



Town Centre Building Improvement Grant

Fife Town Centre Building Improvement Grant



Fife Council is committed to supporting town centres, and small businesses and property owners can now **apply for a small grant** to help improve or develop their property.

Grants will be to support capital works including external shopfront improvements, internal refits and upper floor conversions.

Grant awards will be made in the range of £6,000 up to a maximum of £10,000 per eligible property. The intervention rate is **90% of eligible costs**, excluding VAT.

When can I apply?

Before 31st March 2022. Demand for this grant will be high therefore applications should be submitted as soon as possible. Applications must be completed, and the **grant award offers confirmed and accepted by 31st March 2022. Project works must be completed before the 30th September 2022.**

The funding has been recently allocated from the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Fund to support town centre projects which stimulate the construction industry and support jobs during the current financial year 2021-2022. The Scottish Government has set rigid timescales and conditions on the funding that require monies to be legally committed and/or spent or projects commenced within financial year 2021-2022, and projects must be completed by the end of September 2022. If projects are not completed by the end of September, the Scottish Government may withdraw this funding.

Where?

Applications are invited for property located within one of Fife's key town centres or other local centre boundaries.

Who can apply?

Small Town Centre Businesses and owners of business property. To be eligible for consideration, an applicant business must:

- Have no more than 10 business outlets in a business chain across Scotland
- Have a cumulative turnover of less than £10,000,000

What kind of work can be grant-funded?

- **Shop Fronts**- the grant must be for physical works to shop frontages and building works (not repairs), on existing business premises. The work should endeavour to extend the useful life of the building. Examples include:
 - Replacement doors/ windows/ frontages/ fascias
 - Reinstatement of traditional features
 - Lighting and signage
 - Entrance flooring
 - Drainage improvements
- **Internal Refit** - the grant is for the internal refit of business premises where, as a result of Covid-19, the owner/occupier is modifying the business type to compete in the current economic climate or is a new business. Examples include:
 - New shop-fitting, such as Slat walling, Display units
 - Internal redevelopments, such as office space, room partitions, conversions,
 - Installation of new plant/ machinery & permanent features such as kitchen facilities.
 - Lighting
 - New flooring
- **Upper Floor Conversions** – the grant is a one-off financial contribution towards a change of use of town centre premises, which can be either vacant or occupied. Examples include conversion to:
 - Residential apartments
 - Offices
 - Holiday accommodation
 - Leisure & recreation e.g. gymnasium, gallery/ exhibition space
 - Nurseries & day care

What kind of costs are eligible?

- Improvement/ development works and materials
- Professional fees, such as architecture and design fees, noise assessments.

What costs are excluded?

- Planning fees
- Building warrant fees
- Essential building repair works
- VAT

What about Planning/ Listed Building Consent? Building Warrant? Will I need to apply?

All works/ materials should follow design guidance and must comply with planning, building and environmental health regulations and obtain any necessary consent(s).

We can help guide you through this process. Please 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

- **Shop Front/ External works** If you are changing the external appearance you will likely need planning consent, which carries a planning fee. If the building is located within a Conservation Area, additional planning conditions may apply. If the building itself is Listed, Listed Building Consent will also be required.
- **Internal Works (Refits & Upper Floor Conversions).** Significant alterations will need to be checked with Building Standards and the Public Protection Service, who will be able to advise on how to proceed and what consents are needed. Planning permission for a Change of Use may also be required.

Summary of steps to apply for the Grant:

1. **Enquiry:** If you have an idea for some external or internal improvement works, please get in touch with the Fife Council Town Centre Development Unit (**TCDU**). To help us confirm your eligibility, please provide:
 - ❓ a brief outline of the proposed works,
 - ❓ Your name and Full Address of the Property, including POST CODE
 - ❓ Send this by Email to: TownCentre@fife.gov.uk
2. **TCDU** will liaise with **Planning, Building Standards & Public Protection** for advice on the eligibility/ suitability of your proposals, and the need for consent, and feed back to you.
3. **Design & Scope of Works:** Proposals need to follow all the relevant guidance. It is recommended that you consider commissioning someone to design, detail and specify the work, ideally an architect or other professional.
4. **Obtain Two Quotes:** produce an outline design/specification to obtain a minimum of two quotes for the works.
5. **Contractors:** It is recommended that you use craftsmen with the appropriate skills and experience for the job.
6. **Statutory Consents:** Submit your application for planning consent/listed building consent/ building warrant if needed – allow at least three months for this.
7. **Apply:** At the same time, submit your application for a grant.
8. **Grant Offer:** If successful, an **Offer of Grant Letter** will be sent to you, along with a **Grant Acceptance Declaration**. The Grant Offer will detail when & how to claim your grant.
9. **Sign & return the Grant Acceptance Declaration**
10. **Work Starts:** When you have any necessary Statutory Consent(s), start the work
11. **Claim Interim Grant,** if this has been agreed.

12. Work Completed: When it has been completed to the satisfaction of Fife Council, you can claim the Final grant payment.

Where can I find further information?

Planning Applications

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

Building Warrant Applications:

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

To check if your **building is listed, or inside a Conservation Area:** You can check using this Interactive on the Fife Direct website: <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/planning-and-building2/built-and-natural-heritage/listed-buildings>

Planning Design Guides on matters such as shopfront design, materials and maintenance, advertisements & signage, are available at:

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

Building Standards Guidance:

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

The Town Centre Building Improvement Grant is operated by Fife Council, made possible by an award from the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Fund, 2021-22.