

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Stockton Town Centre Retail Grant Scheme

Guidance Notes

(Revised October 2018)

Funded by



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

About the Grant

A grant of **up to £5,000** may be available to eligible business subject to an appraisal process.

The grant is available to **new** businesses occupying vacant space within the area of Stockton Town Centre (shown on the attached map). **Existing** businesses are eligible if they are **significantly diversifying their business demonstrating growth or creating a more sustainable business model**.

The grant, where appropriate will be linked to a Business Rate Discount Scheme (BRDS) application. This grant and BRDS will be assessed as a single financial package.

Eligibility Criteria

The business:

- A new start up, re-locating to Stockton Town Centre, or opening a branch in Stockton.
- An existing business currently trading in Stockton Town Centre demonstrating growth and expanding into larger premises or significantly diversifying their business demonstrating growth or creating a more sustainable business model.
- Business must be able to demonstrate it is viable and contribute to the diversification of the retail offer within Stockton Town Centre.
- The funding is available to the tenants of the property not landlords.
- Any outstanding financial arrears with the Council linked to the business or any other the applicant is associated with, will be taken into consideration.
- A start-up business must have an existing relationship with a Business Support agency. If not they will be referred to the Council appointed contractor for retail business support.
- Existing retailers will be referred to the appointed Council contractor for retail business support.
- Those business activities that are considered to be in the 'Use Classes' as listed below, will be eligible to apply for support as follows:

Use Class	Included	Excluded
A1	All	None
A2	Professional services including credit unions	Financial services; Betting Shops
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	None
A4	Drinking establishment – if previous use of property was not a Public House.	If previous use of building was a Public House (even if remained vacant for a number of years).
B1	Offices – B1 (a) other than included in A2	B1 (b) – Research & Development B1 (c) – Light Industry
D2	All	None
All other Use Classes are excluded from the Scheme unless the proposed investment is considered to bring a significant economic benefit to the Town Centre		

Type of property/lease

- Property must be vacant or have vacant space within it.
- A minimum lease of 2 years is required (copy to be submitted with application. In exceptional circumstances **or for existing businesses**, grants can be awarded to applicants with a shorter lease, but the amount offered will reflect this.)
- The unit must be brought into use and occupied by the applicant business.
- The vacant unit will be at ground floor. Only in exceptional circumstances will other units be considered
- The property must be in the areas of Stockton town centre as shown on the map attached.
- A property located on the periphery of the area will not normally be considered eligible for support unless the business is within the use classes A3, A4 or D2 as described above and it can demonstrate that, at the sole discretion of the Council, it will be of a high quality and will diversify the mix of such businesses in the town centre.

The Grant

- Grant can be used for improving the frontage of the building, including signage and the fitting out of the premises Equipment that is essential to the operation of the business is eligible.
- Any physical work undertaken, which is requested to be paid by a grant, must be of sufficient quality and undertaken by a professional company.
- Signage design submitted where appropriate.
- Shop front improvements and signage will be considered against Stockton Borough Council's, 'Shop front Design and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document'
- Grant payment will not be issued until evidence of expenditure is provided, unless other arrangements have been made with Stockton Borough Council.
Please note, once an application and associated documentation is submitted and has been validated to confirm completeness, a letter will be sent to confirm receipt. Expenditure will be eligible to claim against from this point, but this is does not constitute approval and any expenditure incurred is "at risk".

Assessment Criteria

The grant application will be assessed by a panel including Council officers and the Councils contracted retail business support provider, who deliver the retail support contract in Stockton Town Centre.

To accompany the application a start-up applicant must submit a Business Plan, including a cash-flow forecast. An existing business is not expected to submit a business plan, but must include a position statement about the history of business, reason for re-locating (including growth plans) and need for grant.

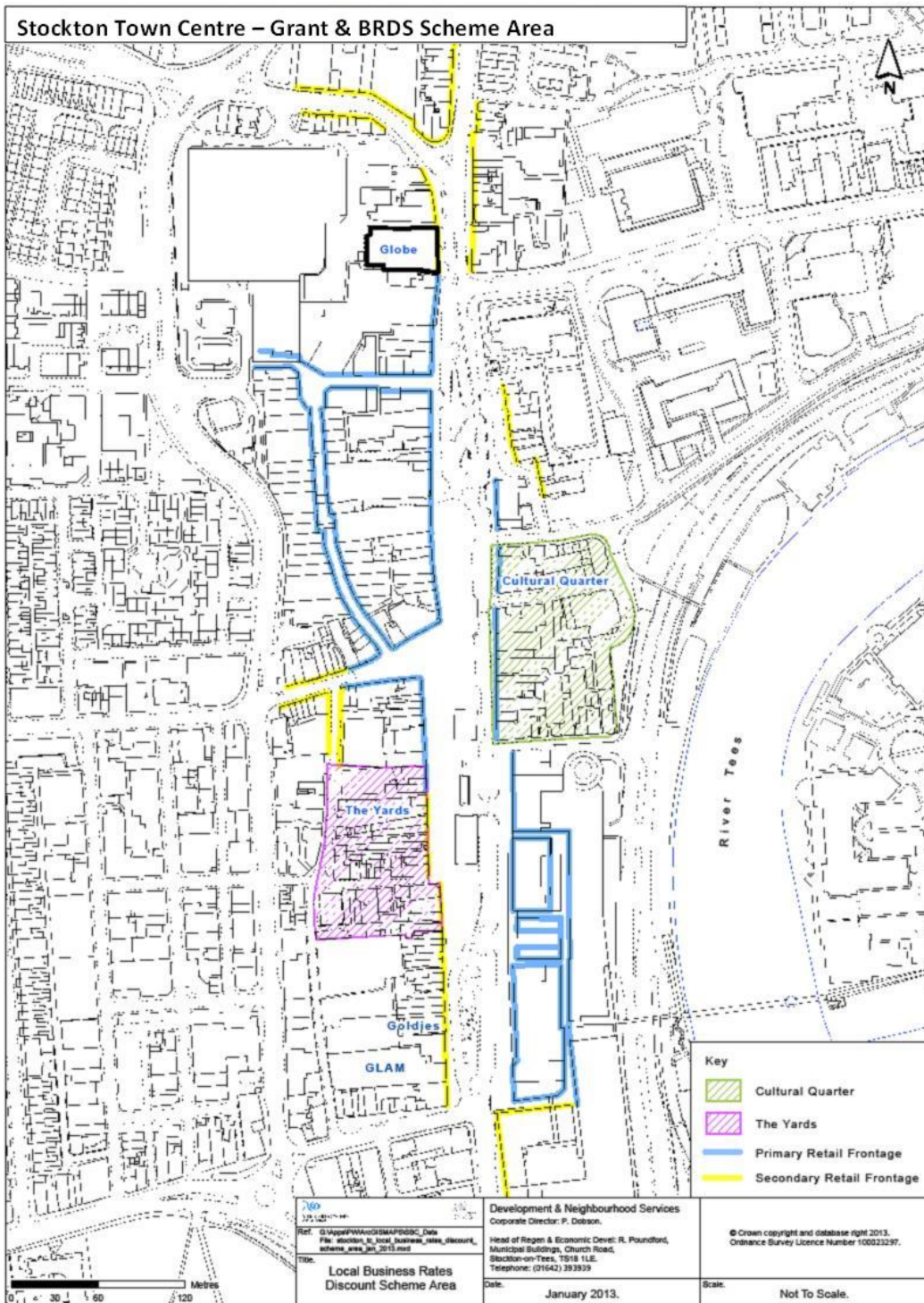
The application will be assessed and level of grant awarded dependent on the following criteria:

- **Location/profile of premises** - a premium will be placed upon those properties that are located within a primary, central location.

- **Type of businesses** – an assessment will be made on the type of business and how it contributes to diversifying the mix of businesses.
- **Scale of project** – the size and scale of the scheme will play a significant role in the level of grant awarded.
- **Condition of property** – consideration will be given to the overall condition of property and length of time it has been vacant.
- **Viability** – an assessment of the financial viability of the business will be made.
- **Applicant contribution** – what financial contribution (%) will the applicant be making to the overall total cost of moving into the property.
- **Length of lease** – a longer lease will show commitment to the town centre.

Stockton Borough Council may seek to reclaim some or all of the grant within 3 years of the award, should the business close, relocate out of the borough or be sold. This includes equipment that is purchased with the use of the grant. The decision regarding the award of a grant is at the discretion of the Council.

Stockton Town Centre – Grant & BRDS Scheme Area



<p>Ref: G:\app\pww\GISMAPS\BRDS_Data File: stockton_tn_centre_business_rates_discount_scheme_area_jul_2013.mxd</p>	<p>Development & Neighbourhood Services Corporate Director: P. Dobson.</p>
<p>Title: Local Business Rates Discount Scheme Area</p>	<p>Head of Regen & Economic Devel: R. Poundford, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1LE. Telephone: (01642) 353939</p>
<p>Date: January 2013.</p>	<p>Scale: Not To Scale.</p>

Key

- Cultural Quarter
- The Yards
- Primary Retail Frontage
- Secondary Retail Frontage

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