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# Shop Unit Business Grant

## Application Guidance





## **Part 1: Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Shop Front Unit Project is a £330,000 project which is delivered in Rotherham and is supported, and part funded by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK Government's agenda. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

### **1.2 The Aim of the Project**

To support businesses within set High Street locations in Rotherham to improve their Shops internally and externally through the provision of capital grants. This will lead to aesthetic improvements of High Street locations

- Maximum grant amount £25,000
- No match funding up to first £10,000 – there will be an expectation that any project that exceeds the £10,000 limit, the applicant will match fund the remaining balance. For example, if the project is £14,000, there is a remaining balance of £4,000. The applicant will be expected to fund £2,000.

Grants must be used exclusively for capital expenditure

Whilst the project is initially looking to improve eligible High Street areas, priority will be given to those applicants that can best demonstrate how the investments will have a positive impact on the local area and the creation of potential new employment opportunities in Rotherham.

### **1.3 How Will the Project Work?**

A Key Account Manager / Specialist Business Advisor from RMBC will work with you to review your business needs and support you in applying for the grant.

The project will run as a competition with an Open Call inviting businesses to apply for grants up to £25,000 to support capital investment projects that will lead to clearly evidenced improvements within an eligible High Street locality.

Businesses that have been trading for more than 12 months can apply for grants over £5,000. Grants are available towards capital investment (updating outside of the premises, equipment and the fit-out of premises)

Businesses that have been trading less than 12 months are still able to apply for the grant; however, they will need to have accessed Launchpad program support and provide a comprehensive business plan detailing plans for growth.

The call will remain open until the funding has been allocated.

### **1.4 Examples of Projects**

The funding is allocated to High Street areas in Rotherham Town Centre, Maltby Town Centre, Swinton Town Centre, Dinnington Town Centre and Wath-Upon-Deane Town Centre, and is designed to improve these areas aesthetically and allow businesses to invest in improvements and enhancements.

If you are unsure if your project would be suitable for this project, please contact your relevant local authority who will be able to provide clarification.

## **Shop Front Projects**

- A retail or hospitality business that has identified that the exterior could do with smartening up redecoration or the installation of new furniture. Repair and reinstatement of any part of the Shop Front fixture that can be seen from the street
- A retail or hospitality business that has identified that they would like to invest in some fit-out internally that will enhance their business offering
- A retail or hospitality business that has identified improvements to accessibility



### Eligible Expenditure

Grants will be offered to help fund solutions for SMEs that will provide significant business benefit and growth. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Capital cost of internal and external refurbishment including shop front improvements.
- Repainting in suitable colours
- External signage and external lighting
- Fitting Out
- Accessibility improvements

### Ineligible Expenditure

Below is a list of excluded costs, this isn't an exhaustive list, and the Program Management Team have the discretion to omit costs if they deem them ineligible and/or not within the scope of the project.

- Any retrospective costs incurred prior to the issuing of a grant funding agreement.
- Reimbursement of goods/services already purchased prior to the date of a grant offer letter
- Repayment of existing loans or debt
- Window Display Equipment
- Security grilles or security glazing
- Recoverable VAT
- Repairs to windows or any other part of the premise

**Please note that Funding can only be issued to achieve 'Additionality' i.e. to add value.**

## 1.5 How Do I Apply?

To apply, you must contact RMBC. The contact details are:

Rotherham Investment and Development Office - Tel 01709 331133

- [info@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:info@rotherham.gov.uk)

## Part 2: Completing the Application Form

Your Key Account Manager or Business Advisor will provide a copy of the BPD-C-09 Application Form for completion to apply for this grant.

### 2.1 Stage 1 - Eligibility Criteria

You must demonstrate that your business/project meets all the eligibility criteria. Any projects that do not meet all the eligibility criteria will not progress to Stage 2 - Application. Please enter Yes or No in the boxes provided (Stage 1 - Page 1 of the Application form).

- Q1 The funding is for the benefit of businesses in Rotherham.
- Q2 The focus of the funding is to support Small and Medium sized Enterprises, not large organisations. For the definition of a Small and Medium sized Enterprise please use this link  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcd0-small-to-medium-sized-enterprise-sme-action-plan/small-to-medium-sized-enterprise-sme-action-plan#:~:text=An%20SME%20is%20any%20organisation,is%20in%20the%20below%20table.>
- Q3 The project will provide grant funding up to a maximum value of £25,000. If the project exceeds £10,000, then the applicant will be expected to 50% match fund the remaining balance. For example, if the project was £14,000 in total, the project would fund the first £10,000, and would then 50% match fund the remaining balance of £4,000, meaning the applicant would pay £2,000 and the project would fund the further £2,000. To ensure the project can proceed you have to confirm whether you have private finance available, either your own from a bank or other commercial finance. Your project must be paid upfront and in full to your supplier before you can claim the grant amount from us.
- Q4 The purpose of UKSPF is to provide added value and ensure there is true need for the grant therefore within the application form you will need to evidence viability of the project and the need for grant support.
- Q5 Financial support provided to your company through the project is considered Subsidy Allowance as part of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/23/enacted>). It is your responsibility to declare compliance with the Subsidy Control Act. Under the scheme rules your company at group level may not receive more than £315,000 during the elapsed part of the current financial year and the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.
- Q6 You will need to confirm that the project you are seeking to fund has not yet commenced.
- Q7 You will need to confirm that your business is not in financial difficulty. If the answer is yes, you will need to speak further with your KAM/Business Adviser as we are unable to award a grant to businesses in financial difficulty.
- Q8 For property related 'fit out' costs on leased premises, you need to confirm you have the approval of the landlord and your lease doesn't expire before the completion of your project.
- Q9 Planning consent - If the grant project requires planning to be approved before you can go ahead with the purchase, you must ensure that it fits with the timescales for this grant, as all projects are to complete by December 2025.
- Q10 For grants over £5,000, your business needs to have been trading for over 12 months so that you can provide a baseline. If business has been trading less than 12 months, you must be accessing support through Launchpad program and provide a business plan to support the application.

## 2.2 Stage 2 - Completing the Application Form

Please use the information in this section to answer each question in the application form as fully as possible.

### Applicant Details

Please provide details of your business, including details of the primary contact for the project. This should be the person the Project Administrators will contact with any questions regarding the application. The application must be signed off by a director of the business, and the Grant Offer Letter must also be sent out to and signed by one of the directors.

Parent Company. This project is only available to SME's. If your business is owned 25% or more by another business, you need to state this in the application form so we can check SME status.

All sections of the application should be fully completed.

### Company Financials & Forecasts

Please provide a summary of your company financials and forecasts covering a 3-year period, this will include the previous financial year, current financial year and next financial year forecast.

### Subsidy Allowance

The UKSPF Business Productivity and Digitisation Grant project is part funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Council considers that financial and non-financial support given to your company (at company group level) as part of this project will be a subsidy for the purposes of section 2 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ("the Act").

Under the Minimal Financial Assistance ("MFA") rules contained in section 36 of the Act, the Council and other public authorities are allowed to award low value subsidies without needing to comply with the majority of the subsidy control requirements. MFA has a financial threshold so no organisation\* can receive more than £315,000 over the applicable period. The applicable period is:

- The elapsed part of the current financial year (i.e., from 1 April 2023), and
- the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

The £315,000 limit over this time period includes all MFA awards under the Act, but also:

- i. any previous subsidy your organisation has received which was provided under the 325,000 Special Drawing Rights allowance set out in Article 364 of Chapter 3 of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement ("TCA")
- ii. any previous de minimis State aid your organisation received under any of the EU Regulations listed in section 42(8)(c) of the Act
- iii. any SPEI financial assistance awards under section 38 of the Act within the applicable period above.

You must combine all of the above support together (at company group level) when assessing your organisation's eligibility to receive MFA support.

### Project Details

Please provide a brief summary about your business and an overview of the project. This should include an explanation of the challenge your business is facing and provide an explanation of what the grant will be funding.

If the address where the project will be undertaken is different to your registered/trading address, please confirm the project location. This grant will only fund projects that are located in Rotherham.

Please provide anticipated start and finish dates for the investment being supported by the grant. It would normally be



expected that this would be less than three months from receipt of your Grant offer Letter and that you will enter into a contract with your supplier within 2 months of receipt of the grant offer letter. The latest completion date we can accept is December 2025.

Please state the total project cost and the amount of funding being requested. The grant investment must attempt to make clearly evidenced improvements.

## Supplier Details

In this section, please give details of your preferred supplier/s for your project and their costs. You must attach a copy of each of the quotes to your application.

The basis of procurement with regard to products or services supported by grant award from this program is one of 'business choice'. This means that you as the business decides who your preferred supplier is.

You will only be required to provide a copy of 1 quotation per goods/services to be purchased, for your grant request to be considered. However, as a matter of good business practice we would suggest that you may want to seek alternative quotations to ensure you are going to get the best value.

It is both the business and Program Management team's responsibility to ensure that best value is being obtained from public funds and the team do reserve the right to seek further information from you to confirm your decision.

The quotations of the preferred suppliers must be adequately detailed and fully align with the information on your Grant Application form.

It is not permissible for any arrangement to be made between yourselves and the provider organisation which may be seen as any form of 'payment offset' for example credit notes or related financial transactions which in any way reduces the Gross Cost of the products or services, or in any way reduces the net contribution you are making to these costs.

The applicant is required to highlight whether the supplier is located in South Yorkshire and is encouraged where possible to seek suppliers from the region. This is to try and retain investment in the region, boosting economic growth.

You must provide details of any conflict of interest with the suppliers you have chosen. Please note that relationships between the applicant and supplier are checked and grants will not be paid to applicants who are linked enterprises of the supplier(s).

For successful grant applicants, there is a requirement to demonstrate full payment for the project before a claim can be submitted.

Any form of lease or hire purchase agreement will not be acceptable.

## Questions

### Q1 The Challenge

In this section you need to:

- 1a - Detail the business challenge the project is trying to overcome.
- 1b - Outline the need for the grant; how the grant will add value to the business and why grant funding is needed, with reference to the viability of the project with or without grant funding.
- 1c - Explain what you will purchase with the grant.
- 1d - Explain how the investment is aligned to the companies overarching growth strategy and/or productivity plan.

Examples of the types of challenges you have may include:

- Improvements to interior/exterior of premises
- Fit-out improvements.



- Improvements to accessibility.

Within the application you will need to explain why grant funding is needed, with reference to the viability of the project with or without grant funding. Support will only be provided to projects that demonstrate:

- the project will not proceed without grant support; or,
- grant support will allow a project to proceed within a shortened timescale; or
- the project will not proceed in South Yorkshire without grant support; or,
- grant support will enable a project to proceed on a larger scale, at a higher level of quality and/or with greater impact.

The grant is only payable for costs incurred after the application is formally approved.

The grant is only payable to the applicant business and upon production of evidence that costs have been incurred by the same business (not another business in a group structure for example). Any costs which have not been incurred by the applicant business will be ineligible.

Any expenditure which is deemed ineligible will not be paid, and any offer of grant will be withdrawn.

### Q3 Outcomes & Impacts

3a - please provide details of how the project will impact on employment opportunities. For those jobs being created or safeguarded by the investment please provide job titles, salaries and when the roles are expected to be created/safeguarded.

For clarification, the definition of a job created / safeguarded is as follows:

- Jobs Created (FTE) - The number of new, permanent, paid FTE jobs created following support. This includes both part-time and full-time jobs, which should be recorded relative to full-time equivalent (FTE). New means it should not have existed before intervention.
- Jobs Safeguarded (FTE) - A safeguarded job is a permanent and paid job that was at risk prior to support being provided, and which the support helped the business to retain.

3b - This section measures the impacts of the investment on the business specific indicators turnover and profit,.

### Q5 If you have previously received a Business Productivity, Digital Innovation Grant or Rural Grant since 2020, which was administrated through one of the teams in South Yorkshire, please tell us what this was for and how this new project differs.

Please provide a summary of your previous projects so that we can differentiate between those and your new project. Please also give details where you have a grant offer letter but have not yet claimed.

## 2.3 Application Form Submission

Once you have completed the application form, email it to your Key Account Manager / Business Advisor together with the necessary documents.

The application form must be signed by the Director/Owner/Chief Executive and an email address for that person must be provided as the offer letter is sent via Adobe for electronic signature and must be received by the person who has the authority to sign on behalf of the company.

Quotes from suppliers, any planning permission required and permission from the landlord for any improvements if you are not the premise owner must also accompany the application.

Applications that pass stage 1 will be assessed competitively based on the information provided in the application form.

You will be notified of the outcome by your Key Account Manager or Business Advisor.



## 2.4 Timescales

Your allocated Business Advisor will work in conjunction with the Rotherham Project Lead and review your application form. Your Business Advisor will reply to you directly to let you know if you have been successful or not. It is estimated to take up to 2 weeks for the project panel to assess an application.

It is essential that you provide all necessary information and that you fully explain the reason for the grant and what it will be used for. Any missing information can delay your application.

If your application is successful, you will receive a formal grant offer letter. This will inform you how to proceed and claim the grant. It is estimated to take up to 10 days to process a grant offer letter after the panel decision.

Once you have purchased the goods/services in line with your grant offer letter, you will submit a grant claim to evidence the purchase including an invoice and bank statements.

It can take up to 1 month to process your claim and pay the grant to you, and any missing information can delay the payment of the grant.

You must not place an order with your chosen provider, commission or purchase any goods/services prior to receiving the offer letter, as grant payments cannot be made retrospectively against activity that has already occurred.

**Projects must complete by December 2025 and claims must be submitted by the end of January 2026. Failure to comply is likely to result in your grant being withdrawn.**

## 2.5 Document Retention

You will be required to retain documentary evidence of the support received, and to provide copies of this evidence to the Programme Management Team to claim the grant and to retain originals which must be made available for inspection by an auditor.

You must retain the original documentation about the grant as per the document retention requirements. Records must be kept until 2034. In the event that your business ceases trading within this period, the documentation must be passed to the Programme Management Team to retain.

The evidence to be retained includes:

- The grant offer letter.
- Any agreement between yourself and the service provider detailing the type of support being provided, the timescale for delivery and the total cost, including VAT.
- The original invoice from the service provider.
- The bank statement(s) showing payment of the total cost of the service to the provider.
- Procurement evidence.

## 2.6 Complaints

Whilst we endeavor to run a transparent and fair project, we appreciate that there will be applicants who may not be happy with the result of their submission. Therefore, if you feel that you have been treated unfairly, you must first contact [businessgrants@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrants@rotherham.gov.uk)

The Program Manager for the project will then review and raise your complaint with the Customer Service Department.