

ROCHDALE, HEYWOOD AND MIDDLETON

Independent Retailers Start-Up Grant Scheme 2016/17



Guidance notes for applicants

Please read these guidance notes before filling out the application form

1. Purpose of the Scheme

The Rochdale Borough Council town centres start-up scheme is a discretionary scheme which awards grants of up to £5,000 to independent retailers to set up in our town centres, within a defined boundary in the three town centres of Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood (see attached maps).

The aim of the scheme is to:

- Bring empty properties back into use and to support their occupation.
- Support the local economy by encouraging new independent retailer start-ups and creating new jobs.
- Enhance the appearance and appeal of the main shopping areas in Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood to visitors, customers and the local community.
- Reduce the number of empty shops in the eligible areas.

Priority will be given to proposals that maximise visual improvement, have a sustainable business proposal and where the improvement is likely to be long lasting.

The scheme's budget is limited and will be paid out on a first come first served basis and the maximum available per hereditament (property) is £5,000.

2. Eligible criteria

The scheme has been established to encourage new business start-ups and improve the quality and visual appearance of the core town centre areas by letting vacant properties. The key eligibility criteria are:

- a) Priority will be given to projects which support independent retailers to occupy empty properties.
- b) Applications can be from an owner or tenant. Tenancy agreements must be valid for at least 12 months from the date of the application and a copy of the lease must accompany the application form.
- c) Grants are available for properties based within the eligible town centre boundary within the shopping areas of Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood (see attached maps).
- d) Grants are for the cost of permanent works/improvements or fixed assets to the building (i.e. shop fronts, signage, security & shutters, fixed internal fixtures & fittings).
- e) Applicants can apply for up to **50%** of the costs of the work, up to a maximum of **£5,000** grant.
- f) Projects that can be delivered with no additional revenue costs to Rochdale Council.
- g) The grant is for the cost of permanent works/improvements or fixed assets to the building only and not for staff, running costs, revenue costs or moveable items.

The Council has defined a number of target sectors and wishes to encourage business growth in eligible sectors:

Eligible	Excluded
Food/drink	Charity Shops
Clothes/Fashion retail	Pawnbroker/cash generator shops
Cafes/restaurants/coffee shops	Mobile phone shops
Department store	Off-licence/newsagent
Travel shops	E-cig shops
Home and garden	Pubs/bars/clubs
Retail outlets	Pound shops
Specialist shops	Taxi's/transport
Health & beauty	Adult shops
	Takeaways

4. Terms and conditions

- a) Applicants are limited to one grant per property.
- b) The scheme is for up to 50% of the costs of the work up to a maximum of £5,000
- c) Businesses must be solvent and up to date with all Rochdale Council accounts, e.g. business rates.
- d) Bank account details provided must be a business account and not personal.
- e) VAT on purchases relating to the project must only be included in the amount requested if it cannot be claimed back from HM Revenue and Customs.
- f) Projects must be well designed with professional design input. The Council reserves the right to decline to provide a grant should the design or quality be inadequate.
- g) Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all necessary permissions and other legal requirements are complied with such as planning permission, building regulations, leases, health and safety and insurance relating to their project.
- h) Grants will normally be paid in arrears following the submission of verifiable invoices. Successful applicant(s) must provide copy invoices/receipts that reflect the amount awarded and purpose for which the grant was approved as detailed in the application form. Failure to provide verifiable invoices/receipts may result in grant payments being withheld. Grants must be claimed within six months of approval after which time the offer will be withdrawn. Any extension to this period must be made in writing.
- i) The project must be carried out in accordance with the works specified on the application form. Any requests for a change to the works specified must be made in writing. In the event of a change in the project in respect of which the Council has not given prior approval, the Council shall not be bound to pay any monies to the applicant in respect of the amended project.
- j) The applicant/landlord shall ensure that the property is kept in a good and proper state of repair and in working order.
- k) The Council may inspect the works that have been approved for grant aid during the time that work is being undertaken and will inspect on completion.
- l) The applicant shall maintain proper accounting records in such a way as to ensure that all monies received and paid through the grant shall be identifiable and traceable.

- m) The Council does not accept any liability for damage, loss or future maintenance of any projects funded by Council Funds.
- n) The Council reserves the right to withhold or reclaim the grant monies if the terms and conditions are not adhered to or if the work has not been carried out to a satisfactory standard.

5. Decision Making Process

- a) All applications are discretionary and the final decision on all applications rests with the Council. There is no appeals process.
- b) The scheme is subject to available funds.
- c) All projects must be submitted on the prescribed application form with supporting documentation. Applications will be assessed on:
 - How it meets the schemes aims and objectives
 - Project description and design
 - Value for money
- d) Application forms will be checked by Council officers to see if the project meets the terms and conditions of the fund.
- e) Projects not meeting the terms and conditions or incomplete application forms will be referred back to the applicant within 10 working days with a written explanation. At this point applicants may be requested to supply additional information before a decision is made.

6. Payment

Grants will normally be paid in arrears following:

- A site visit to confirm completion of the work to the Council's satisfaction.
- The submission of verifiable invoices & receipts.
- Confirmation of compliance with any other conditions the Council has requested.

7. Data Protection Act 1998

The information you give us may be held in our computer and manual records. Strict confidentiality will be observed and your information will only be processed for the purposes of grants administration and public relations.

8. Contact for more information

For questions about the independent retailers start up grant scheme or the eligibility criteria, please contact

Rochdale Development Agency
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
Rochdale
OL16 1XU

Tel: 01706 868999

Email: info@investinrochdale.co.uk