

Shop Improvement Grant Scheme

Guidance Notes



1 Background

1.1. The appearance of shop fronts has a considerable influence on the overall character of a town. They are an essential element not only of the buildings in which they are set but also of the wider streetscape. A shop front that has been designed with respect given to the architecture of the building and character of the surrounding area can add charm and vitality, making it attractive to shoppers and visitors alike.

1.2. The shop improvement grant scheme aims to provide assistance to owners and tenants who wish to improve their premises. The scheme provides a means of supporting the growth of local businesses, improving the local environment and raising the image of the town amongst locals and visitors.

1.3. The Scheme is funded and administered by Newton Abbot Town Council.

1.4. The fund is intended to benefit as many businesses in the town as possible. Therefore, the grants allocated may depend on the number of applications that have been received in any one year.

1.5. These guidance notes are provided to help applicants understand the aims of the Shop Improvement Grant Scheme and to set out how to make a grant application.

1.6. For further information on the Shop Improvement Grant Scheme in Newton Abbot please contact Newton Abbot Town Council Town Development Manager 07595 893151 or email sally.henley@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

2. Who can apply?

2.1. The scheme is open to all freehold owners and leaseholders with at least five years remaining on their lease and tenants of premises with commercial/community services shop-frontages facing the high street within the town of Newton Abbot. Tenants must have the building owners' prior written approval.

2.2. Qualifying premises could include:

- Shops - including hairdressers, beauty salons, funeral directors, launderettes, dry cleaners etc.
- Financial and professional services (e.g., banks, building societies, estate agents).
- Restaurants, public houses, cafes and food takeaways.
- Buildings that are being used to provide a community service.

3. What does the Scheme cover?

3.1. Funds are available to cover up to 50% of the total expenditure on a project. This means that the applicant will still need to finance the remaining 50%. 'In-kind' contributions such as DIY labouring/painting are welcome but will **not** contribute towards the 50% match-funding.

3.2. There will be one opportunity to apply each year. The deadline for applications is 31st March. Work must be completed, and invoices received before 31st March the following year.

3.3. Claims can be made against the following costs:

- Planning pre-application advice.
- Planning fees.
- Photomontage, material samples or anything else required as part of the planning process.
- Physical work necessary to deliver the improvement (see 3.4 and 3.6).

3.4. The following work will be considered eligible for support:

- New shop fronts and fascias.
- Repair and reinstatement of any part of a shop front fixture that is visible from the street.
- Re-instatement of original architectural features e.g., ornamental masonry, stucco and other applied finishes or details, historically patterned woodwork, ornamental metalwork or other features of historic significance.
- Repainting of shop front in suitable colours.
- Repair and reinstatement of guttering and down-pipes to match historic materials.
- Repainting or re-rendering prominent elevations in suitable heritage colours.
- Repair of external stonework and brickwork and replacement of stonework or brick work.
- Re-pointing using traditional materials.
- Pedestrian access improvements - these must be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Signage.
- Fixed window display equipment.
- Replacement of external shutters with internal security grilles and or security glazing (e.g., laminated or strengthened glass), which allows window-shopping to take place in the evening.
- External and window lighting.
- Suitable awnings & replacement awnings.

3.5. All work is subject to the relevant permissions being secured (see section 4)

3.6. The scheme will not support:

- Improvements to residential property, including residential property located above commercial/community premises.
- Works which have already been undertaken or any works which are started prior to a formal offer of grant funding being made.
- Structural repairs including re-roofing.
- Internal repairs and alterations not visible from the street.
- External shutters and other security devices (e.g., CCTV).
- Recoverable VAT.
- Properties in the ownership of a local authority.
- Any premises in receipt of a Shop Improvement Grant in the last 4 years.

3.7. The Scheme will only provide grants to commercial/community premises within the Newton Abbot Parish boundary. Please note that grants are discretionary and subject to availability of funds. The inclusion of a building within an eligible area does not give any automatic entitlement to a grant. The Council reserves the right to refuse any application which, in the opinion of the Grant Panel, does not meet the aims and objects of the Scheme which ultimately is to deliver improvements to the existing offer.

4. Do I Need Permission?

4.1. Most alterations to shop fronts within Newton Abbot will require permission under the Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations or both, and work carried out without consent may result in enforcement action or prosecution by Teignbridge District Council.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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 stallrisers, fascias or window frames.

4.4. 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 in a different colour.

4.5. Advertisement consent is required for the display of certain types of signs in particular locations.

4.6. Please note that it takes the District Council approximately two months to determine a planning application, advertisement consent or other statutory consent. This consideration should be built into the project timetable.

4.7. The Town Council can be contacted prior to making a grant application, if there is any uncertainty about permissions required for the proposed work.

5. How do I apply?

5.1. There will be one opportunity to apply each year. The deadline for applications is 31st March (see point 3.2)

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

- Completed Application form including the full details of the work to be carried out and any supporting evidence.
- Proof of ownership/lease – The applicant will need to provide proof in writing that they have permission from the owner to carry out the works if not the owner.
- 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.

- 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.

6. How is the decision made?

6.1. Applications should be sent for the attention of the Town Development Manager at info@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can post it to Newton Abbot Town Council, Newton's Place, 43 Wolborough Street, NEWTON ABBOT, Devon, TQ12 1JQ.

6.2. Applications will be considered by a small Grant Panel made-up of officers and Councillors from Newton Abbot Town Council.

6.3. The Grant Panel will make a decision on the application within four weeks of the closing date in any quarter. All grant offers will be made in writing. If the proposed project requires planning permission and the grant is approved, the applicant will receive a letter making an in principle offer of funding, A formal grant offer letter will be issued as soon as relevant permission is granted. Full details of the conditions that apply to the grant will be set out in a grant offer letter.

6.4. All grants will be conditional to the securement of appropriate consent. The scheme operates independently of the planning process and any offer of a grant does not imply in any way that planning consent will be granted.

6.5. A requirement of the scheme is that maintenance of the property to a satisfactory standard must be carried out for a minimum of 3 years.

6.6. Grants will be paid on production of invoices from contractors showing a detailed breakdown of costs. Payments will normally be made after all works are completed, for larger projects interim payments may be considered.

6.7. The Grant Panel reserves the right to request that alternative competitive quotes are sourced for works that are estimated to cost over £10,000.

6.8. The Grant Panel reserves the right not to make any grants if the applications received are not appropriate or compliant with the Newton Abbot Shop Improvement Grant Scheme.