

GO FORTH STIRLING SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME INFORMATION PACK

These guidance notes are provided to help you understand the aims of the Shop Front Improvement Scheme and how you can make a grant application.

ABOUT

Shop fronts are the most conspicuous part of a building's façade. They make a big impact on the appearance of a town centre. They contribute to people's first impression of a town and their condition affects a town's image. High-quality shop fronts make a town feel more welcoming to locals and visitors, improve its image, contribute towards a stronger sense of identity, and, importantly, encourage a greater number of shopping visits.

The Go Forth Stirling BID shop front improvement scheme aims to improve shop fronts in selected areas as a means of supporting the growth of local businesses, improving the local environment and raising the image of the town centres amongst locals and visitors.

WHO CAN APPLY?

All businesses with premises located within the Go Forth Stirling BID area (see the map on page 3 for reference) who are looking to fix, upgrade, improve or beautify their shop frontage and shops that have been vacant for a minimum period of 6 months are eligible to apply to the fund. Lease-holders with a commercial shop-frontage in Stirling town centre have to have at least 3 years remaining on their lease.

A business will only be eligible if its BID levy payments are up to date.

If you're not a levy-paying business (businesses with a rateable value below £10,000) but located within the BID area, you're eligible to apply too as long as you join our voluntary levy scheme which costs £125 ([find more information here](#)).

Examples of eligible commercial premises include:

- Shops (including hairdressers, beauty salons, funeral directors, laundrettes, dry cleaners and post offices)
- Financial and professional services – e.g. banks, building societies, estate agencies, professional and financial services
- Restaurants, public houses, cafes and food takeaways

If you are unsure whether your business will qualify for a grant, you should contact the scheme administrator via admin@goforthstirling.co.uk.

Both tenants and building owners can apply.

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AVAILABLE FUNDING

The scheme will provide matched funding up to a limit of £500.

Should the applicant organisation receive funding from a different source (e.g. from the Stirling City Heritage Trust), the shop front grant will only cover 50% up to a limit of £500 of the difference.

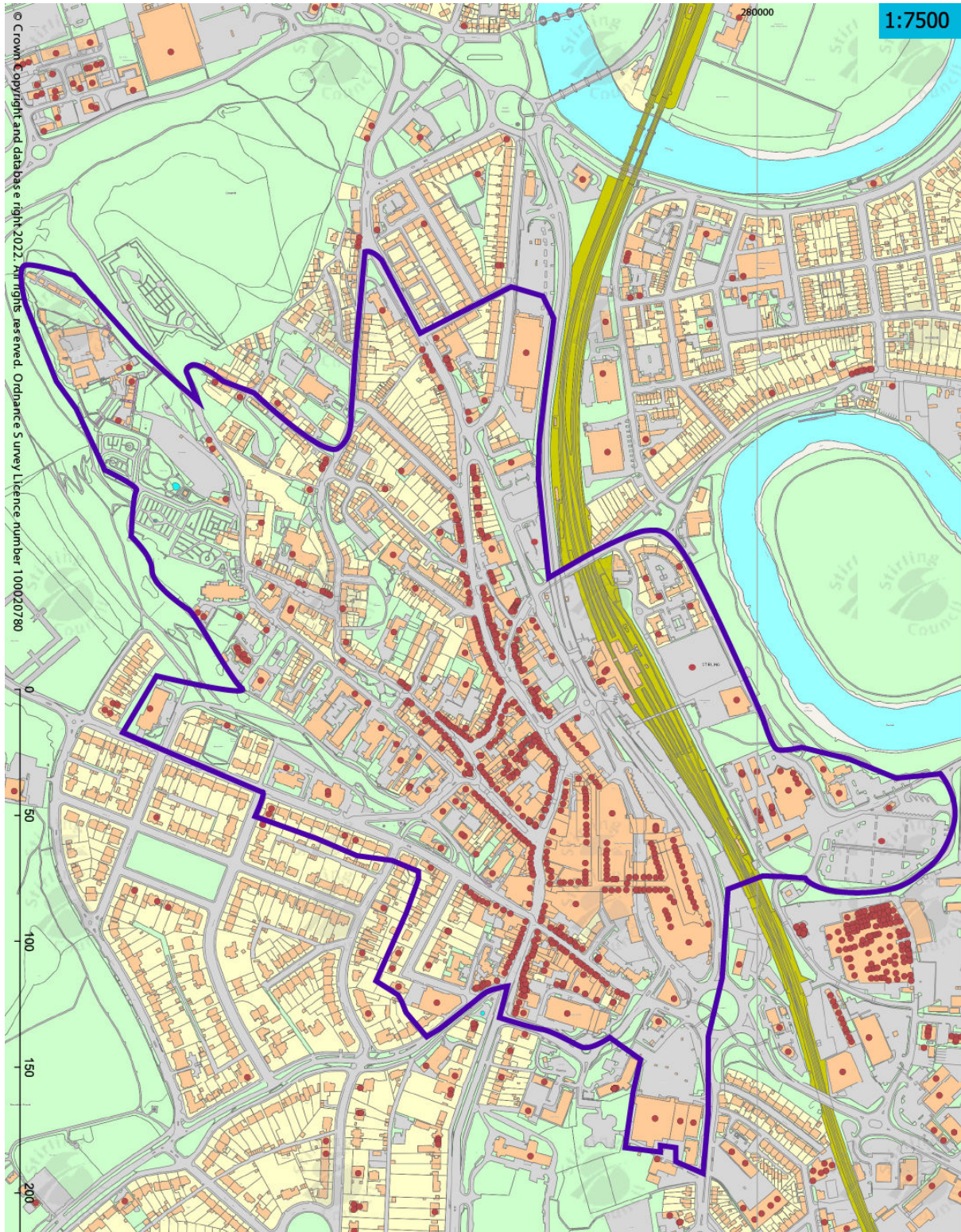
Grants are discretionary and subject to the availability of funds. The inclusion of a building within the eligible area does not give any automatic entitlement to a grant.

The scheme will not support works which have already been undertaken or any works which are started prior to a formal offer of grant funding being made.

The grant can only be used for business units located within the Go Forth Stirling BID zone.

There are a limited number of grants available so where the scheme is oversubscribed, a system of prioritisation will be put in place. In such cases, priority will be given to improvements that would be seen to be most impactful and to businesses that have not yet received any financial support from Go Forth Stirling BID.

Subject to the availability of funding, applications for funding must be made by 31 August 2024. (works must be completed within six months of approval).



Map of the BID area – list of streets can be found on the Go Forth Stirling [website](#).

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WHAT WILL THE SCHEME FUND?

- Repair and reinstatement of all or any part of a shop front fixture that is visible from the street, including the first and second floors of premises where they are used for commercial activities.
- Repainting of shop fronts.
- Repair and reinstatement of guttering and downpipes.
- Pedestrian access improvements compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- New, additional & improved signage
- Equipment for floral installations (planters, hanging baskets, fixings)

INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

The scheme will not support:

- Improvements to residential property, including residential property located above commercial premises
- Retrospective applications i.e. for work already completed or underway Structural repairs including re-roofing.
- Internal repairs and alterations
- External security features
- CCTV systems Recoverable VAT
- Live plants

LEVELS OF FUNDING

The scheme will provide grants of 50% but no more than £500 towards expenditure on works.

IN ORDER TO CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION WE REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING:

- Completed Application form
- Schedule of works – giving full details of the improvement works that you intend to carry out.
- Proof of ownership/lease for 3 or more years
 - If you do not own the property, you will need to provide proof that you have permission from the owner to carry out the works. The building owner must countersign your application (or give you a written agreement) to show that they have given permission for the works to be carried out.
- Copies of any statutory consent notifications (e.g. planning permission)

You MUST consult with the Stirling Council to establish a need for Planning Permission/ Listed Building Consent/ Conservation Area Consent and or Advertisement Consent.

(If consent is needed you will be required to obtain it before a final grant offer letter can be sent out to you).

- Photographs showing your current shop front
- Sketches or design proposals showing the proposed improvement

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Your business is likely located in a Conservation Area and it is important that any changes are appropriate and sympathetic to its character. The control over advertisements in these areas is stricter and **we require that any signs are in line with the Advertising Regulations and Historic Environment Scotland guidelines.** You should consult your designs with the Stirling Council, Historic Environment Scotland or the Stirling City Heritage Trust.

- Quotations obtained
- Proof of up-to-date levy payments

PROCESSING YOUR APPLICATION

We will make a decision on your application within three weeks of receiving a complete application. Applications will be considered by a panel of the Go Forth Stirling Board of Directors. All grant offers will be made in writing.

HOW WILL THE GRANT BE PAID

The Grant will only be paid directly to the business on submission of receipted invoices and upon satisfactory completion of the outlined work.

Claims of eligible expenditure incurred must be supported by a fully transparent audit trail traceable through invoices and bank statements (the improvements are not to be paid in cash).

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS ENTAIL?

1. Enquire about eligibility and submit the application form detailing proposed improvements, estimated costs and supporting evidence. We'll acknowledge receipt and let you know should any required documentation be missing.
2. Your application will then be processed and assessed by Go Forth Stirling and our Board of Directors.
3. Either a provisional grant offer will be made or alternatively the applicant will be advised that a grant will not be made available for their project. The reasons will be outlined for that decision.
4. If you are eligible for a grant, you will need to receive consent for the necessary statutory permissions (where required and unless already provided).
5. A final grant offer letter will be sent out once Go Forth Stirling has received and approved the following:
 - Drawings / Schedule of Work
 - Planning Permission / Advertisement Consent / Listed Building Consent / Building Warrant (where required)
 - Satisfactory quotes for the works from independent contractors
6. At the same time as accepting the final grant offer, you will be asked to enter into a legal agreement with Go Forth Stirling setting out the terms and conditions of the grant. A copy can be made available in advance.

7. Physical works for the property are expected to commence within two months and be completed within six months of acceptance of the final grant offer. Go Forth Stirling reserves the right to rescind the offer where these timescales are not met.
8. Grants will be paid upon production of invoices from contractors showing a detailed breakdown of cost and following satisfactory inspection of the works.
9. Following completion, you will be required to maintain the property to a satisfactory standard for a minimum of three years and acknowledge Go Forth BIDs support.

ARE THERE OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING?

Stirling City Heritage Trust's Traditional Building Repair Grant programme complements the Shopfront Grants Scheme and aims to preserve and enhance the unique character of the built environment. Grants are available for traditional properties within the Stirling City boundary which are members of the Traditional Buildings Health Check. For further information please contact the Trust on 01786 498462 or email rachael@scht.org.uk or visit <https://www.stirlingcityheritagetrust.org/projects-grants/>

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The agreement is between Go Forth Stirling and the Applicant(s) as named in the offer letter.
- Businesses/Organisations accepting grant offers from the Shop Front Scheme will be required to abide by and agree to the following terms and conditions:
 - The approval or refusal of a grant is at the absolute discretion of Go Forth Stirling and there will be no rights to an appeal process.
 - The applicant must inform Go Forth Stirling of any changes to the business or changes of business address and telephone number.
 - The grant must be used for the purpose intended as outlined in the Grant Offer letter.
 - The grant may not be used to fund retrospective work.
 - In the case of tenants payment of the grant requires the building owner's approval and furnishing proof of a minimum 3 year lease for the building.
 - The grant must not be used for improvements to residential property, internal repairs and alterations, external security features, CCTV systems or recoverable VAT.
 - The grant will only be paid to proposals which have been granted planning permission.
 - The grant will only be paid to businesses whose levy payments are up to date (where applicable).
 - The grant is made on the condition that the property will be maintained to a satisfactory standard for a minimum of three years.
 - Any grant must be taken up within the period stated in the Grant Offer Letter unless a prior arrangement is made.
 - Go Forth Stirling will pay the grant to the successful applicant in one sum when it receives evidence that the applicant has incurred the expenditure.
 - Claims of eligible expenditure incurred must be supported by a fully transparent audit trail traceable through invoices and bank statements.
 - Go Forth Stirling reserves the right to publish illustrations, photographs or other details of your project in promotional literature, social media, website and other documents associated with Go Forth Stirling initiatives.

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- o The results will be shared on social media tagging Go Forth Stirling who provided financial support.
- o The Applicant(s) are asked to show support to Go Forth Stirling and its projects such as Pubwatch and display Go Forth Stirling sticker.

HOW CAN I APPLY?

If you are interested in applying for a grant, please download and fill out the application form available at <http://www.goforthstirling.co.uk/shop-front-improvement-scheme> and post/email it to Go Forth Stirling team.

Email: admin@goforthstirling.co.uk

Postal address:

Go Forth Stirling – Shop Front Improvement Scheme
Room 2.13, Old Town Jail
31 St John Street
Stirling, FK8 1EA