPLY

The fund is available to businesses, landlords and tenants* of high street businesses who are located within the geographical area of East Suffolk.

This includes:

- Sole traders
- Limited companies
- Business partnerships
- Landlords of commercial high street space
- Any constituted “not for profit” community, voluntary or business group
- Voluntary organisations or social enterprises

* If your project is taking place on rented/leased/tenanted land or premises, please ensure you submit a letter of authority from the owner or that the owner applies for the grant funding direct.

Certain businesses are excluded from applying for this grant and these include pawn brokers, adult/private shops, betting shops, charity shops, vaping shops, national and international chain stores.

Priority will be given to premises located within the following 12 towns however we will also consider applications from smaller localities who can demonstrate a commercial offer (for example, a small village row of shops):

- Aldeburgh
- Beccles



Funded by
UK Government



- Bungay
- Felixstowe
- Framlingham
- Halesworth
- Leiston
- Lowestoft *
- Saxmundham
- Southwold
- Wickham Market
- Woodbridge

* If you are a business located within the areas covered by the North or South Lowestoft Heritage Action Zones / Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSICA), there may be other grants available for shop front improvement. Please contact the Economic Regeneration Team for more information on economicregen@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

WHAT WE CANNOT FUND

- Improvements to residential property, including residential property located above commercial premises
- Retrospective cost and applications i.e. for work already completed or underway
- Cleaning of buildings for purely cosmetic purposes
- Structural repairs including re-roofing
- Internal repairs and alterations
- External security features CCTV systems
- Costs associated with planning permission and building regulations fees
- Architects' fees
- VAT: If you can 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
- Sponsored or fundraising events
- Repeat funding – i.e. if East Suffolk Council has previously provided a grant for the same activity
- To replace lost income/profits/hardship experienced because of the pandemic, although it can be used help you to resume activities suspended due to Covid-19.

GRANT FUNDING INTERVENTION RATE

Grant intervention rate is the amount of funding a grant will provide. This is calculated as a percentage of the total eligible expenditure of a project.



Funded by
UK Government



Grants of between £2,000 - £5,000 per application and the owner/tenant is expected to make a minimum contribution to the project of at least 50%.

You must provide evidence within your application on what other match funding has been secured / you are seeking and how you will fund the remaining costs of the project.

Please note that East Suffolk Council also has a Historic Building Grant, with grants up to £1,000 per application which could support your match funding requirements. The Historic Building Grant could fund shopfront improvements, repairs, and restoration of heritage retail buildings. To find out more about the grant scheme, please email: Conservation@eastsoffolk.gov.uk.

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.

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

Please provide any quotations that you have obtained for the project along with the completed application form.

PERMISSIONS AND LICENCES

If you are applying for any physical upgrades or improvements that will require Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and/or Advertisement Consent, grants will only be approved if the required consent(s) have already been approved or if there is evidence that they are currently being sought. The grant may be awarded on a conditional basis until the relevant consent(s) are approved.

Whilst in Part 7 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country General Permitted Development Order (England) 2015 (as amended) allows for some minor works to shops, many physical works that change the appearance and/or fabric of the exterior of buildings containing shops **will** require Planning Permission. **Therefore, it is very likely if you are proposing to replace any part or all of a shopfront, or any other part of the exterior of the building that Planning Permission will be required.**



Funded by
UK Government



The Council aims to determine most applications for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, and/or Advertisement Consent within 8 weeks from receipt of all necessary information and application fee (an explanation of the Planning Application Process is published at <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-enforcement/planning-application-process/>). You need to build the time for this application process into your timetable for carrying out your project.

Advice can be sought on the potential need for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and/or Advertisement Consent, and the potential for such consent(s) being granted for your proposals, through the Council's Pre-application advice service: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-enforcement/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission/>

Please refer to appendix 1 for more information on the process for applying for planning permission

SUBSIDY CONTROL

Please be aware that all applicants are expected to complete the subsidy declaration within the application form for both schemes.

The EU State aid rules no longer apply to subsidies granted in the UK following the end of the transition period, which ended on 31 December 2020. This does not impact the limited circumstances in which State aid rules still apply under the Withdrawal Agreement, specifically Article 10 of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The United Kingdom remains bound by its international commitments, including subsidy obligations set out in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) with the EU.

East Suffolk Council will be providing this grant to the business / organisation as a Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act (2022). MFA subsidy limit is £315,000 over a three-year period (including your current financial year and the previous two financial years).

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>

HOW TO APPLY AND PROCESS

This grant scheme will open on **1 April** and close on **28 February 2025**, unless all the funding available has been allocated before this point.

To assess the works being proposed an Expression of Interest will need to be completed first, this will help to determine not only your eligibility for the scheme, but also what, if any, planning permission or other consents may be required. Once completed, this document will be assessed by the Funding, Economic Development and Planning Teams and if the project is approved, a full application will be required.



Funded by
UK Government



Timeframe

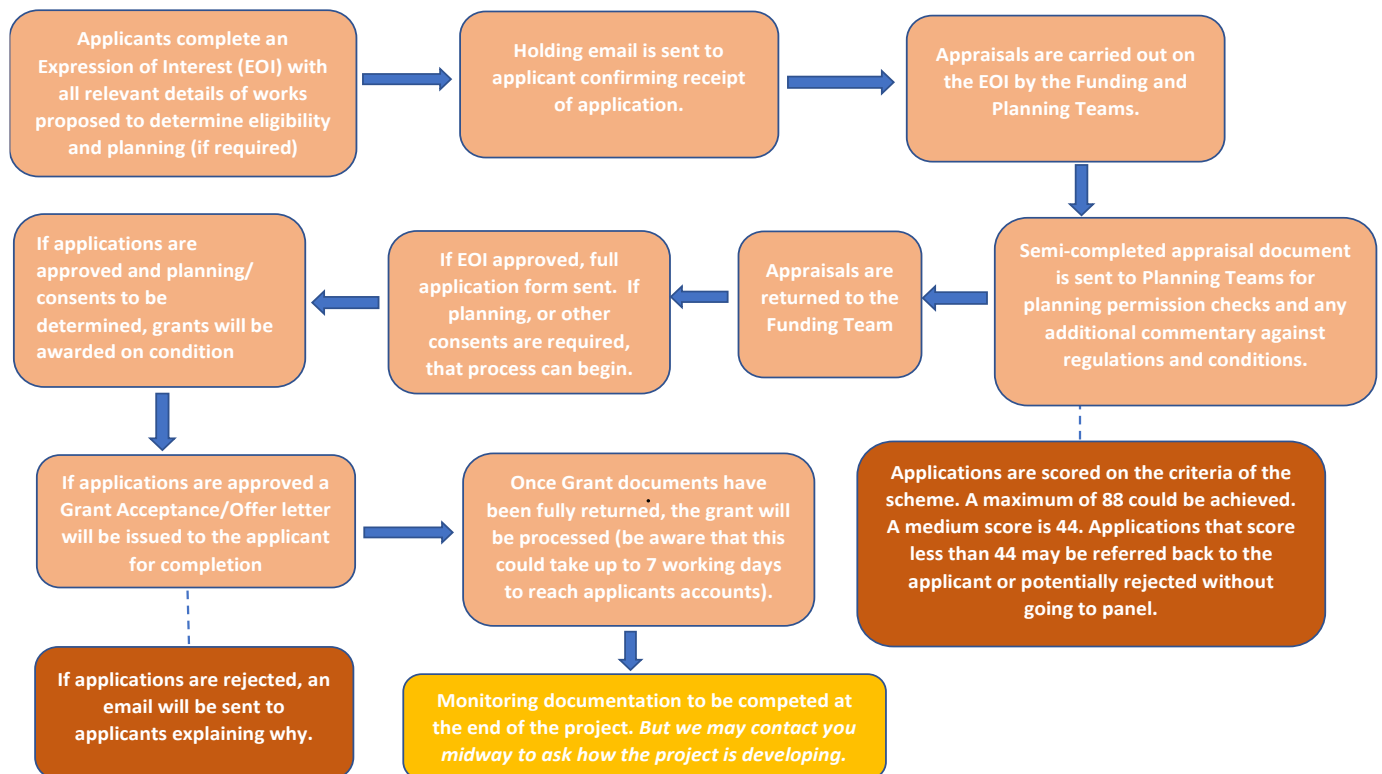
Rounds	Expression of Interest Opening/Closing Dates	Approval & Decision to move to full application	Full Application open/closing dates	Final Grant Decision Date
Round 1	1 st April 2024 – 19 th April 2024	30 th April 2024 - 14 th May 2024	16 th May 2024 - 24 th May 2024	24 th June 2024
Round 2	24 th June 2024 - 12 th July 2024	30 th July 2024 - 13 th August 2024	15 th August 2024 - 30 th August 2024	23 rd September 2024

The grant decision will be relayed to you at the earliest opportunity. Please be aware, full compliance with the eligibility criteria does not guarantee that your application will be successful, as grants are discretionary and if relevant, dependent on achieving the relevant planning consents. There is no right of appeal against the grant decision. If your grant application is declined, an explanation will be provided.

If you would like to access funding through the East Suffolk Shop Front Improvement Grant, please complete the Expression of Interest by visiting the UKSPF webpage on the following link:

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

See the diagram below for more information on the application process.





Funded by
UK Government



Funds through this grant scheme **should only be spent on the items/purpose detailed in the Expression of Interest, 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 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 along with the Grant Acceptance. This needs to be completed once the project and spend has ended and within 12 months of the date of the Grant Acceptance – although this period will be extended if a change in national guidance means that your project must ‘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.***

We may contact you midway through the project to discuss how the project is developing.



Funded by
UK Government



SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be scored as per the below scoring matrix:

SCORING CRITERIA			
	Criteria	Strong projects will have...	Weak projects will have...
A	How will the design/improvement impact business	The project will have a positive impact on the business and Town Centre it is clear how the project is supporting the business to reach its longer-term ambition.	It is unclear how the project will benefit the business and it is clear how the project is supporting the business to reach its longer-term ambition
B	How will the design/improvement impact the Town Centre	The project will have a positive impact on the business and Town Centre it is clear how the project is supporting the business to reach its longer-term ambition	It is unclear how the project will benefit the business and it is clear how the project is supporting the business to reach its longer term aims / business plan.
C	Clear links with the grant fund priorities	The applicant has identified how the project is linked to the priorities of the scheme	It is not clear how the project is linked to the priorities.
D	Evidence of Need for the project and need and demand (have they provided photo)	The applicant has clearly demonstrated the need for the works needed at the property	The applicant has not provided any evidence of need for the project
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 whether the project is realistic and achievable, and it is not clear how and when the project will be delivered and by whom.
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 works will be maintained after the grant funding is awarded.	It is unclear how the project will continue and be maintained after the funding has been spent.



Funded by
UK Government



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



Funded by
UK Government



APPENDICES

PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

If you are applying for any physical upgrades or improvements that will require Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and/or Advertisement Consent, grants will only be approved if the required consent(s) have already been approved or if there is evidence that they are currently being sought. The grant may be awarded on a conditional basis until the relevant consent(s) are approved.

You will need to include a completed application form (including ownership declaration), existing and proposed scaled drawings showing the site location, site layout and the extent of all new work (potentially both internal and external works), and other supporting documents (e.g. Heritage Impact Assessment/Statement in some cases). Planning and Advertisement applications also require an application fee. The Local Validation List setting out what is required to be submitted with such applications is published at <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-enforcement/how-to-submit-a-planning-application/>

It is also recommended that as part of your formal planning/listed building/advertisement application(s) you supply full and precise details of all proposed materials and detailing of any proposed changes to the building, along with levels and angles of illumination of any lighting etc as in order to reduce the potential need for the inclusion of conditions on the consent(s) which would require 'discharge' (i.e. formal approval) through a further application to the planning service, prior to the commencement of any works on site.

Other planning elements to consider:

Renewable Energy equipment - The installation of renewable energy equipment on commercial premises can sometimes be undertaken without the need for Planning Permission but only where certain criteria relating to their size, position on or within the grounds of a building are met, and the criteria to be met are tighter within Conservation Areas and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Planning Permission is usually required for such equipment where such properties are Listed Buildings or within the curtilage of a Listed Building. The criteria are set out in Part 14 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country General Permitted Development Order (England) 2015 (as amended).

Listed Building - If the building is a Listed Building, any external and internal works will also require Listed Building Consent. It is a criminal offence for anyone to undertake unauthorised works to a Listed Building (i.e. a builder) and by anyone causing them to be carried out (i.e. someone instructing a builder) without Listed Building Consent. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to check whether the building is Listed and/or if consent is required prior to starting any works.

Advertisements/Signage - If you are proposing to install/replace any advertisements/signs either on the building or within its grounds or on a boundary wall/fence, they may also require Advertisement Consent. Some advertisements/signs which meet certain criteria have 'deemed consent' under the Town and



Funded by
UK Government



Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), so would not require specific Advertisement Consent but many advertisements/signs require advertisement consent due to their size, position and/or illumination. This includes fascia signs, hanging/projecting signs, a-boards, banners attached to fences, and some directional signs. General advice on the need for advertisement consent for shops can be found at <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-enforcement/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission/advertisement-consent/> and <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/interactive-guidance>

Conservation Area - Many shopfronts are in conservation areas, which receive a higher level of protection through Local Plan policies. This means that any significant changes to the exterior must 'preserve or enhance' the character of the Conservation Area (as required under the Town and Country Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990). However, even outside Conservation Areas, all shopfronts should be in keeping with the building and relate to the existing characteristics of the street scene. In locations where the quality of shopfront(s) is poor, an improvement in quality will be encouraged, where this does not result in the loss of historic fabric or features, and the new/altered shopfront is visually appropriate for the building and its location. Please ensure you have considered the East Suffolk Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document, which you can view via the following weblink: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Historic-Environment-SPD/Historic-Environment-SPD-reduced.pdf>

Advice can be sought on the potential need for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and/or Advertisement Consent, and the potential for such consent(s) being granted for your proposals, through the Council's Pre-application advice service: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-enforcement/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission/>

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS FOR REFERENCE:

Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/Adopted-Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/East-Suffolk-Council-Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan.pdf>

SCLP11.3 – Historic Environment

SCLP11.4 – Listed Buildings

SCLP11.5 – Conservation Areas

SCLP11.6 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Waveney Local Plan

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveney-Local-Plan/Adopted-Waveney-Local-Plan-including-Erratum.pdf>

WLP8.37 – Historic Environment

WLP8.38 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

WLP8.39 – Conservation Areas

Conservation Area Appraisals



Funded by
UK Government



Many town centres throughout the District include conservation areas. Shop owners' proposals must demonstrate that they not only conserve and protect the historic fabric and character of their own premises but also the historic character of the wider conservation area. It would be worth including a link to the conservation area appraisals webpage, which is set out below.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/design-conservation-ecology-trees-landscape-and-rights-of-way/conservation/conservation-areas/conservation-area-appraisals/>

Heritage Action Zones

Many shopfronts in Lowestoft are located within the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone. The North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone Design Guide includes guidance about repairs and alterations to shopfronts within the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone. The document can be accessed here:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Lowestoft-HAZ/North-Lowestoft-Heritage-Action-Zone-Design-Guide-SPD.pdf>

The North Lowestoft HAZ Design Guide also provides a link to Historic England work about shopfronts in Lowestoft High Street, which can also be accessed here and provides useful background information.

https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/8427/TheShopfrontsofLowestoftHighStreetSuffolk_ResearchandInvestigation

The London Road, Lowestoft High Street Heritage Action Zone and Seafront Masterplan does not contain specific guidance about shopfronts. However, it sets out the key principles for development and regeneration in the South Lowestoft HAZ area. These include public realm improvements, creating active frontages and preserving historic buildings. Restored shopfronts should where possible contribute towards achieving these objectives.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Business/Regeneration-projects/HAZ-and-Seafront-Masterplan-Report.pdf>

Some of the principles about shopfront repair and improvement as set out in the North Lowestoft HAZ Design Guide SPD may also be relevant to properties in the South Lowestoft HAZ.