

Business Start up Grant

Application form



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Guidance notes

The Business Start up Grant

The aim of the scheme is to support new businesses in the Wychavon District. The scheme will encourage the occupation of vacant commercial premises, help regenerate town centres, stimulate entrepreneurship, create new jobs, and enhance the sustainability of new businesses.

Summary of the scheme

Businesses can apply for a grant of up to £500, or up to £750 if they are moving into business premises that are liable to business rates. The grant must be match-funded, pound for pound from the business's own resources. Only capital expenditure is eligible.

Eligibility criteria

- The scheme is open to new businesses that have started trading within 6 months of the date the application is received by Wychavon District Council.
- The business must be located within Wychavon District.
- The full grant amount of up to £750 is only available to businesses moving into business premises that are liable to business rates (the applicant must be the Proprietor or Lessee of the premises). Businesses that are not moving into business rated premises can apply for a grant of up to £500.
- The applicant must hold a business bank account (a 'trading as' account is acceptable).
- The applicant must have received business start up advice from an accredited business start up adviser and have an approved business plan. Wychavon District Council will refer the applicant as appropriate.
- The applicant must have all the necessary permissions and licenses to operate the business.
- The business must create employment of more than 30 hours per week for the applicant unless there is a valid reason for not doing so (e.g. the applicant is physically unable to work 30 hours a week).
- The business must have the ability to match fund the grant award.
- The applicant must give consent for Wychavon District Council to involve the business in publicity, e.g. press releases and photographs.
- The applicant must agree to take part in any monitoring and produce relevant information as requested at 6 and 12 months after the grant is paid.
- The applicant must not have any outstanding debts payable to Wychavon District Council.

Eligible expenditure

Only capital expenditure is eligible. As a general rule, this can be defined as expenditure where the benefits last more than 12 months. Eligible expenditure includes: equipment, machinery, building works, fixtures and fittings, electrical appliances, website construction, logo design, software, and other similar one-off items to help start a business.

The grant may not be used for:

- Recurring revenue costs including: salaries, stock, rent, utility charges, subscriptions.
- Repaying existing loans or debts.
- The reimbursement of goods/services already purchased prior to the date of an offer letter.
- Items subject to hire/lease agreements
- Activities that may bring Wychavon District Council into disrepute

The grant payment will only be paid on production of relevant receipted invoices.

Availability of Grant Funding

All grants are made at the discretion of Wychavon District Council and are subject to availability of funding. Grants will be limited to one per business and applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Assessing the application

Completed applications will be assessed to check eligibility and the extent to which they meet the aims of the scheme. The Council will refer the applicant to an accredited business start up adviser for start up advice and business plan support. When the applicant has completed this stage and following feedback from the adviser, the grant application will then be considered by the Economic Development Officer at Wychavon District Council who will decide to make one of three decisions:

- Offer a grant.
- Request further information from the applicant.
- Reject the application.

Each application will be judged on its own merits with regard to how well it meets the scheme's aims and eligibility criteria and its ability to be implemented within the set timescales. The decision of the Council is final. The Council will not enter into a commitment until the formal acceptance of the offer of the grant.

Deciding on the application

Notification of a final decision on the application will be made in writing to the applicant. A final offer of grant will be made by an offer of grant letter, which will specify:

1. The eligible applicant
2. The eligible capital expenditure
3. The maximum amount of grant awarded
4. The date by which the expenditure should be completed (receipted invoices should be received by Wychavon District Council within one month of this date)

The offer of a grant

An offer of a grant must be accepted within 21 days of receipt of the offer letter by returning a copy of the offer of a grant letter signed by the applicant. After this date the offer will be automatically withdrawn. The applicant will then have to re-apply if they still wish to proceed after this date.

The grant aided works

1. No grant aided work is to be carried out other than in accordance with the agreed project outlined in the application and as agreed in the offer letter.
2. Wychavon must be notified immediately of any variations needed to the agreed offer and before any variation to the application takes place.
3. Variations to the agreement must be approved in writing prior to such work commencing. Wychavon reserves the right to refuse the grant for changes to the specification which it deems not appropriate for the scheme.
4. Approved schemes must be completed by the date specified in the offer letter unless agreed otherwise by the Council. The applicant must inform the Council immediately if the deadline cannot be met. The Council will then consider the most appropriate action but is under no obligation to alter the conditions in the original offer letter, and therefore no obligation to offer assistance for works undertaken after the original deadline date.

Payment of the grant

1. Grants are discretionary and the Council reserves the right to withhold payment of the grant in whole or part if any condition of the offer letter has been breached.
2. The applicant must inform the Council upon completion of the works.
3. The applicant must submit the claim (including receipted invoices) for grant assistance within one month of the completion date as stated in the offer letter.

4. Payment will be subject to the applicant having satisfactorily completed the project and complied with all terms and conditions of the scheme.
5. If the actual costs are less than those outlined in the application and agreed in the offer letter, payment will be restricted to the actual amount in accordance with the receipted invoices.
6. If the costs of the proposed project exceed the maximum grant awarded as agreed in the offer letter, the Council is not obliged to increase the grant amount. Increases to the grant payment will only be made in exceptional cases.
7. Payment of the grant will only be made when Wychavon receives copies of paid invoices for the approved grant from the applicant. Invoices dated before the date of the offer letter will not be eligible for payment.
8. Payment of the grant will be made into the applicant's business bank account (or 'trading as' account) via BACS.
9. Applicants who are VAT registered will have their grant assessed on the net cost of eligible projects; non-registered applicants on the gross cost.
10. A check will be made to ascertain whether the applicant has any outstanding debts owed to Wychavon District Council. If it is found that such debts exist, reserves the right to withhold grant payment until such debts are cleared.

Liability

Award of the grant does not imply that Wychavon is expressing a view regarding the business or its products/services nor that it accepts responsibility for any debts, or liabilities incurred by the applicant or the business.

Repayment of grant:

Wychavon District Council reserves the right to recover all or part of the grant it has provided if:

- The business is sold or ceases to trade for whatever reason within a 78-week period from receipt of the grant.
- The business relocates outside the boundaries of Wychavon District Council within a 78-week period from receipt of the grant.
- If information provided by the applicant is found to be incomplete or substantially incorrect or misleading/false.
- The applicant fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions of this scheme.

Declaration and signature please read carefully...

1. I confirm that my business has all the necessary permissions and licences to operate.
2. I confirm that the business will create employment of 30 hours or more.
3. I confirm that the business is able to make a cash funding contribution of at least 50%.
4. I confirm that I am responsible for all goods/services/works carried out as a result of the award of this grant and will ensure that any works comply with all relevant regulations and legislation.
5. I understand that any goods/services purchased are to be completed within the date specified in the offer letter.
6. I consent to all documentation submitted being made available for Wychavon District Council use. I understand that any personal information provided on this form will be used to process the application and may be used to monitor the support of the project. Personal data will only be held in accordance with Data Protection legislation. I also understand that the Council is bound by the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000
7. I consent to the Council carrying out checks to ascertain whether I have any outstanding debts owed to Wychavon District Council. I understand that if it is found that such debts exist Wychavon reserves the right to withhold grant payment until such debts are cleared.
8. I agree to take part in any monitoring at 6 and 12 months after the grant is paid which will help the Council to assess the success of the overall grant scheme
9. I give consent to Wychavon to involve the business in publicity, e.g. press releases and photographs
10. I do not object to Wychavon District Council seeking information from other sections of the Council or other public sector bodies.

11. I understand that Wychavon District Council reserves the right to recover the entire grant if any information supplied is found to be inaccurate or misleading or if I am found to have improperly tried to influence the decision of any officer or Elected Member of Wychavon District Council in the award of a grant. In the event that I am requested to repay the funds to Wychavon District Council I will do so within a period of 30 days.
12. I have read and understand the criteria for application and the accompanying notes and agree to comply with the principles of the Wychavon District Council Business Start Up Scheme. I am aware that false declarations will invalidate my application.
13. I understand that any payment will be made directly into my business bank account through the Bank Automated Clearance System.
14. I understand that Wychavon District Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers. The Council may check information provided to it, with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds and with other information it holds, in order to prevent and detect fraud.
15. I undertake not to do anything to bring the Council's reputation and/or standing into disrepute or attract adverse publicity for the Council.

I confirm that the details given in this application are full and accurate.

Signed: _____

Please print name: _____

Date: _____

For further information please contact
Jane Dobson T: 01386 565278
jane.dobson@wychavon.gov.uk

Please return completed form to:
Jane Dobson, Wychavon District Council, Queen
Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, Worcs, WR10 1PT

