



Please read this document in full before starting your application . 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.

1 - Introduction

This policy and guidance document has been created to help you understand the aims of the Repurposing Our High Streets grant scheme. This document sets out what the grant scheme funding is for, who can apply, the eligibility criteria that must be met, the deadline for applications, how people must apply, and when they are likely to hear the outcome of their application.

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 UK Government's Towns Fund and is supported by Crewe Town Board and managed by Cheshire East Council.

3 - ROHS Eligibility Criteria

Businesses, organisations, sole traders, charities, CIC's can apply for this funding.

To apply for this funding, you must:

3.1 - Have a signed lease on an eligible commercial property which has been vacant for at least 3 months. The property must be within the Crewe Town Centre Boundary found [here](#).

3.2 - Have signed a lease or rental agreement for an eligible property within 12 weeks of submitting an application and have not yet started trading from the property.

3.4 - Be able to match the funding by 20%.

3.6 - Employ less than 249 people.

3.7 - Have a turnover of £50 million or less or ; £43 million or less on your balance sheet.

3.8 - Have a business bank account.

3.9 – If you are requesting more than £10,000 you must provide a credible Business Plan and 12 month Cash flow forecast.

4.0 - Be in good standing with the council include being fully paid up on any money owed to the council, such as council tax and business rates.

4.1 - Not be in administration, insolvent or subject to a striking off notice.



4.2 - Not reached maximum Subsidy control level over a 3 year period £315,000.

5- What organisations would not be considered eligible to apply :

5.1 - Residential uses are not eligible.

5.2 – 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.

6.0 Subsidy Control

Cheshire East Council intends to use the exemption of Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA), which allows public authorities to award low value subsidies without needing to comply with the majority of subsidy control requirements. MFA is capped at a financial threshold, meaning no recipient can receive more than £315,000 over three years. The applicant will be requested, as part of the application process to declare that the cap has not been met by completing a declaration to accept that any grant funding that is unlawfully claimed or paid in error will be subject to clawback.

7 - How to apply.

7.1 - Read and review **all** application guidance and documents before applying. We suggest you download a copy locally; you will be asked to declare that you have read and understand all grant guidance documents before applying.

7.2 - All applications should be made via the official grant approval site 'Ascendant' found [here](#). You may login with your existing details if you have used the grant approval site in the past or register for a new account to access applications.

7.3 - Details of successful applicants will be added to an approved list which will be subjected to upfront checks. This will include use of the Government Grants Management Function digital due-diligence tool, Spotlight, to enhance the due diligence checks carried out as part of the grant assessment process. In cases where potential fraud is detected, the Council will make use of tools available from the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) to verify the bank accounts of companies in receipt of these business grants.

7.4 - Any business caught falsifying their records or making any material misrepresentations to gain grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back, as will any grants paid in error.



8 – How much can I apply for?

8.1 - The maximum grant award amounts usually range from £3,000 upto £30,000. The maximum amount you can apply for depends on the length of your lease and the first ‘break clause’ date in your lease if you have one). i.e. if you have a 4 year lease with a break clause inserted at year 2 then you would only be able to claim a maximum of upto £12,000

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
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.

8.2 - The grants will contribute upto 80% of the total submitted eligible costs with the applicant being required to provide 20% match funding.

9 - Eligible Costs.

9.1 - Examples of Capital costs that are eligible:

- The extension, improvement, or modification of commercial/retail buildings (with relevant permissions)
- Works including replacing shop fronts, windows, doors, rendering, stone/brick cleaning, electrical works, floors, and ceilings, etc.
- New equipment/shop fittings such as: shelving, racks, storage, and display units; food/refrigeration storage; food preparation equipment (ovens etc.)
- Fees of a solicitor or chartered surveyor who has advised the applicant on matters associated with entering into a licence or lease agreement.

9.2 - The Grant cannot be used for the following:

- Salaries or wage subsidies.
- Equipment specific to your business/industry that is integral to your business providing services (examples include crockery for restaurants, hairdryers for salons etc).
- Acquisition of land/buildings either directly or indirectly.
- Consultancy, design, and statutory application fees.
- Professional fees.
- Rent payments.
- Servicing existing business debt.
- Marketing Campaigns.
- Maintenance of equipment or licences/subscriptions.



10 - Grant income received by a business is taxable. This grant will need to be included as income in the tax return of the business. Only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

11 - Unless otherwise agreed in writing, you must not start any works or purchase any requested equipment until you have received an offer in principle by the council. We are not able to pay for any works already started or equipment already purchased.

12 - In exceptional circumstances the Council may approve funding for costs incurred prior to an Offer in Principle being agreed, but any payment will only be made after evidence has been provided and the council has agreed in writing to release payments.

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

13.1 - 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.

13.2 - 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.

13.3 - There is no right to appeal, and the decision of the Council is final. The Council's interpretation of this document is at its own discretion, and it will be the final arbiter of the definitions contained within this scheme.

14 - What happens if I am successful in my application?

14.1 - If your grant application is successful, you will receive an offer in principle.

14.2 - An offer in principle can be made once you have secured a property. In some cases, the Grant Decision Panel can approve your application in principle 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.

15 - How is the grant paid to successful applicants?

15.1 - Grants are paid **retrospectively** once full payment of items can be evidenced through bank statements/invoices/receipts. You will need to upload evidence to the documents section of the Grant Approval System for review by the scheme manager. Payments **cannot** be made for Cash payments or Hire Purchase Agreements and Finance agreements.



15.2 - Once the Grant Scheme Manager or member of the ROHS team has visited the business premises to confirm works related to the grant have been undertaken we will release the grant to you. We aim to process claims and make payments as soon as possible but allow up to four weeks for payment to your business bank account.

15.3 - The minimum amount we will process against any one claim is £1000. If you submit a claim detailing eligible costs of less than £1000, 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.

15.4 - The grant covers the net cost of items for businesses that are VAT registered. However, the grant covers the gross cost of items for businesses that are not VAT registered at the time of expenditure and that do not expect to register for VAT within that current financial year.

15.5 - The application window closes November 2025 dependent on availability of the allocated overall budget.

15.6 - We expect to receive invoices for all requested items within 90 days of issuing an 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.**

19 – Other funding conditions

19.1 - 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

20 – Appeals

20.1 - There is no right to appeal, and the decision of the Council is final. The Council's interpretation of this document is at its own discretion, and it will be the final arbiter of the definitions contained within this scheme.

21 - Right to update this Scheme

21.1 - The Council reserves the right to update, change or withdraw this scheme without notification or warning , if the government updates or changes its guidance to us, or in the event of an error, omission, or unallocated funds.



22 - Monitoring and Record Keeping

22.1 - Local authorities are required to report regularly to Department of Levelling Up and Housing Communities on funding awarded under this grant scheme.

22.2 - 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.

22.3 - You will be required to complete impact monitoring forms every three months until the funding window closes.

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