



Town Centre Frontages Grant Programme

Enabling Grant - Guidance Notes (Eligibility and Criteria)

Please ensure you **read all of this document before** you submit your Enabling Grant Application.

If you need any help or have any questions about the grant criteria, please contact the Economic Development Team at business@rugby.co.uk

1.0 Introduction:

The Town Centre Frontages Enabling Grant is an opportunity for property owners and tenants to apply for funding to cover the costs of a designed and approved new frontage, or relevant improvement to a commercial shopfront.

This grant is designed to help towards the costs of the planning, design and consents phase, to ensure all components are in place, and are fully compliant for improvements prior to physical works (this grant **does not** cover the cost of physical works and changes to your frontage).

This grant is funded by Rugby Borough Council and is for a **maximum 10 businesses and up to £5,000 per** successful applicant. Please note this grant is currently only open to businesses with shop fronts on **Sheep Street and High Street, Rugby**. This grant will open to a wider town centre area in January 2027.

The aim of this grant is to help businesses and landlords move closer to improving the look of their shopfront, which will increase the curb appeal and overall character of Rugby town centre.

The grant process has been designed to help you through each stage with ease. The Economic Development Team will assist, help with advice and can guide you through the process.

1.1 Application timeline - the following deadlines apply to the grant

- Expression of Interest form closing date: **30th April 2026 at 4pm.**
- Enabling Application closing date: One month after Economic Development give you the enabling grant application link.

The enabling works must be completed by the **end of March 2027.**

2.0 Application process

The following flow chart gives a brief overview of the process for the whole grants programme. Success at one stage of the process **does not** guarantee success in the further stages of the process.



2.1 Expression of Interest

The first step is to complete the **expression of interest form**; the link to this can be found at [Town Centre Frontages Grant Programme: Expression of Interest – Fill in form.](#)

This form is to capture your details, make sure the building is eligible, and to learn about your proposed project (improvements to the frontage of the building).

The form will go to the Economic Development Team, who will contact you giving you the opportunity to discuss your project.

Costs already spent on eligible activity within the last year may be considered at the discretion of the Council, and upon any evidence and proof of expenditure. For example, you have an eligible building where you have already paid for pre planning advice and new signage designs, and this was 6 months ago. You can submit your expression on interest form to ask for payment of these costs.

2.2 Enabling grant application

The second stage is the enabling grant application form.

You will be given access to this if you are still eligible and only if you have engaged with the Economic Development Team.

The application form goes into more detail to capture costings, quotes, financial details, what planning/consents/designs/etc and any other information the Council needs to process the grant.

The application forms will be assessed and if your project is successful, you will receive a grant award letter which will have to be signed and returned within 5 working days.

If successful, you will need to provide relevant supporting documents (a list of these will be given to you before filling out the application form so you know what to expect).

The grant will be paid to you so you can pay the costs and invoices and proceed with the enabling work. The finished outcome is a compliant shopfront design with all permissions, consents and planning in place.

There will be a checklist to assist you with preparing for the enabling grant application, as well as support from the Economic Development Team.

2.3 Works grant application

The third stage of the town centre frontages grant programme is a **works grant**. This will be for the physical works to the building. This will be a competitive process with a new application needed. More details on this element of the grant programme will be released later in 2026 to successful enabling grant applicants.

You will only be able to apply for a works grant if:

- You have successfully completed the enabling grant process.
- You can evidence that you have already completed compliant preparation of works over a year ago (contact business@rugby.co.uk to discuss this).
 - For example, if you had planning permission completed 18 months ago and your project is compliant but have not started works.

Please note success at the enabling grant stage of this process does not guarantee you will be awarded the works grant.

If successful, this grant will require you to pay **20%** or more of the total cost and will be capped at maximum of £20,000 contribution from the council (if the works are over £20,000, you will have to cover more than the 20% contribution).

Examples of potential costs:

Total Cost of works	Cost to the Council		Cost to the business	
	£	%	£	%
£20,000	£16,000	80%	£4,000	20%
£25,000	£20,000	80% (Max from RBC)	£5,000	20%
£40,000	£20,000	50% (Max from RBC)	£20,000	50%
£100,000	£20,000	20% (Max from RBC)	£80,000	80%

3.0 Enabling Frontage Grant Details

3.1 Summary

3.1.1 Description	<p>The purpose of the enabling grant is to help businesses / property owners with the initial planning stage of improving the exterior appearance of their business or property. The grant is to fund any planning permissions, listed building consent, architect drawings, and any other permissions or consents, or design needed. This grant does not cover the physical works.</p> <p>Due to this being a competitive process, applications will be scored. Scoring will be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Compliance with Shopfront Design GuideB. Contribution to Town Centre Character and AppearanceC. Priority of the BuildingD. Feasibility and Value for Money <p>More detailed information on this can be found on the scoring criteria sheet at Town Centre Frontages Grant Programme - Rugby Borough Council</p>
3.1.2 Funding Type	Grant
3.1.3 Maximum grant per applicant	The maximum grant is £5,000 per successful applicant.
3.1.4 Grant Intervention Rate	<p>A maximum grant of £5,000 will be awarded.</p> <p>If the total cost of the works is over £5,000, the difference must be paid by you, the applicant. E.g. if the total cost of works is £5,600, the grant will be £5,000 and you will have to pay £600.</p>

3.2 Eligibility

3.2.1 Who can apply:	<p>To be eligible for a grant you must be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The registered owner of a building or have a repairing lease which covers the external fabric of the building with the lease running until at least 30th April 2028. (If the lease expires before this date, please contact us).2. The frontage of the building the application is for must be on Sheep Street or High Street, Rugby.3. Grants are for commercial properties only. Any form of residential property will not be considered.
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3.2.2 Eligibility:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any fees associated with required planning permissions and consents for the intention of improving the frontage of the building. 2. Any fees associated with required architect, agent or consultants for works of any planning, consents or design elements for the purposes of improving the frontage of the building. 3. The planning, consent, design and associated professional fees mentioned in 1. and 2. are for the purposes of preparation for improving the building, for example replacement of shopfront elements, such as signage, repairs and improvements to the external fabric of the building. Works could include repairs to the ground floor such as facing walls, windows and doors, rainwater goods, and any other elements of the external fabric of the building. 4. All proposals must be in accordance with the guidance outlined in the Council's Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which can be found in the application pack and at https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/shopfronts-design-guide-supplementary-planning-document-spd- 5. The preparation for the works must include the ground floor of the building and can include the facade (front) of the above floors. 6. Previous spend for relevant costs and invoices can be considered at the discretion of the council. This spend must have been within a year of your application and must be compliant.
3.2.3 Ineligible works (what the grant does not cover):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Properties not with a frontage on either Sheep Street or High Street, Rugby. 2. Any preparation of works solely above ground floor level (for example, you cannot just apply for the 1st floor, but you could apply for the ground floor and any floors above). 3. Any preparation works within the interior (inside) of the building. 4. Any costs or invoices that have been undertaken, but from over a year ago of you submitting your application form. 5. Physical works to the building. This grant is for the enabling phase, and not for the physical improvement works to be done to the building. (There will be a further grant available to apply for, in the future, for the physical works).

3.3 Scope

3.3.1 Your Proposal	The aim of this enabling grant is to fund any planning, consents, consultants, agents or architects for the design and permission of improvement works to the facade of the building. This grant helps to put everything in place before the physical works start.
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	<p>This is to assist with enhancing the character of Rugby Town Centre. The outcome is planning approval for a compliant shopfront. If this outcome is not achieved, the property cannot be put forward for a works grant.</p>
3.3.2 Quotes	<p>Formal quotes will need to be received by the applicant from the chosen supplier. This will be requested as part of the enabling grant application (not the expression of interest).</p> <p>The quote(s) from your chosen supplier, once seen by the Council, will be paid.</p> <p>Previous spend within a year on eligible items may be considered at the discretion of the Council and upon any evidence and proof of expenditure.</p>
3.3.3 Value Added Tax (VAT)	<p>VAT may be payable on eligible items of the proposed works. Where it cannot be recovered by you as the grant recipient (i.e. you are not VAT registered) you are able to claim VAT expenses as part of your application.</p> <p>Any costs that include VAT should be clearly identified on submitted quotations.</p>

3.4 Application

3.4.1 Applying	<p>The first stage of the process is to complete and submit the expression of interest. The Economic Development Team will then contact you to discuss your project. More information about the expression of interest can be found at Town Centre Frontages Grant Programme - Rugby Borough Council</p> <p>The Economic Development Team will then give you access to the enabling application form, if your project is eligible. Once the application is submitted, you will be contacted within 10 business days by the team to confirm the application has been received.</p> <p>The enabling grant application will be assessed. If your grant application passes the criteria, it will be scored by a panel. We will let you know as soon as possible if you are successful after the scoring and selection process.</p>
3.4.2 Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of Interests close on 30th April 2026. • You will have one month to complete the Enabling Grant application, after the Economic Development team give you the link to the enabling grant application form.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All enabling works paid for by the grant needs to be completed by the end of March 2027.
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3.5 Assessment Process

3.5.1 Application assessors	All applications will be assessed by relevant council officers to ensure compliance with grant eligibility criteria.
3.5.2 Consents and permissions	<p>You need consent of the landlord to apply for this grant.</p> <p>It is unlikely that many works will require compliance with Building Regulations. However, it is strongly recommended that advice is sought from the Warwickshire Building Control Partnership during the grant process.</p>
3.5.3 Application prioritisation	<p>This is a competitive process and a limited fund, therefore the Council may not be able to fund all eligible applications.</p> <p>Decisions on application will be made against the eligibility and scoring criteria.</p> <p>Once the full allocation of funds has been met, the Council will retain a “stand by” list of grant applications that will be considered, should any successful applicants become unviable, or if further funds become available.</p>

3.6 Grant Funding Arrangements

3.6.1 Grant Agreement	<p>Successful grant applicants will enter into a funding agreement (through signing the grant acceptance form) with the Council. If we approve your application and offer you a grant you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If, as the grant recipient you are a tenant, you need to provide confirmation that the landlord/freeholder has given permission for the planning/consent/works and that they would consent to the physical works being completed in the future. Ensure the works are completed in a timely manner and by March 2027. Read and abide to the shopfronts design guide supplementary planning document. Provide evidence of how grant money has been spent, if requested by Rugby Borough Council. The grant money must only be spent on what it is intended for and what has been outlined and therefore approved in your application.
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	<p>6. If there are any changes due to unforeseen circumstances, you must tell the Economic Development Team as soon as possible. This may be required in writing.</p> <p>7. If grant money is not spent for its intended purpose the project will not continue, and Rugby Borough Council may require the money to be returned (claw back).</p>
3.6.2 UK Subsidy Control	<p>Applicants will be asked to declare whether they or any businesses / organisations they are formally linked with have received any funding from EU or other public sources, in the last 3 years. You must list this on the expression of interest form, and if you have received more than £315,000 in the last 3 years, you will not be able to apply.</p> <p>To find out more about the - UK Subsidy Control regime</p>
3.6.3 Grant Payment	<p>If you are successful and chosen for the grant, a grant acceptance form will be sent to you. To accept the grant, you will need to read, sign, and return a copy of the acceptance form to the Economic Development Team within 5 business days (Monday – Friday). If we do not receive this from you, we reserve the right to withdraw the offer.</p> <p>After you have accepted, a grant payment for the agreed amount will be issued to you as soon as practicable.</p>

3.7 Supporting Information

3.7.1 Data Sharing	<p>The Data Controller is Rugby Borough Council. The data you provide on the application form will only be used in connection with funding and services provided by the Borough Council. By signing the application form you are agreeing that any financial assistance granted by Rugby Borough Council, will be repayable on demand or future payments not made if any information provided is found to be incorrect.</p> <p>By submitting your application, you are consenting to the council verifying your information against other records it holds (for example, business rates records) to secure the effective financial management of the council. Where you are an individual or individuals, please note that the council is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018 (the “Act”) and the information in this form will be used for the purposes of assessing your application and cross-checking with other information the council holds relating to you, in accordance with the provisions of the Act.</p>
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	<p>For our full privacy notice please see: https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/privacy#business-support-and-economic-development</p>
3.7.2 Support in completing your application	<p>If you need more information or help with completing your grant application, email us at business@rugby.gov.uk and we will arrange a suitable time to chat with you. If you have any questions, please reach out and ask.</p>
3.7.3 Useful Information	<p>There is an information sheet for the expression of interest that you will have to read prior to submitting your expression of interest form, this has easily digestible information for the main points about the grant, whether you are eligible, and what you need before applying.</p> <p>A further checklist will be shared with you for the enabling grant application through your communication with the Economic Development Team.</p>
3.7.4 Accessibility and Inclusion	<p>We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and are committed to making our application process accessible and fair to everyone. This includes making reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability or a long-term condition and face barriers applying to us; we can assist with filling out the online application with you.</p> <p>A paper copy of the application form can also be requested for anyone that cannot access or cannot use the online application. You can contact us at any time to ask for guidance whilst the fund is available. <i>We recommend</i> you contact us at least 15 business days before this grant's closing date to allow us to put the most suitable support in place. The support we can provide may be limited if you contact us close to the grant closure deadline.</p> <p>You can contact us at the following: E-mail: business@rugby.gov.uk; Call: 01788 533533; Visit: Rugby Town Hall, reception.</p>