



Repurposing Our High Streets (ROHS) Grant Scheme

Application guidance notes

Please read these guidance notes in full before starting your application form. Please note that these notes may change at any time. Any application submitted will be reviewed against the application guidance notes operating at that time.

Please email the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager ROHS@cheshireeast.gov.uk if you have any questions or anything you have read is unclear.

Section 1 - Introduction

This policy and guidance have been created to help you understand the aims of the Repurposing Our High Streets grant scheme before you make an application for funding to Cheshire East Council.

Please read the notes carefully and ensure you've understood them before starting to write an application form. Please also read the 'Application Requirements' document.

For details about how we use your personal information see our privacy notice on the council's website: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/website_information/privacy-notice/growth-and-regeneration-privacy-notice.aspx

Applicants can designate someone to speak on their behalf.

If you would like support to help you understand the guidance notes or complete the application form, please email the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager ROHS@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

You can also email the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager for help if:

- You would find it easier to speak about this grant over the phone. (Please tell us this in your email and include your telephone number).
- You would like to suggest a reasonable adjustment to the conditions of the scheme to make your application. (Please tell us a bit more about this in your email. We will support you if we believe that we are able to).
- You would like someone else to speak with us about this grant on your behalf. (Please tell us a bit more about the situation in your email).

Cheshire East Council welcomes applications from people of all levels of ability. We are committed to supporting all eligible businesses and organisations through the application process.



Grant awards are paid in arrears, following submission of a grant claim with evidence of eligible costs.

We will continue to work with successful applicants to monitor how the grant has been spent and offer further support to their business or organisation for up to three years from the date of the grant offer letter.

Section 2 – Why are the Council offering this grant funding?

Cheshire East Council wants to help reduce the number of vacant commercial properties in Crewe town centre. We will achieve this by funding businesses, sole traders, charities, CIC's, creative and cultural activities, and community groups who can strengthen and diversify these areas, boost footfall, and create new jobs.

The grant is funded by the Government's Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities through its Towns Fund, and supported by Crewe Town Board and managed by Cheshire East Council.

Section 3 - What are the eligibility criteria

There are a range of criteria that need to be satisfied for anyone applying for a grant under this scheme. This is to ensure that it:

- Is fair to all applicants
- Meets the scheme's objectives, for which funding has been awarded to the Council
- Demonstrates good use of public money.
- Prevents fraud or misuse of public funds

The detailed criteria are shown in the separate document 'Application Requirements'

All types of commercial properties can be considered eligible to receive funding for renovation and/or equipment, including retail, leisure, hospitality, offices and in some cases industrial or warehousing premises. Residential uses are not eligible.

Properties do not need to have traditional shop frontages or be on a ground floor to be considered eligible for this funding.

If you are unsure whether a property could be considered eligible, please contact ROHS Grant Scheme Manager.

Priority will be given to businesses that meet the objective of diversifying the mix of town centre business uses and generating social value for residents of Crewe.

Some types of organisations would **not** normally be eligible to receive funding, including:

- Any organisation subject to a franchise agreement that gives control over business decisions to a franchisor.
- Hairdressing and other beauty treatments, betting shops, pawn brokers, tanning salons, amusement or gaming arcades, tobacconists, vape shops, shisha bars, most fast-food outlets, shops or venues wholly or mainly offering material of an adult or sexual nature, businesses or



activities for political purposes or gain, for activities promoting religious beliefs or to proscribed organisations or organisations that support radicalisation or terrorism. **This is not an exhaustive list. The Council retains the right to add to it at any time.**

Section 4 - How much can I apply for?

The maximum grant award amounts usually range from £3,000 to £30,000. The amount you can apply for depends on the length of your lease (or the first 'break clause' date in your lease if you have one).

Applicants intending to occupy premises for less than two years may do so under the terms of a licence (this is negotiated between the applicant and the property owner).

Length of lease / date of first lease break	Maximum amount of grant available (excluding VAT)
28 days to 12 months lease/licence	Up to £3,000
12-24 months lease/licence	Up to £7,500
24-36 months lease	Up to £12,000
36-48 months lease	Up to £20,000
48 months or longer lease	Up to £30,000

In certain strategically located properties, the Council may agree to grants of up to £50,000.

If you are the owners of an eligible property committed to operating a business activity under the same ownership (in the same premises) you may also receive funding, but it will be more restricted - you will not be able to receive the full allocation due to the time-limitations of the grant and the need to avoid the risk of fraudulent payments). In the event of a successful application, you will receive retrospective funding for eligible costs every 12 months for each year that your business trades in those premises, up to the date that the grant scheme closes, i.e. the amount that you can receive is calculated by deducting the amount of time between the grant award and the end of the scheme (e.g. a grant approved in March 2024 will be eligible for two years of funding, i.e. £7,500) which will be paid retrospectively in two equal instalments in March 2025 and March 2026, if your business is still trading under the same ownership).

This grant can be used to fund structural works to a property and/or equipment your business needs to provide services and trade from the property (Capital Expenditure).



Here are some examples of costs that are eligible:

Cost type	Any specific conditions
Fees of a solicitor or chartered surveyor who has advised the applicant on matters associated with entering into a lease or licence agreement	Up to 10% of the total grant.
The extension, improvement, or modification of commercial/retail buildings.	Subject to further 'subsidy control' checks that any benefits to the property owner are eligible.
Works including replacing shop fronts, windows, doors, rendering, stone/brick cleaning, electrical works, floors and ceilings, etc.	Up to 100% of the total grant
New equipment/shop fittings such as: shelving, racks, storage and display units; food/refrigeration storage; food preparation equipment (ovens etc.)	Up to 30% of the total grant.
New equipment specific to your business/industry that is integral to your business providing services. (Examples include crockery for restaurants, hairdryers for salons)	Up to 10% of the total grant

The grant cannot be used to pay for VAT on any items. All claims must be exclusive of VAT.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, you must not start any works or purchase any requested equipment until you have received and signed your grant offer letter. We are not able to pay for any works already started or equipment already purchased before our grant offer is confirmed. In exceptional circumstances the Council may approve funding for costs incurred prior to a Grant Offer Letter being agreed, but any payment will only be after the Grant Offer Letter is in place.

The council, as a public authority, is subject to the UK Subsidy Control scheme, which applies limits on the level of funding any recipient may receive, or a third party (such as the property owner) may benefit from. When completing the Grant Application Form, you will be required to declare the sources and amounts of any funding they have received.

If you are unsure if your requested works or equipment are eligible, please email the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager ROHS@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Section 5 - How does the Council decide whether to award this grant?

Initial enquiries are made through the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager who will arrange to meet with you to discuss your eligibility, your proposal and help to identify suitable premises.

They will provide support to you in making the Stage 1 grant application. If any information you provide leads the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager to believe the you are not eligible to receive funding for the identified property, the application will not progress further. You will be given an explanation on why



the application has been rejected. In certain circumstances, where you can address the reasons for rejection, the applicant may be able to re-apply.

If the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager believes the you are eligible based on the Stage 1 grant application information, they will provide a link to the Stage 2 grant application.

You will then be asked to provide more information, such as the proposed property and what you expect to spend the grant on.

You will also be expected to check whether you need any other permissions, such as planning, building control or licences for your business activity.

If you are seeking more than £7,500 you will also be required to provide a credible Profit & Loss forecast for your business to demonstrate that your business idea is viable.

When you have provided all the necessary information, the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager will make a recommendation to the Council's Grant Decision Panel. The panel is made up of officers from the Council's Economic Development team and other services. Decisions made by the panel are final. There is no right of appeal.

Grants are discretionary, merit-based, and subject to the availability of funds. There is no automatic entitlement to funding based solely on the location of a property.

The council reserves the right to change the terms, conditions, and nature of the Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme at any time without notice.

Section 6 - What happens if I am successful in my application?

If your grant application is successful, you will be sent a Grant Offer Letter. This is a form of agreement or contract that sets out both specific and general terms and conditions relating to the grant award. The Grant Offer Letter needs to be signed by the applicant and Council before any payment can be made.

The terms of the Grant Offer Letter cannot be changed, unless in exceptional circumstances agreed by the ROHS Grant Decision Panel and ROHS Grant Scheme Manager.

A Grant Offer Letter can be made once you have secured a property. In some cases, the Grant Decision Panel can approve your application before you secure a property and extend an offer in principle if required, but no payment will be made until you've provided evidence of your lease and costs incurred.

Confirmed offers on Secured Properties:

The lease or rental agreement must have been signed no more than 12 weeks prior to us receiving your completed application form. In exceptional circumstances the Council may approve funding for costs incurred before a Grant Offer Letter has been agreed, but any payment will only be after the Grant Offer Letter is in place.



Offers in Principle:

We can confirm in writing if signing a lease or rental agreement on an eligible property would make you eligible for a grant award. Once you can provide proof of a signed lease or rental agreement, and have satisfied the other application criteria, we can then confirm our offer with a formal Grant Offer Letter.

Offers in principle secure the agreed amount of funding to your application for a maximum of 90 days from the date on our Grant Offer Letter. If you are unable to provide all necessary information within this period, we may withdraw our offer at our discretion and reallocate the agreed funding to other applicants.

Section 7 - If my application is successful what happens after I accept my grant award?

Once a formal Grant Offer Letter has been signed you will be required to keep in touch with the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager, providing monthly progress reports until you start trading from the property.

Once you start trading from your new property the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager will visit you within 1 month to speak with you about your business, your new property and the impact receiving this grant has had for you.

With your permission we will take photographs and record the audio of an informal interview with the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager. We may choose to produce a case study to be made publicly available on the council's website and used in our publicity and marketing outlets, as well as licenced to you for your own promotion.

If you do not want to be photographed or be the subject of a case study, please make the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager aware of this.

The informal interview with you will cover the following questions about how you have used your grant award to improve Crewe town centre and the local area:

- How has receiving grant funding helped you to trade and achieve your goals?
- How has your business brought something new to the local area?
- How does your business make Crewe a better place to live for our residents?
- What sustainability commitments has your business made in response to the climate emergency?

The ROHS Grant Scheme Manager will also work with you to decide on further questions specific to you and your business that highlight your passions and promote the message you want to share. In any publicity you use, you are required to reference the grant scheme and the Government's Towns Fund – you will be given more details on this.

The ROHS Grant Scheme Manager will talk to you about your business in general and ask if you have any needs that they are able to support you with, either 1-1 or by referring you to third party providers of professional business support.



You will be required to complete impact monitoring forms every six months for the duration of your lease or rental agreement, up to a maximum of three years.

Impact Monitoring Forms will ask for you to provide the following financial and employment information:

- Your businesses turnover for the previous 2 months.
- The amount of money you've invested in the new property in the previous six months.
- The number of paid employees, volunteers, and apprentices you've hired in the previous six months, their average working hours, and if they are Crewe residents.
- The number of jobs you've 'protected' in the last six months that were at risk of becoming redundant if you hadn't started trading from your new property.
- Whether your business is currently an accredited Living Wage employer.
- Your total number of paid employees, volunteers, and apprentices, their average working hours, and if they are Crewe residents.
- The social value that your business/organisation will generate, such as employment and training opportunities for local people, public health benefits, support for local voluntary and community sector organisations.

Section 8 - How is the grant paid to successful applicants?

This grant is paid in arrears. You must submit a claim to us which clearly relates to item(s) detailed in the agreed item list outlined in our grant offer letter. This must include copies of invoices to which the claim relates. We may request evidence that you have defrayed the payment, e.g. a copy of your bank statement. We aim to process claims and make payments as soon as possible, but allow up to four weeks for payment to your bank account.

The minimum amount we will process against any one claim is £500. If you submit a claim detailing eligible costs of less than £500, we will not authorise the payment of the claim as it costs the council money to process invoices. We have set these thresholds based on our assessment of the costs it is reasonable for the council to incur, and our judgement that viable organisations should generally have a minimum of £2,500 available cash flow at any given time.

If you believe your organisation has a viable model but you are unable to guarantee short term cashflow please contact the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager ROHS@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

We expect to receive invoices for all requested items within 90 days of issuing a formal Grant Offer Letter. If you experience delays with contractors or purchases that mean you will not be able to submit all invoices within 90 days, please make the ROHS Grant Scheme Manager aware of this. No grant payments will be made after 28/2/2026.



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Section 9 – Other funding conditions

The council reserves the right to withhold grant payments if works or equipment are not purchased or completed within the agreed timeframe, and to recover financial assistance in full or in part if the grant agreement conditions are breached.

If your lease is terminated or surrendered early, the Council will seek to recover an appropriate proportion of any grant awarded (e.g. if your business is awarded £20,000 as part of a 4 year lease but your business departs after 2 years, the Council will seek to recover 50% of the grant – i.e. £10,000).



Repurposing Our High Streets: Crewe town centre Property Owner Consent Form

For your business or organisation to qualify for a **Repurposing Our High Streets: Crewe town centre** grant, Cheshire East Council requires consent from the property owner or property manager, acknowledging the intent to lease the property to you for the period of time detailed in your application and confirmation of any works proposed to be funded through the grant.

I/We, {Property Owner(s)/Manager's Name(s)} _____, the
owner(s)/property manager(s) of the property located at:

do hereby grant (Applicant Name): _____

permission to complete the works as detailed in their application form at the above property.

Confirmation of Occupation

I can confirm the applicant has committed in writing to lease the space for the period outlined in their application, and that this lease has been agreed by both parties.

I can confirm the premises has not been in occupation for a period of 3 months. Please also state the dates that the property has been vacant or occupied for a meanwhile use/pop up.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email address: _____

For details about how we use your personal information see our privacy notice on the council's website:

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/website_information/privacy-notice/growth-and-regeneration-privacy-notice.aspx



Please submit this completed form as part of the application submission

Cheshire East Council Repurposing Our High Streets: Crewe town centre grants: Equality Monitoring

Cheshire East Council wants to ensure that our services are fair and that all potentially eligible applicants are able to access this grant scheme.

We are committed to understanding how accessible our business support interventions are to all leaders of our resident businesses.

We carefully monitor all the data provided in this form to ensure we are aware of areas of improvement that can be made. For this reason, the questions on this form are mandatory for all grant applicants. Answering them is a condition of being considered for grant funding.

You are able to select 'Prefer not to say' for all questions except your home postcode and business or organisation name, but the more information you supply, the more effective and inclusive our future support interventions will be.

Information provided will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The data you disclose on this form will not be made available to any member of the Grant Decision Panel until after we have made our decision on your eligibility for this grant. Personal and sensitive information will be used solely for the purpose of equalities monitoring to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

Please answer the questions below by ticking the boxes that you feel most describe you.

Required

1. What is your age?

- 16-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44



- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+
- Prefer not to say

2. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

3. What is your ethnic group?

- Arabic
- Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian/Asian British - Chinese
- Asian/Asian British - Indian
- Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian/Asian British - Other Asian Background
- Black/Black British - Caribbean
- Black/Black British - Somali
- Black/Black British - Other African
- Black/Black British - Other Black Background
- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White - Gypsy, Roma, Traveller or Irish Traveller
- White - Irish
- White - Other European
- White - Other White Background
- Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups - Asian & White
- Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups - Black African & White
- Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups - Black Caribbean & White
- Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other Mix
- Other Ethnic Group
- Prefer not to say



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