

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Argyll and Bute Shopfront Improvement Grant 2021/22

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is considered to be a 'shopfront'?

A shopfront is a street level shop frontage that is public facing and the trading frontage of a business, and which would usually be used to showcase goods. Non-retail businesses, including restaurants, hotels and charitable organisations, are also eligible to apply, where this description can be met. Businesses within industrial estates are not eligible to apply.

A shopfront does not include the amenity space/area of ground in front of a unit or any adjoining areas, such as boundary walls, nor does it include the upper floors of a building.

### Do I require planning permission or any other statutory consent?

**Planning permission** is required for any alteration that materially affects the external appearance of a building, including canopies/awnings and external security measures (and painting within Conservation Areas).

**Listed Building Consent** (separate from planning permission) is required for any alterations to a listed building which affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

It should be noted that many proposed signs will require **Advertisement Consent**.

You are responsible for obtaining any consent(s) required. Please see the link to Argyll and Bute Council's Planning web pages as follows:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/pre-application-guidance>

**It is crucial that you seek the appropriate advice from the Planning Department to satisfy yourself that you do or do not require consent prior to making an application for grant.** You will have to show in writing that you have discussed your proposal with the relevant departments.

### How do I work out if my shopfront is part of a listed building?

You can search for your address to find out whether your property is listed via the following link:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/>

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Argyll and Bute Shopfront Improvement Grant 2021/22**

#### **I am only proposing a repair to my shopfront. Will I require to discuss this with the Planning Department?**

If your shopfront is part of a listed building, even a small repair requires to be given careful consideration to ensure this is sympathetic to the character and matches materials used in the historic property. Having said that, it is unlikely if you are proposing a truly like for like repair of good quality that you will require consent, but you are encouraged to confirm this by [seeking the advice of the Planning Department](#).

#### **Please note that like for like means exactly as is.**

The use of non-traditional or gimmicky style shopfronts/architecture will be discouraged in Conservation Areas and is unacceptable for listed buildings.

When considering your application we will be looking for the quality of the repair or replacement to have been given full consideration.

#### **Do I need an agent/architect?**

If you are required to apply for planning permission, advertisement consent or listed building consent you will be required to submit drawings to the Planning Department. You are advised to seek the advice of the Planning Department in relation to what would be suitable to inform your application.

If you are undertaking small works of repair to mend a component of your shopfront a photograph overlaid with a description of the works you would hope to achieve will be sufficient for the shopfront application. If however you are looking to make a more substantial repair, or are planning to add to or replace any element of your shopfront, a scale drawing will be required. If you are proposing to add a canopy for instance, a scale drawing would be required.

If we feel that there is insufficient information to inform your application, we will come back to you with a specific request.

#### **What alterations are grant eligible?**

Please refer to the Shopfront Improvement Guidance Note for a full list of what is and is not eligible for grant.

It should be noted that original 19thC and early 20thC shopfronts should be retained and restored wherever possible, and there will be a presumption against removal/alteration of surviving shopfronts that contribute to the architectural quality, or historic interest of the town centre.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Argyll and Bute Shopfront Improvement Grant 2021/22**

You are reminded that we will be looking for assurances that repairs and replacement elements will be of good quality. Please note that replacement elements in upvc are ineligible for grant.

#### **I would like to apply towards the cost of re-painting my shopfront. Do I require to obtain Planning Permission for this?**

If you have a property that is situated in a conservation area, you are required to make an application for Planning Permission.

Argyll and Bute's list of conservation areas can be found via the following:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/conservation-areas>

Please seek the appropriate advice from the Planning Department.

#### **Are professional fees eligible for grant?**

Yes, the grant can be used towards the cost of architect, surveyor structural engineer and agent fees.

The grant can also be used towards statutory consent fees, including planning permission, advertisement consent, listed building consent and building warrant fees.

#### **What paint colours are likely to be deemed appropriate?**

You are encouraged to consider the look and feel of the streetscape when considering colour options. You are encouraged to consider how your colour choice would enhance the streetscape. We would hope for a range of colours within the townscape. A sensitive colour palette of a heritage type (usually chalkier and matt in appearance) is therefore promoted and you are expected to state what the final result will look like in your application. Please provide the British Standard Colour Chart number and where this is to be applied to masonry, a suitably breathable masonry paint should be used.

If successful for the grant, we strongly recommend that you buy and test a paint colour sample, prior to purchasing the paint.

Please seek the appropriate advice from the Planning Department.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Argyll and Bute Shopfront Improvement Grant 2021/22**

#### **Are canopies and awnings eligible for grant?**

Traditional flat projecting canvas sunblinds, which are hardwearing and fully retractable are eligible for grant.

Proposals for Dutch canopies, designed with a curved profile and enclosed ends, are ineligible for grant. This is due to their size, shape and projection, which can often make them appear intrusive thus creating difficulties of integrating them into a historic town centre.

The style/design of the proposal should be sympathetic to the building and its existing features and should be restricted to the width of the individual window. The size of the canopy should also respect the proportions of the shopfront.

The Council will favour the use of traditional sunblind materials, such as woven materials or canvas, in preference to PVC or plastic; in neutral rather than bright colours.

Planning consent is likely to be required.

#### **If my application is successful, when will I receive a grant contract?**

You will receive a grant contract within 4 weeks of your application having been determined. You will be expected to sign and return a copy for our records.

In cases where you are awaiting consent from the Planning Department or Building Standards, the grant contract will include a clause to only commit funds should the relevant consent(s) be granted.

#### **If I am successful in securing grant, when can I commence my project?**

If you are successful in securing grant, and have all required consents approved and in place, you will be provided with a 'permission to start' letter advising you that you can begin works and start to claim your grant.

#### **If I am successful in securing grant, when can I request my first payment?**

You will be provided with information on how to claim alongside your 'permission to start' e-mail. Grant will be paid retrospectively on receipt of evidence to show that the work has been undertaken and paid for. Any works commenced before permission to start is given will not be eligible for grant.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Argyll and Bute Shopfront Improvement Grant 2021/22

#### Can I undertake works myself?

Yes, if you feel comfortable and experienced enough to undertake the work yourself to a high quality, you can make an application for grant towards the cost of goods only.

#### How do I invite contractors to quote?

You should seek written prices from contractors, and ensure that responses are provided on headed notepaper, or e-mails include relevant quality standard information.

Be specific about what it is you hope to achieve with your project to ensure the contractors fully understand what it is they are being against to quote for, and send the same specification to each contractor to ensure a fair process. Ask the contractors to send you a price breakdown and to give you an idea as to how they would go about undertaking the works, including when they would be able to fit you into their schedule. It may be that you would rather go with a higher price if the contractor is able to undertake the work earlier than the others for instance.

You might like to ask the contractor to follow the following example:

*INVITATION TO QUOTE– To Be Returned to [address] by [date]*

*[Business Address]*

*We have read the specification of work and the associated drawings (where required) referred to therein, and by returning this quotation confirm that we are willing to execute the whole of the said works described for the tender sum of:*

*[£value]*

*Broken down as follows:*

*[Cost breakdown of all items]*

*Please provide any Trade/Quality marks*

You are reminded that:

- **2 quotes** are required for works up to £999; and,
- **3 quotes** are required for works with a value of £1,000 and over.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Argyll and Bute Shopfront Improvement Grant 2021/22**

#### **Can I apply for the grant, even if I applied to a previous round and was successful in obtaining a grant?**

Yes, you can apply for a grant from this funding round, however it must be for works that were not previously funded.

Please note that applications from businesses within Campbeltown, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Oban and Rothesay will not be considered under this round of funding.

#### **If I don't manage to apply by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021, will there be another round of funding?**

This is a first come first served fund. If there is any residual funding beyond 17<sup>th</sup> December, a final round will be advertised. Please keep an eye on the [shopfront improvement grant webpage](#) for updates.

#### **How will I know if there is still grant left in the pot for my town?**

There is £65,000 in total. This will be divided equally between the four council administrative areas. The remaining funds for each administrative area will be updated on a weekly basis. As soon as funds are fully committed for each area, this will be announced on the shopfront improvement webpage. Please therefore keep an eye on the [shopfront improvement grant webpage](#) for updates.

#### **If I am successful in securing funding, when should I start and finish my project?**

Your project can commence as soon as you are in receipt of your 'permission to start' email, and must be complete by **30<sup>th</sup> June 2022** to meet the conditions of the grant and to be able to draw down your grant in full.

You can draw down your grant after works are complete until **31<sup>st</sup> August 2022**.