

SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Scheme Guidance Notes

1. Details of Scheme
1.1 Funded by the East Midlands Development Agency (<i>emda</i>) and Leicestershire County Council, the Shop Front Improvement Grant aims to improve the attractiveness of market towns and rural areas by upgrading the frontages of its shops and other commercial premises.
2. Criteria
2.1 The following criteria will be applied. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must either be the freeholder or have an unexpired term of at least 7 years (lesser leases may be considered in exceptional circumstances). • Projects need to be sympathetic to the local built environment and if a property is within a Conservation Area then traditional materials must normally be used. • Projects need to significantly improve the look of the shop front – this will be assessed by the District Council and County Council Heritage Offices. • Relevant approvals such as planning permission and building regulations for new use or new signage should be obtained before applying. Planning permission reference numbers must be supplied within the application. • Businesses which have more than 5 outlets nationally will not be eligible to apply. • Full drawing or diagrams of planned work, including materials used must be submitted with the application. • Environmental impacts in undertaking the work, including materials used and energy efficiency of the property.
3. Priority Areas
3.1 The grant scheme is available to all market towns and rural areas within Leicestershire (limited funds are available to Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray and Oadby and Wigston). 3.2 Priority will be given to projects which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the attractiveness of market towns and rural areas • Increase footfall and viability of local businesses • Are in prominent locations Shop front improvements which will benefit a number of retail businesses (e.g. within a parade) are encouraged. Applications are welcome from multiple retail businesses.
4. Eligible Activities
4.1 Eligible activities include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New shop windows and doors • New signage • Lighting improvements as part of shop front improvements • Restoration of traditional shop front features
5. Non-Eligible Activities
5.1 Non-eligible activities include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General property repairs, repointing, replacement of rainwater goods, weather damage • Security features • Improvements that purely conform to requirements set out within the Disability Discrimination Act • Improvements to upper floors
6. Funding
6.1 The maximum grant available under this scheme is £3,000, with a minimum grant of £250. The

grant will not exceed 50% of eligible costs.

6.2 The funding is only available for infrastructure works and can not be used for advisory services, consultancy fees or planning applications.

6.3 The grant panel reserves the right to request additional information, including a recent business plan. The decision of the grants panel is final.

7. Support Agencies

- Business Link - www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands, 0845 058 6644
- Local Planning Authorities (e.g. Districts and Borough Councils) - www.leics.gov.uk/council_local_gov (especially for planning permission and conservation advice)
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas: Melton Town Centre – John Sharpe (Senior Historic Building Officer, Leicestershire County Council) 0116 305 7062. Grant support for historic buildings.
- Rural Shops Alliance - www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk
- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) – www.fsb.org.uk
- BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) - www.breeam.org

8. Specific guidance for completing the Application Form

In addition to the General Guidance Notes, when completing the Application Form some specific information is required when applying for this grant.

Please provide with your application:

- A location map
- Full drawings of shop front and new signage designs, including materials to be used
- Photograph of the building
- Any reference numbers supplied with planning / change of use applications
- Indication if the building is listed as of architectural or historical importance or located within a Conservation Area.

9. Contact Details

For further information please contact Heather Bell or Sarah McCartney, Better Places Team, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8RA
heather.bell@leics.gov.uk or sarah.mccartney@leics.gov.uk (ruralgrants@leics.gov.uk, 0116 305 5541/0116 305 7023).