

Urban Façade Improvement Scheme

A Waterford City and County Council incentive to improve the facades of central urban buildings.

Waterford City & County Council is extending a support to assist in the improvement of visible facades (upper and lower floors) of buildings in notable areas of Waterford City Centre, Tramore Town Centre and Dungarvan Town Centre. Other areas can be considered if they are in notable areas within the town/village centre (as defined by the Waterford Development Plan map).

This scheme allows for up to 50% of the cost of improvement works (excl. VAT) to the exterior presentation of a building, including upper floors, for up to a maximum allocation of €2,000.

What type of buildings/ premises are eligible?

- Premises fronting onto a public road.
- Premises in the town/city centre defined by the Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Owners or leaseholders of indigenous commercial businesses/ retail premises – premises that are part of a franchise or chain are not eligible.
- Commercial premises where there are not commercial rates outstanding to Waterford City and County Council
- Businesses not in receipt of the Economic Incentive Scheme.

Grants available: The scheme provides for up to 50% of the cost of building refurbishment up to €2,000 (ex VAT) per approved applicant. Applicants are more likely to be successful if they intend carry out works on the upper floors.

Type of Work (Examples only)

- Paint and redecorate building
- Decluttering and repair of building
- Replace shopfront and/or signage
- Painting of upper floors
- Vegetation removal from upper floors
- Clearance of gutters
- Returning upper floor windows into use
- Repair of upper floor windows

Eligible works under the scheme include:

- In order to encourage best practice approaches to shop front maintenance and presentation, applications should be in line with the criteria outlined in the following documents:
 - [Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028](#)
 - [Retail Design Manual 2012 and other Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines](#)
 - [Waterford Council 'Shop Front and Signage Guidance Document' \(2019\)](#)
 - [Foras na Gaeilge Bilingual signage: A guide for best practice](#)

- Repair and reinstatement of all or any part of a building fixture that is visible from the street, including the first and upper floors of premises.
- Reinstatement of architectural or historic features that have formed part of the building's design and character.
- Repainting of buildings. Colour schemes should co-ordinate with adjoining buildings and upper floors of buildings should be painted to blend in appropriately with ground floors.
- Repair and reinstatement of guttering and down-pipes (to match historic materials where appropriate).
- Repainting and/ or re-rendering of prominent elevations.
- Repair of external stonework and brickwork and replacement of stonework or brickwork which forms part of the stall riser of the shop front.
- Removal of neon signs, banner or other inappropriate signage affixed to front elevations (or side elevations visible from the street) and replacement with signage in line with Waterford City & County Council standards.
- Permanent removal of external security shutters and installation of suitable replacements.
- The removal of redundant wiring, alarm boxes and utilities on premises is encouraged.
- Works to the side or rear of a building will only be funded if they are clearly visible from the street and if they are associated with an overall project which includes improvements to the front façade of the same building.

Ineligible Expenditure:

- Retrospective applications i.e. work already completed or underway more than 30 days before receipt of application (subject to approval).
- Structural repairs including re-roofing.
- Internal repairs and alterations.
- External security features, such as CCTV Systems.
- Any work which is not in accordance with Planning Legislation, ACA Guidelines or protected Structure Guidelines.
- Statutory fees • Architect / consultant fees • Professional fees (e.g. solicitor / surveyor) • Insurances

**Applicants currently in receipt of the Economic Incentive Scheme
will not be eligible to apply for funding under this scheme.**

How to apply for a grant?

1. Applications may be made by the owner of the premises or by the lessee with the owner's written consent.
2. Applications should clearly identify each element of the proposed works.
3. The completed application form must be accompanied by a description of the proposed works to include:
 - a. Photographs of the existing building (prior to works being carried out)
 - b. Indication of the material type and colour scheme to be used
 - c. Two written quotations for the proposed works from registered builders/contractors
 - d. Where works are to be completed by the owner, quotations for materials should be included and grant assistance will only be available for the cost of materials.
4. Any alterations to design and/or materials must be agreed in advance and recorded on the work schedule. No grant will be paid to any project where changes are made that have not been agreed in advance with Waterford City & County Council.

Assessment Criteria : The following will be considered in assessment of applications:

- The quality of the proposed changes to the shop front/ building facade.
- Impact on the immediate area of the street
- Preference will be given to applications for clusters, where a number of adjacent properties make a joint application.
- Preference will be given to applications that propose to do works to the upper floors.
- Applications will be considered by an Adjudication Panel appointed by the Council. The Adjudication Panel may include expertise from Economic Development, Forward Planning/ Development Control and the Conservation Officer.
- Applicants currently in receipt of the Economic Incentive Scheme will not be eligible to apply for funding under this scheme.
- The decision to award a grant rests with Waterford City & County Council, whose decision shall be final.
- All grants will be subject to funding being available.

Grant Drawdown

- Payment will only be made following completion of works.
- Upon completion of works, the applicant must submit evidence of paid contractor invoices together with photos of the completed shop front to Waterford City & County Council. Invoices should include the Tax Reference Number of the builder/ contractor.
- All payments must be made through the applicant's bank account. Applicants will be required to be set up as a supplier if they are not already set up.
- An inspection may be undertaken to ensure compliance with the agreed work schedule.
- If the inspection/ works are satisfactory, Waterford City & County Council will then pay the applicant.
- If a grant is not drawn down within a period of 6 months from the date of issue of the Grant Offer letter then funding will be withdrawn, unless a prior agreement has been made.
- Where the works are undertaken by the owner, grant assistance will be provided towards the costs of materials only. Vouched expenditure receipts must be submitted and bank statements may be required as proof of payments.

Will I require Planning Permission?

- Applicants are advised to contact Waterford City & County Council in advance of making an application for funding to discuss individual proposals. Guidance will be provided by a Planning Officer in respect of whether the proposed works put forward require the making of a planning application or whether the works proposed are exempt from planning permission.
- It is the business owner/ lessees responsibility to ensure they are fully compliant with planning legislation in relation to any alterations to the building.
- Please note that additional provisions may apply in the case of Protected Structures and any applications from buildings on the Record of Protected Structures will require sign off by Waterford City and County Council's Conservation Officer.
- Where planning consent is not in place and a proposal involves a material alteration to the structure, planning permission will be required at payment stage. The onus is on the applicant to ensure that their project proposal has the necessary planning consents in advance of drawing down grant assistance from this scheme.

How it works?

1. Fill out the application form, submit two quotes for the estimated costs, a description of the planned works and pictures of the property.
2. If your application is approved you will be notified the amount you have been approved for and a deadline of 6 months to complete the works.
3. Return the Supplier Set Up Form by post. This form is our way of paying out to you once the works are completed. A hard copy must be sent. You will be sent this when approved.
4. Once the works are complete, submit your invoices and a picture of the completed works. You will be allowed 50% of the costs of works (excl. VAT) up to the amount you were allocated when approved.

Terms & Conditions

- Works commenced more than 30 days prior to receipt of written approval from Waterford City and County Council will not be considered eligible unless approved.
- Maximum grant permitted is 50% of final costs (exclusive of VAT) up to €2,000 (or the amount allocated upon approval).
- Properties that are commercially rated should have no local taxes or charges due to the Council.
- Recipients currently availing of other local authority grant schemes including the Retail Fit Out, Office Refurbishment Scheme and Arts, Crafts, Artisan Food Scheme and Economic Incentive Scheme are not eligible to apply.
- Applications will be accepted from either the landlord or the lessee, whichever is appropriate. Where the applicant is a lessee, the lease must have a minimum of 2 years to run and the application should have the

consent of the landlord. This requirement will not apply in the case of rolling leases where the lessee can prove continuity for a minimum of 2 years.

- Grant payment will be subject to the applicant having obtained planning permission if required and submission of a copy of the Final Grant of Permission.
- In the event that planning permission is required for the proposed works, please note that this is a separate process to the grant application and the statutory timelines in the processing of a planning application apply.
- Nothing in the agreement or negotiation of the grant will affect the Council's decision over planning permission.
- The Council accepts no responsibility should a business receive a Grant Offer letter or subsequent grant payment, which become subject to Planning Enforcement proceedings relating to improvements got which monies are issued. In such circumstances any offer of funding will be withdrawn and where a grant has been awarded, the applicant will be required to reimburse any grant claimed and to comply fully with statutory planning requirements.
- The council reserves the right to publish photographs of shop fronts (before and after) in promotional material associated with the scheme and its purpose.

FAQs

Q: When filling out the supplier set up form whose details do I fill in? The person doing the works or my own?

A: Please fill in your own details on this form. This grant is to reimburse you for a portion of the costs, not to pay for them directly.

Q: How is the reimbursement calculated?

A: If, for example, you are approved for the maximum amount, €2,000, and spend €5,000 (excluding VAT) you will receive €2,000.

Q: What happens if I can't complete the works within the 6-month deadline?

A: If you can't complete the works within the 6-month deadline and you can't provide proof of planned works within 30 days of the deadline passing, the grant will be rescinded and allocated to someone else.

Q: Why have I been unsuccessful in receiving the grant?

A: This grant is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis (provided the property is deemed in need of works). If you have been unsuccessful it either means your property is in better condition than the other applicants or funding has been fully allocated. If other applicants do not complete their works within the deadline funding may become available and allocated onto you.

For further queries on the scheme, please contact:

[Maureen Fitzsimons](#)

[353 \(0\) 51 849655](tel:3530051849655) / [353\(0\)87 764 9173](tel:35300877649173)

mfitzsimons@waterfordcouncil.ie

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Waterford City & County Council

35 The Mall

Waterford

X91 DN23

