

New Grant to help Town Centre Businesses

The Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA, have recently announced a **new £50 million funding initiative to stimulate town centre regeneration**. The fund covers every local authority in Scotland and is weighted according to the number of towns within each authority.

Local authority priorities

Each local authority will decide how their own funding will be used as long as these investments improve economic activity within town centres and increase footfall. The aim is to make town centres more successful and sustainable, stimulating the construction industry and supporting jobs.

Fife Council is inviting qualifying small businesses & property owners to apply for a small grant to help improve or develop the property. The money is intended to support capital works and can include exterior shopfront improvements, internal re-fitting and upper floor conversions.

How much is available?

Awards are likely to be in the range of around £6,000 up to a maximum of £10,000 per eligible property. The intervention rate is up to 90% of eligible costs, excluding VAT.

Application deadline

Applications should be made as soon as possible. Applications must be completed, and grant award offers confirmed and accepted by 31st March 2021, with project works completed before the 30th September 2021. The Scottish Government have stated that if the timescales and conditions of the grant are not met, the funding could be withdrawn.



Qualifying criteria

The funding is **aimed towards small Town Centre businesses and property owners**. To be eligible for consideration, an applicant business must have no more than 10 business outlets in a business chain across Scotland with a cumulative turnover of less than £10,000,000.

Which areas qualify?

Property located within the defined Town Centre Areas below can apply.

Cowdenbeath Cupar Dunfermline Glenrothes
Kirkcaldy Leven Lochgelly St Andrews

What improvements can be funded?

External shop front improvements could include things like replacement doors, windows and fascias; lighting and signage; and entrance flooring.

The grant for internal refit could cover COVID-19 related modifications so the owner can remain competitive or diversify, e.g. partitioning an area or installing new features.

The grant for upper floor conversions is a one-off financial contribution towards a change of use of town centre premises, which can be either vacant or occupied. This could be a conversion to offices, rental accommodation or leisure space.



What costs are eligible?

Improvement and development work and materials, plus professional fees are included.

What costs are excluded?

Costs including planning fees, building warrant fees, essential building repair works, and VAT aren't covered.

What about Planning/ Listed Building Consent or a Building Warrant?

All works and materials must comply with planning, building and environmental health regulations and necessary consent(s) must be obtained. Different consents are required depending on the nature of the work and the status of the building. For advice email TownCentre@fife.gov.uk and detail what works you want to carry out, or submit a draft application form to TownCentre@fife.gov.uk

Grant Application Process:

Business Gateway have some helpful guidelines here - <https://www.businessgatewayfife.com/town-centre-grant-fife>.

Where can I find further information?

To check if your building is listed, or inside a Conservation Area visit -

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/planning-and-building2/built-and-natural-heritage/listed-buildings>

For Planning Guidance visit –

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/planning-and-building2/planning/development-plan-and-planning-guidance/planning-guidance>

For Building Standards Guidance visit -

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/planning-and-building2/building-standards-and-public-safety/application-forms-and-guidance>

If you need advice on anything covered in this article, please get in touch with Partner Sharon Collins at scollins@thomsoncooper.com or call 01383 628800.