

Soho & Middlemore Property Improvement Programme (SMPIP)

Guidance for Applicants

Introduction

Birmingham City Council's North West Planning and Regeneration Team have developed the Soho and Middlemore Property Improvement Programme, (the Programme) to help local businesses within the Holyhead Road Industrial Estate and Soho Road Local Centre to prosper.

The Programme

The Programme will provide grants to improve industrial and commercial, land and property in the Middlemore Road Industrial Estate and Soho Road Local Centre. The Programme aims to improve premises to meet modern business needs; create new employment; and enhance general business competitiveness.

How much grant is available?

Individual applications can be made for financial assistance between **£1,000** to a maximum of **£24,999**, subject to 50% cash contribution from the applicant [referred to as 'match funding'].

What outputs are expected for different levels of funding?

- £1,000 - £9,999 - Evidence of improved business confidence / physical environment
- £10,000 - £19,999 - Evidence of number of jobs safeguarded
- £20,000 - £24,999 - Evidence of number of jobs created

Who can apply? Businesses or property owners located within the Middlemore Road Industrial Estate and Soho Road Local Centre can apply (see attached Programme Boundary Map).

What are the general terms and conditions of the Programme?

To help you consider making an application for grant to improve your business competitiveness, the following information outlines the general terms and conditions that will be applied to the grant. Please read this detail carefully, as eligibility criteria will form part of the conditions of grant aid.

Grant assistance will be subject to the City Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (including specific Conditions of Grant Aid) and to the European State Aid Regulations.

Grant recipients are required to provide information for monitoring purposes and to take part in any publicity with the City Council.

What types of Land and Property Improvement works are eligible?

Priorities will be given in the order of:

1. Business proposing to bring vacant industrial land or premises into economic use and create jobs.
2. Businesses proposing to bring vacant retail and commercial premises into economic use and create jobs.
3. Refurbishment, enhancement or expansion of existing industrial, retail and commercial floor space (e.g. extension to existing building premises) to safeguard jobs.

The following list provides examples of **eligible** expenditure:

- Structural works/alterations to walls and floors.
- New building work, including extensions.
- Provisions of new toilets/kitchen facilities.
- Electrical installation/rewiring.
- Land reclamation/demolition.
- Shop Front improvements.
- Professional fees of up to 12.5% of the grant will be payable, but fees will not be paid for unsuccessful grant applications.

The following list provides examples of **ineligible** expenditure:

- Maintenance works.
- Purchase of Equipment, Plant and Machinery.
- Internal fixtures and fittings.
- Work that has already been completed.

Please note that the above are examples only

What information will you have to provide?

For grants between **£1,000** and **£24,999**, we will require the following information:

1. Completed application form, including a 'State Aid' declaration.
2. Site plan showing location of the project and appropriate detail plans.
3. Detailed written specification of all elements of works to be carried out.
4. Three competitive quotations for each element of works, based on a standard specification of works.
5. Evidence of the 50% match funding you will provide towards the total cost of the project (for example: bank statements, evidence of bank loan etc.).
6. Confirmation of site/property ownership or written consent of landlord if the site/property is leased and details of any Party Wall Agreements where applicable.
7. Confirmation from you're your bank/ accountant of Company's legal status and number of years trading.
8. Confirmation of relevant statutory consents (e.g. planning and building regulations and fire officer approval, where applicable)

Additional information will be required if the grant assistance you are applying for through Soho & Middlemore Property Improvement Programme and any grants you have received previously exceeds £24,999.

1. Three competitive quotations for each element of works based on a standard specification of works to be overseen by professional Construction Design and Management (CDM) coordinator.
2. Last three years audited accounts or a business plan for companies trading for less than three years.
3. Last 6 months management accounts and/or cash flow.
4. A completed legal charge taken out over the property, to provide security against the grant, as follows:

- a 5 year Legal Charge for grants received to date, between £25,000 to £50,000
- a 15 year Legal Charge for grants received to date, between £50,000 to £100,000

How will the Application be assessed?

- We will discuss your outline proposal with you and eligible applicants will be asked to complete an application form.
- A robust financial appraisal of the applicant business and the project proposal will then be undertaken (for **level 2 funding** only).
- A Birmingham City Council Quantity Surveyor will carry out a value for money appraisal.
- The overall appraisal process will take between **6 to 8 weeks** (following the submission of the application and all supporting documents). and this process may take up to 12 weeks, where a 'Legal Charge' is required.

When can works start and when will the grant be paid?

- If the application is approved, a formal grant offer letter will be issued.
- Works may commence on site, when the approval is received in writing.
- Once the approved schedule of works are complete the grant recipient must provide;
 - Paid invoices for the work
 - Bank statement to evidence payment of invoice/s
- Payment of assistance will be made subject to completion of works as approved and inspected by a qualified Birmingham City Council Quantity Surveyor and/or other officers where appropriate.
- Stage payments method is available to support cash-flow issues.

Please Note: Where expenditure incurred is less than that originally approved, the grant paid will be based upon 50% of the actual expenditure.

Applications are now invited. To find out more or to discuss your proposal in detail, please contact:

Syed Ahmed on 0121 464 9839

email SMPIP@birmingham.gov.uk or for more information visit our webpage:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/sohogrants

email: syed.ahmed@birmingham.gov.uk

Grants will be distributed on a 'first come: first served' basis, so please submit your completed application at the earliest opportunity to avoid disappointment.