

RURAL SHOP SUPPORT SCHEME



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



THE SCHEME

Grant assistance up to £7,500 or 50% of costs, whichever is the lower, may be available to help the development and diversification of rural retail outlets, which provide small communities with general stores and/or Post Office facilities.

The scheme, which is operated by Aberdeenshire Council, offers shopkeepers, and similar, a comprehensive package of support including:

- Business Counselling
- Specialist Consultancy
- Training Advice
- Grants to a maximum of £7,500
- Loans





ELIGIBILITY

The scheme is intended to support shopkeepers who make a positive effort to maintain the viability of their business where the shop has sound underlying commercial prospects. Assistance is focussed in most cases, on those shops stocking 'everyday' products where the shop provides, or will provide, the sole permanent source of these products in a rural community. The facility does exist to assist with the provision of other products and services (such as a Post Office) where this is considered either socially necessary or which helps the overall viability of the shop.

Consideration will be given in certain circumstances in areas with two outlets where a clear need exists. The scheme is open to individuals intending to open a new shop in an area where no such facility exists. Mobile shops are also eligible for assistance where a substantial part of the business is in rural areas and where they are not in direct competition with another shop.

ASSISTANCE



Business Counselling

The scheme offers a confidential retail counselling service to rural shops, which will be carried out at the shopkeeper's place of business free of charge. This service offers the opportunity to discuss all aspects of the business and develop plans to improve the business. In some cases specialist consultancy may be available.



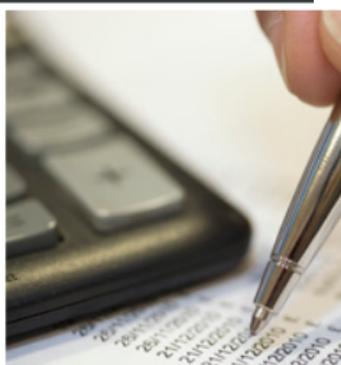
Specialist Consultancy

Where it appears that the business may benefit from the specialist skills of a consultant (for example to provide marketing advice) the scheme may provide additional grant assistance for this cost on a case-by-case basis.



Training Advice

Specialist training advice can be provided covering areas such as identifying training requirements, selecting training methods and information on training providers.

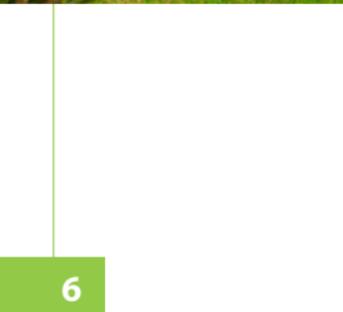


Grant/ Loan Assistance

The Scheme provides discretionary grants, to a maximum of £7,500. Additionally, loans may be available to assist with some development costs and equipment.

Assistance may be available for the following:

- Improvements and extensions to the shop layout and fixtures.
- Schemes to improve the image of the shop either internally or externally, e.g. shop fronts, signs, lighting and car parking.
- Promotion of operations that would help the overall viability of the shop.





PLEASE NOTE

- In the event of a change of ownership to the business within a two-year period of any award being made, grants and loans awarded will be deemed repayable at the discretion of Aberdeenshire Council.
- Additional applications will be considered on their merits subject to a qualifying period of two years between applications.
- Details of standard terms and conditions relating to the award of loans can be found in the leaflet 'Support for Aberdeenshire Business Scheme' or on the Council's website.
- Minimum award £1000.

CONTACTS

Further information on SAB is available from the following Economic Development Officers:

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Business information and start-up advice is available from our partners at Business Gateway

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