

## Accessibility and shop front improvement grant

### Introduction

South Gloucestershire Council has received funding through the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is administered by West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. £100,000 has been allocated for this grant to support businesses on the high street.

The purpose of the grant is to support businesses and occupiers with:

- works to improve accessibility into and within their premises
- specific equipment that improves accessibility
- external shop improvements, including signage

'Accessibility' is the degree to which a product, service, website or environment is available to as many people as possible.

There are an estimated 16 million disabled people in the UK<sup>[1]</sup>. The collective spending power of disabled people and their households continues to grow. It's estimated to be worth £274 billion per year to UK business.

Figures from the 2021 Census show that 16.5% of residents in South Gloucestershire identified as being disabled. This is slightly higher than Bath and North East Somerset (16.2%) and lower than North Somerset (17.3%) and the City of Bristol (18.7%)<sup>[2]</sup>.

Around 50% of disabled customers say businesses could do more to be accessible and more than half (56%) agreed that improving staff understanding about different disabilities would encourage them to spend their disposable income<sup>[3]</sup>.

Shop front improvements can play a pivotal role in high street regeneration, offering a range of economic, social, and aesthetic benefits. The way buildings and their shop fronts look has an impact on the character of a high street. Visual improvements can make the high street a more appealing place for residents and visitors, which in turn benefits local businesses by increased potential customers.

<sup>[1]</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2021-to-2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2021-to-2022)

<sup>[2]</sup> [Census2021-Briefing-Note-09 Health disability and care.pdf](#)

<sup>[3]</sup> [modernretail.co.uk/purple-tuesday-how-retail-businesses-can-better-facilitate-disabled-customers/](https://modernretail.co.uk/purple-tuesday-how-retail-businesses-can-better-facilitate-disabled-customers/)

Grants of up to £4,000 are available. The deadline for applications is Friday 9 January 2026. Any costs over £4,000 will need to be funded by the applicant. All works will need to be completed and invoices submitted to the council by Friday 13 March 2026.

## Eligibility criteria

The grant is open to all freehold owners and leaseholders with at least 2 years left on their lease within the high street areas below (see Appendix 1 map boundaries). Premises must be visible to the public when on the high street area.

- Chipping Sodbury
- Downend
- Filton
- Hanham
- Patchway, Rodway Road
- Kingswood\*
- Staple Hill
- Thornbury
- Yate, Station Road

\*If your business/organisation is in Kingswood and not included in the shopfront improvements that are taking place as part of the Kingswood regeneration project; we recommend that, in addition to the design guidelines set out below, you also contact the project team at [Kingswood.Regen@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Kingswood.Regen@southglos.gov.uk) to discuss your proposals, prior to submitting your grant application. This is to ensure that the works proposed are in line with the shopfront improvements that are already being designed for Kingswood and will not result in any negative impacts on the high street or wider public space improvements as part of this project.

Eligible businesses/organisations include:

- retailers e.g. grocery, butchers, bakery etc
- service provision e.g. hairdressers, beauty salons, barbers, dry cleaners
- financial professional services e.g. accountants, estate agents, solicitors
- hospitality e.g. public houses, cafes, restaurants
- community organisations e.g. community groups, local charities, social enterprises

The following businesses/organisations are not eligible:

- national retailers/chains/multiples
- national charities
- betting shops/pawnbrokers
- adult entertainment premises
- vape shops
- industrial units
- if they do not qualify under the state aid/subsidy control rules
- if they are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking off notice has been made
- if the business has any outstanding licensing issues

## Applicants must:

- have sought any necessary permissions e.g. from the property owner, planning consent, advertising consent, listed building, demolition consent, building regulation approval (if applicable)
- have a minimum of 2 years remaining on the lease
- have eligible costs of a minimum of £250
- have a lease for the premises and be registered with HMRC on the day the grant application is submitted
- meet the definition of a small to medium business (max. 250 staff £42m turnover)
- supply all the required evidence (see section below)
- make sure works are undertaken by a competent contractor on behalf of a reputable company.
- provide sufficiently detailed invoices for us to verify the grant claim

## Eligible works

Eligible capital works are:

1. external and internal works or equipment that improve accessibility into and within the premises (please note we will only award funding to internal accessibility improvements for wheelchair users if the premises is accessible from the outside)
2. external shop front improvements including new signage that align with the [Shopfronts and advertisements SPD.pdf](#)

## Ineligible works

1. Works to the first-floor frontage, upper floors or basement
2. Works relating to any externally mounted security features, such as shutters, CCTV or lighting
3. Works or any elements of works that have already taken place
4. Window display equipment
5. General cleaning of frontages or gutters (except if stone)
6. Any works that are not undertaken by a professional contractor
7. Statutory costs (such as planning fees)
8. Removable items such as advertising boards, seating, heaters, planters, window displays
9. Stock
10. Revenue items – e.g. rental costs, business rates, insurance costs

## Planning and building regulation considerations

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure appropriate planning and/or advertisement consent is in place.

Please note that some works may require the submission of two applications. Works carried out without consent may result in enforcement action or prosecution.

Some alterations to shop fronts will require permission under the Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations or both. Planning permission is required for works that require a material change to the external appearance of a premises.

Please note it takes 8 weeks to determine a planning application, advertisement consent or other statutory consent. It is the applicant's obligation to ensure that they have all necessary consents in place before carrying out the works. Please also be aware that where applications become controversial, they can take significantly longer than 8 weeks to determine – the submission of an application as part of this grant process does not guarantee a favourable outcome.

It is the responsibility of person doing the works to establish if they need to do a formal submission for the building regulations.

These should be considered alongside the deadline for works that need to be completed and invoices submitted to the council by Friday 13 March 2026.

More information on planning permission and consent, building regulations, listed building consent and conservation areas can be found on our website:

[Planning permission and consent](#)  
[Apply for building regulations approval](#)  
[Historic environment and listed buildings](#)

## Design principles

Applicants must:

- ensure the design of the shop front signage is to a high standard and of a scale that is proportionate to the building ([Shopfronts and advertisements SPD.pdf](#))
- ensure the design enhances and respects the character of the building and incorporates heritage features ([Shopfronts and advertisements SPD.pdf](#))
- ensure the design enhances the wider street scene
- ensure improvements for accessibility have been considered and addressed, where feasible ([How do I make my business more inclusive and accessible? - Disability.Inc.](#)) ([SME Toolkit | Business Disability Forum](#))

## Grant payment

Any grant will be paid in two instalments. 50% of the grant award will be payable within 7 working days of the formal grant agreement being signed. The final award will be paid after the works have been completed and necessary invoices provided to us.

## Application process

1. Applicant sends an expression of interest email to [highstreets@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:highstreets@southglos.gov.uk) including the business name and address and brief outline of works you are considering for your application. This information will be used to solely assess the interest in the grant
2. Applicant seeks necessary permissions for required works (if necessary)
3. Applicant secures 2 quotations (from qualified trades people) for all proposed project expenditure. Include one quote from a South Gloucestershire based business, where possible. This should be via email or on headed paper
4. Applicant completes the full application form and compiles additional evidence
5. Applicant emails completed application form and evidence to [highstreets@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:highstreets@southglos.gov.uk) by Friday 9 January 2026
6. Council assesses applications and emails an 'offer of grant' or rejection notification – estimated completion date Friday 16 January 2026
7. Council pays applicant 50% of the grant within 7 working days of notification and signed agreement being received
8. Applicant arranges works and works undertaken
9. Applicant provides evidence of works and invoices submitted to council by Friday 13 March 2026. Any information or invoices received after this date will not be reimbursed
10. The council will visit the property to view works completed
11. The council pays applicant remaining 50% of grant, or less if works are less than estimated in the original grant application by 31 March 2026.

## Evidence requirements

For an application to be considered, businesses must demonstrate that they adhere and meet the criteria detailed in the above sections. In addition, you will need to declare the following in the application form:

- company registration number
- business rates account number
- state aid compliance including the value of the business support received over the last 3 years
- confirmation of trading figures for the last 2 financial years

Applicants will need to email copies of the following additional evidence alongside the completed application form:

- photograph of the current shop front
- drawing, design and colour information for shop front improvements
- copy of 2 formal quotations on headed paper or email (from qualified tradespeople where appropriate) for all proposed project expenditure, including one from a tradesperson based in South Gloucestershire, if possible
- copy of a bank statement from your business account dated within the last 3 months, clearly showing the sort code, account number and transactions
- copy of lease or confirmation from the landlord that there is 2 years remaining on the lease

- evidence of any necessary permissions e.g. from the property owner, planning etc (if applicable)

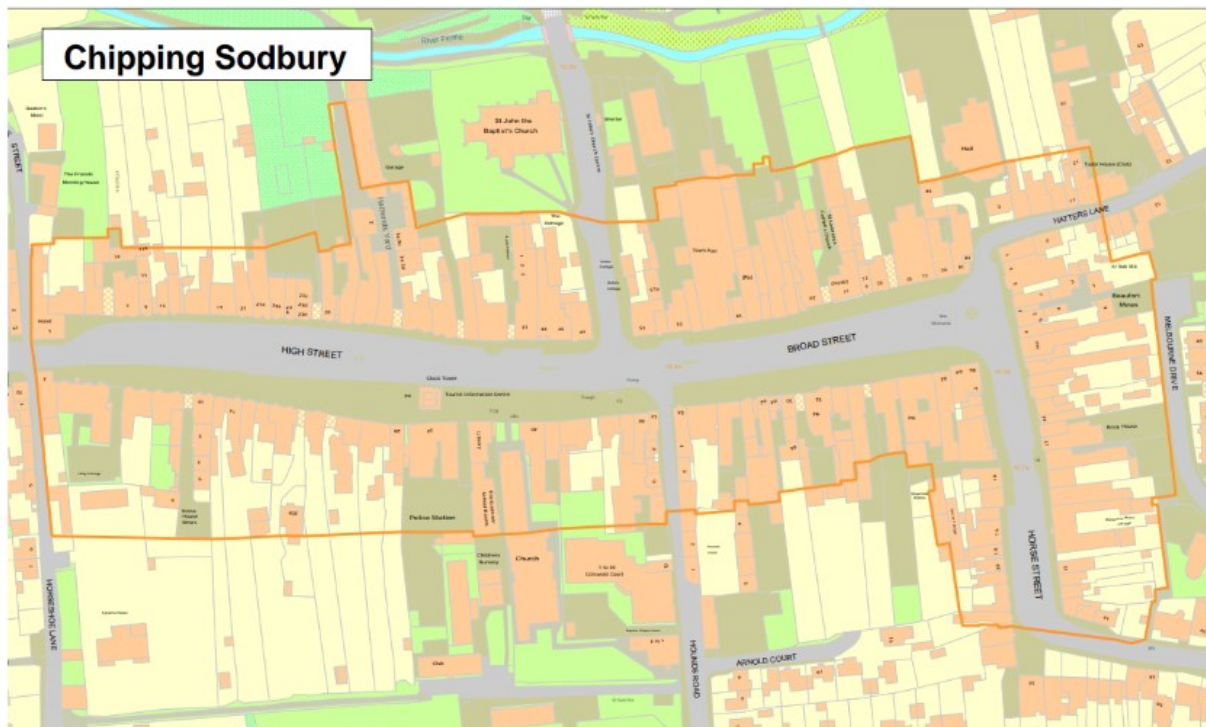
If requested, the council shall be granted access to inspect the property prior to and on completion of the works and at other reasonable times, subject to prior notification.

## Publicity

The grant is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund administered by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. We may approach you after completion of the works to promote how the grant benefitted your business.

# Appendix 1

## High street area boundaries



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FILTON

LONG ROAD



South Gloucestershire  
Council

**South Gloucestershire**  
*Council*



## Hanham



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## Kingswood



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