

BUSINESS FEASIBILITY GRANT

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

The Business Feasibility Grant is funded by the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and will support businesses in Bridgend County Borough to diversify, decarbonise and grow.

The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) supports the government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK and provides funding for local investment between 2023 and 2024. The primary aim of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.

WHO CAN APPLY

- Sole traders, Partnerships, Limited Companies, Co-operatives and Limited Liability Partnerships, Registered Social Enterprise or Charity are eligible to apply.
- Has an operating turnover in last 3 years above the current VAT threshold (£90,000)
- An established business that has been trading more than 3 years
- Bridgend County Borough business address
- An SME (less than 250 employees and an annual turnover under €50 million)

If you are unsure of your eligibility please contact businessfunds@bridgend.gov.uk who will be able to advise.

The Business Feasibility Grant is awarded under UK Subsidy Rules. All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as per UK Government guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

Where applicants do not adequately demonstrate that the proposed project is compliant under the UK Subsidy Control Regime it may be considered ineligible, and your application could be rejected.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR

The Business Feasibility Grant provides **100%** of eligible projects costs. The minimum grant is **£5,000** and the maximum grant available is **£25,000** (excluding VAT).

The grants will be awarded on a first come first served basis and all forms must be completed and contain the relevant information.

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

A feasibility study is a preliminary exploration of a proposed project or undertaking to determine its merits and viability. A feasibility study aims to provide an independent assessment that examines all aspects of a proposed project, including technical, economic, financial, legal, and environmental considerations.

The Business Feasibility Grant is to support businesses to explore feasibility of longer-term options to diversify, decarbonise and grow including:

- Before purchasing a piece of machinery, the study could determine the market for increased production or new product is financially viable.
- Explore using space in retail, hospitality to introduce new service / product e.g. new hotel spa
- Cost benefit analysis to introduce green procurement

WHAT WE CANNOT FUND

- Any costs incurred prior to formal approval
- Any capital costs
- VAT or any other taxes
- Bank / finance charges & loan repayments
- Legal costs being carried out as a statutory requirement
- Routine or ongoing running / revenue costs (including rents, rates, insurances, salaries, ongoing rentals).
- Fundraiser's fee
- Vehicles
- Membership of Professional Bodies
- Refinancing of bad debts of any kind, or company liabilities not associated with the project
- Planning application costs
- Insurance
- Stock or non-reusable items
- Grant support to third parties
- Works carried out on a domestic property, either new build or refurbishment or extensions/garden rooms/log cabins

Please note, where the total project cost is significantly higher than the maximum grant amount available, it is unlikely to be approved.

PROJECT IMPACTS - OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

All projects funded by the UKSPF in Bridgend, must align with the intervention listed and must contribute the outputs and outcomes associated with that intervention. A full list of the intervention and Outputs and Outcomes can be viewed in **Appendix A**. Projects will be required to provide evidence that they have achieved their proposed Outputs and Outcomes.

HOW TO APPLY

- Completed and signed application form
- Two comparable quotes relating to each element of eligible spend. The cheapest quote provided to determine the grant amount
- Business Plan
- 12-month cash flow forecasts and three years accounts
- If planning permission or change of use relating to a commercial premises / building is required for the project then approval evidence is to be provided before grant approval can be made
- Proof of funds available whether in business account or loan to enable 100% purchase prior to grant claim
- Projects must be delivered by December 2024 and all evidence including defrayment must be provided within this timeframe.

No expenditure should be incurred before grant approval, as the grants cannot be awarded retrospectively. Under normal circumstance we will only support one application for funding under the Business Development Grant Fund.

The business/director(s) of the business must **NOT** have an interest/shareholding in any of the companies supplying quotes/estimates for the grant application. The Applicant must accept the terms and conditions of the grant by completing and returning the Certificate of Acceptance which we will issue if your grant application is successful. Do not proceed with your project until you have returned the Certificate of Acceptance. Should the project not proceed within the period stipulated in the offer letter the grant would automatically lapse.

Items purchased through credit card/hire purchase/extended credit agreements/finance leases and cash purchases will **NOT** be considered for grant funding. All purchases need to be

undertaken from the **BANK ACCOUNT listed on the application form which must be in the name of the Business or the Applicant.**

Should the application be successful, the grant money is paid direct into the **BANK ACCOUNT** of the Applicant or Business after receipt of invoices and sight of bank statements to confirm payment and satisfactory monitoring.

Grant will not be offered or paid if the Business or the Applicant is in arrears with any payment to Bridgend County Borough Council. Checks will be made as required, to be determined by your Project Officer.

SUBSIDY CONTROL

Under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, a subsidy is where a public authority provides support to a business that gives them an economic advantage, meaning equivalent support could not have been obtained on commercial terms.

Grant support provided by the Business Growth Grant is offered under Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA). MFA has a financial threshold which means that no recipient can receive more than £315,000 over the applicable period under section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

The following should all be taken into account when calculating the amount of MFA your business has received during the current and previous two financial years:

- Other MFA
- Services of Public Economic Interest (SPEI)
- Aid given under the EU State aid de minimis regulations before the end of the implementation period of 31 December 2020 and
- Subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance (SAFA) under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement prior to this section of the Act coming into effect.

Please confirm in writing on the application form that the amount applied for will not exceed your organisations MFA threshold of £315,000.

For further information please email:- businessfunds@bridgend.gov.uk

Bridgend Council has absolute discretion over the terms, eligibility and decision making of the Business Development Grant awards and retains the ability to amend criteria at any time.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Rhwch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.