

Maryport Residential Conversion Scheme (MRCS) 2022

Information and Eligibility

The Maryport Residential Conversion grant Scheme (MRCS) is made up of contributions from the Future High Street Fund (HM Government) and Allerdale Borough Council. Grants are available to the owners of eligible properties who wish to carry out high-quality repair and restoration works that bring unoccupied first-floor (or above) floorspace into use for residential purposes. These grants are not means-tested but they are discretionary. This grant scheme should not be viewed as a means of subsidising the cost of the purchase of a property in any way.

Properties eligible to make an application for MRCS funding must be located within the MRCS area (see MRCS map). Properties must be classed as unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for tax purposes as of the 21 March 2022 and at the time of application, unless the unoccupied space forms part of a larger unit (e.g. an empty storeroom above a shop).

Grant funding is only available for first-floor (or above) properties where direct access to the residential unit from the street or a public area is created or improved. Funding is not available under this scheme to help cover the cost of improvements to ground floor properties or those without independent access to the upper floor(s).

Typically, grant funding will be offered at a rate of **80% of eligible costs**, however, each application is assessed on its own merits and significance, with all offers of grant assistance made at the discretion of Allerdale Borough Council. The maximum grant available for any eligible property is **£75,000**.

Eligible costs can include both external and internal works to repair and restore the structure of an eligible property that will enable unoccupied floorspace to be brought back into use for residential purposes. All works must be sympathetic to the building's character and form and undertaken in accordance with the approved schedule of works and any relevant Planning and Building Control consents. Internal (non-structural) works will only be eligible up to the provision of basic heat, light and power with floor coverings (e.g. carpets) and integrated, non-electrical kitchen units also eligible for funding. White goods, appliances and furnishings other than floor coverings and integrated, non-electrical kitchen units are not eligible for grant funding.

Professional fees are eligible for grant assistance at a rate of 80%, however, the appointed professional must belong to a relevant recognised institution (RICS, RIBA) or be approved by the Council based on relevant previous experience. Professional involvement is required where an MRCS grant in excess of £20,000 is awarded. Where the involvement of professional advisers is not required as a condition of the MRCS contract, their appointment is still encouraged. Fees for professional services are only eligible for grant assistance if the professional supervises the work to completion and is responsible for the certification of payments. Grant-aid towards professional fees is typically 10% of total eligible costs, with a maximum grant of £10,000 per eligible property.

Planning and/or Building Control fees are eligible for grant assistance at a rate of 80%.

Relevant building survey fees are eligible for grant assistance at a rate of 80% up to a maximum grant of £5,000.

All of the professional fees listed above are only eligible for funding on the basis of the approved improvement works to a property being completed to a satisfactory standard. Should the approved works not be completed to the satisfaction of Allerdale Borough Council then any grant funding offered towards the cost of professional fees may be withheld or clawed-back. Grant funding towards fees and surveys is included within the maximum grant available for any eligible property of £75,000.

In the event of the number of applications received under the MRCS scheme exceeding the budget available then Allerdale Borough Council will prioritise applications on the basis of the extent of the positive economic and social impacts that will be brought about by the proposed works. All decisions in this respect will be made at the discretion of Allerdale Borough Council.

SUMMARY OF GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. All works (including those not specifically grant-aided) must be carried out in accordance with the approved schedule of work and to appropriate construction and conservation standards. The design and specification of works should be of the highest standard using matching materials and detailing where evidence exists of the original works.
2. A 'Certificate of Title' form must be completed and verified prior to the offer of any grant funding being made.
3. Eligible properties must be unoccupied and substantially unfurnished at the time of application and as of the 21 March 2022 as verified by the relevant Council Tax / NNDR records for the property that are held by Allerdale Borough Council, unless the unoccupied space forms part of a larger unit (e.g. an empty storeroom above a shop).
4. Grant-aided properties must be used for residential purposes for a period of at least 5 years from the date of the final grant payment.
5. Procurement of works should be competitive; with at least three tenders being obtained for all grant eligible capital works from suitably qualified and experienced contractors. A minimum of 1 of the tenders must be obtained from a contractor based in Allerdale. Tenders obtained must be provided to the Council as part of the application process.
6. All works must be carried out in full and to the complete satisfaction of the Council. An inspection will be made on completion of the work to ensure that all terms and conditions of the grant offer have been met before the grant is paid. Interim inspections of work in progress may also be made and representatives of the Council and other relevant organisations must be allowed access to the property to carry out such inspections, by appointment, at any reasonable time.

7. Any property offered an MRCS grant must be adequately protected by insurance (including, but not limited to public liability insurance with a limit of indemnity of not less than **five million pounds (£5,000,000)** in relation to any one claim or series of claims arising from the Project). This cover must remain in place for the entire period of the grant contract, covering all aspects of the work including protection in the event of fire, lightening, flood or other events. This cover must be sufficient to facilitate reinstatement in materials and techniques that are consistent with the building.
8. No grant funded work shall be started prior to the submission of your application to the Council. **The Council's written consent and offer of a grant is required before any works (including any professional / survey fees being incurred) can commence.** Failure to observe this condition will result in the application being invalidated.
9. Any offer of grant must be accepted in writing within 1 month of the date of the offer letter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.
10. The grant-aided works must commence within 6 months of the date of any offer letter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. These works shall be completed as quickly as is practicable and at the very latest by 31 December 2023. Offered grant funding may not be released or clawed-back if works are completed after this date.
11. The contributing bodies may recover the grant from the recipient if:
 - any term or condition to which the grant is subject is not complied with or is contravened; or
 - during a period of **5 years** from the date of the final grant payment the building(s) is/are sold or the lease(s) changes hands.
12. The Council accepts no liability for any professional advice offered by its representatives.
13. **Any offer of grant-aid will be subject to the applicant obtaining the necessary consents, where required for the proposed works, under planning, ancient monuments or historic building legislation, building regulations, or any other relevant legislation.** Any applicable planning and building regulation consents must be acquired prior to any works getting underway. If in doubt, please contact the Council prior to submitting your grant application.
14. Responsibility for complying with all regulations rests entirely with the recipient of the grant who must ensure that no conflict arises between the conditions of grant and these regulations.
15. Grant monies will be paid on completion of the works to the required standard and submission of the relevant paid invoices, including the final account from the recipient's contractor. Interim payments against work in progress may be made at the Council's discretion following the completion of eligible work elements that have been certified as complete to a satisfactory standard.
16. On the satisfactory completion of eligible works, grant monies will be paid to the grant recipient as per the terms of the grant contract between Allerdale Borough Council and the applicant. Grant monies will not be paid directly to any contractors appointed by the applicant or other third party.

17. Any grant offer will be based on the tendered costs provided as part of the application process, including Value Added Tax at the current rate where it cannot be recovered. In those cases where VAT may be wholly or partly recoverable this will be taken into account in any grant offer made. On the grant application forms, therefore, the applicant is required to certify whether or not they are able to recover any of the VAT payable.
18. If the cost of the Eligible Works exceeds the estimated cost on which a grant offer is based there is no guarantee that additional funding will be made available. Requests for additional funding will be considered by the Funder at its absolute discretion and in no circumstances will Grant funding in excess of £75,000 be offered for any single eligible property.
19. If the actual cost of the works is less than the estimated cost on which the grant offer was based then the grant offer will be reduced in line with the agreed intervention rate (typically 80%).
20. The Council and HM Government reserve the right to publicise any offer of grant. Should the applicant accept an offer of grant a sign will be provided which should be displayed outside the grant-aided property while works are in progress.

Should you have any queries regarding the Maryport Residential Conversion Scheme please contact Joe Broomfield on 01900 516762 or e-mail joe.broomfield@allerdale.gov.uk