KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

SHOP FRONT / TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT
GRANT SCHEME 2017

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Kildare County Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) has established the Shop Front / Town Centre Improvement Grant Scheme (hereinafter referred to as “the scheme”) to financially assist and support independent business owners to improve the appearance of their shop fronts / commercial properties. This funding is being provided in recognition of the fact that a building’s facade makes a big impact on our town centres. They help form people’s first impressions of a town centre, so their condition can really affect a town’s image. Smart shop fronts will make a town feel more prosperous, improve its image and contribute towards a stronger sense of identity.

Proposals for funding do not have to involve a significant or expensive change. Simple jobs like repainting a shop front or seasonal window dressing may qualify. Each application will be assessed on its own merits and any job that will enhance the town’s character may qualify for grant aid.

Particular emphasis should be on works to enhance the visual appearance of the streetscape, more appropriate shop front signage and removal of neon signs, banners or other inappropriate signage.

If a number of owners/lessees of commercial properties wish to group together, to form a cluster and submit a group application, their application will be welcomed.
General Provisions of the Scheme

1. The scheme will operate in 2017.

2. Fully completed applications received by the Council on or before 31st March 2017 will be given priority but the scheme will remain open for the remainder of 2017.

3. Where Planning Permission is required for the proposed works; the grant will only be paid to applicants who have been granted planning permission.

4. It is each applicant’s responsibility to determine if planning permission is required and to seek said permission. The Council accepts no responsibility should a property owner / lessee (receiving a grant under the scheme) be held to account by the Planning Authority for a breach of planning regulations relating to works carried out and grant aided under the scheme. In these circumstances applicants will be asked to repay any grant claimed and to comply fully with the Planning Authority.

5. Grants are awarded entirely at the discretion of the Council.

6. If the Council approves a grant application a Grant Offer Letter will issue to the applicant.

7. The grant must be used for the purpose intended as outlined in the Grant Offer Letter.

8. Grants must be taken up within the period stated in the Grant Offer Letter unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with the Council.

9. Payment of the grant is made on the condition that the property will be maintained to a satisfactory standard for a minimum of three years after payment of the grant.

10. Payment will be made, in arrears, upon production of the fully completed Grant Claim Form together with the appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. copies of paid invoices).
Eligibility for Grant Aid under the Scheme

1. Grant aid is available to the owners/lessees of non-domestic commercial property within a town in County Kildare
2. Grant aid under the scheme is only available to existing businesses
3. In general grants will only be offered to independent businesses. Grants will generally not be approved for businesses that are franchises or are part of a national or international chain.
4. Grants will not be offered in respect of works already completed (as of January 2017)
5. Grants will not be paid in respect of properties included on the Derelict Sites Register
6. If the applicant is a lessee the lease must have a minimum of 2 years to run and the application must be accompanied by a letter of consent by the owner of the property. This requirement will not apply in the case of rolling leases where the lessee can prove continuity for a minimum period of 2 years.
7. Applicants must not be in arrears with the Council or must be able to provide evidence that they have entered into, and are abiding by, a scheduled payment agreement with the Council.
8. An application for grant aid, under the scheme, may be sought by a group of commercial property owners/lessees subject to all members of the group being eligible for the scheme on an individual basis.
9. It is the applicants’ responsibility to determine if planning permission is needed for the proposed works and to secure approval from the Planning Authority.

Ineligible Expenditure

The scheme will not support:

1. Improvements to residential property
2. Retrospective applications i.e. for work already completed or underway as of 1st January 2017
3. Structural repairs including re-roofing
4. Internal repairs and alterations
5. External security features such as CCTV systems
6. Recoverable VAT
### Amount of Grant

The Council recognise that in some cases significant improvements can be made through fairly minor and relatively inexpensive work; for example repainting a shop front. In other cases more significant levels of work are required. To reflect this, a minimum or maximum level of grant has not been set. The Council will look at each application on a case by case basis. The Scheme has a limited budget and operates on an application and appraisal basis. Funds, therefore, may not be available to support all applications received. Successful applicants will be expected to make a financial contribution towards the proposed works. In general, the grant offered will not exceed 75% of the estimated cost of the works.

### Application Process

An application for funding under the scheme must be submitted to the Council. The following information/documentation will be required:

- Fully completed application form
- Current colour photograph(s) of the premises
- A copy of relevant plans, designs and / or specification for the proposed works.
- Two estimates / quotations for the proposed works
- Evidence of ownership of the property or lease agreement

Applications for funding will be considered by an Adjudication Panel appointed by the Council.

The following criteria will be considered in the assessment of applications:

- The quality of the proposed works / changes to the shop front
- The impact on the street in which the property is located
- Preference for a cluster effect where a number of adjacent properties make a group application

If you require further information or have any enquiries please contact Gerard Mackey, Kildare County Council by email gmackey@kildarecoco.ie or by phone 045-980 500