

Bolsover District Council

Business Growth and Business Start-Up Grant Schemes

Guidance Notes

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UK Government



1. Introduction

Bolsover District Council has been awarded funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), a central pillar of the Government's Levelling-Up agenda. The Council have allocated a proportion of the money to deliver two new grant schemes which aim to support new and existing businesses within the district. Existing businesses can access grant funding to support innovative product and service development resulting in job creation and retention. They can also apply for funding to access specialist consultancy and/or training, a grant to help to adopt digital solutions, carbon reduction solutions and product development. In addition, there is an opportunity for the grant to contribute towards the purchase of capital equipment, including plant and machinery. Grants of up to £10,000 are available to existing businesses via the **Business Growth Grant Scheme**. In addition, there are grants of up to £500 available for pre-starts, or new businesses to assist with the purchase of essential start-up equipment via the **Business Start-Up Grant Scheme**.

2. Business Growth Grant Scheme

Grants from £1,000 up to £10,000 are available to support existing businesses (trading for more than 18 months) to:

- Expand/grow resulting in job creation
- Become more carbon efficient
- Develop local supply chain relationships
- Access new clients and/or contracts
- Diversity into new markets/export
- Introduce new products to the business
- Engage in new knowledge transfer activity
- Adopt new or improved products or services
- Increase the amount of investment into the firm
- Access improved digital connectivity
- Introduce new technologies or processes
- Increase productivity
- Experience growth
- Increase turnover

2.1 Eligible expenditure

The scheme will fund both capital and revenue expenditure and includes but not limited to:

- Equipment and machinery
- Computer hardware/software - any ICT purchases should form part of an overall investment strategy and a comprehensive rationale will need to be provided for why the investment is required
- Specialist consultancy and/or training
- Relocation/fit out costs of premises (not moving transport costs)

- Improving/extending premises (subject to planning permission approval)
- Websites where this is a critical part of the business model, for example enable international sales, or incorporate additional functions that will increase sales/improve efficiency such as shopping carts

2.2 Ineligible expenditure

Expenditure that doesn't evidence growth potential and job creation and which do not meet with the funders outcomes for the scheme will not be eligible.

This includes but not limited to:

- Vehicles
- Feasibility studies
- Planning application fees and building control fees
- Replacement items
- Activity to address decreases in trade
- Wages/salaries
- Stock/consumables
- Further and higher education training
- New website (basic functionality)
- Radio/vehicle/newspaper/online (e.g. Facebook) advertising
- Marketing literature
- Attendance and exhibiting at Trade events
- Rental agreements for items including equipment and machinery
- Subscriptions

2.3 Grant amount

Minimum grant: £1,000

Maximum grant: £10,000

Up to 80%* of the total project cost can be applied for up to a maximum of £10,000; the remaining percentage of the cost of the project must be funded by the business applying for the grant.

Please note that the grant is not retrospective and therefore any payments for work carried out, deposits paid, or orders placed BEFORE a business has received, signed and returned the grant offer letter **WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT PAYMENT**

2.4 Eligibility Criteria

- The business needs to be located in Bolsover district, or accessing the grant would enable a move into premises in the Bolsover district
- The business operates as a sole trader, partnership, or limited company. Social enterprises are also eligible to apply where sustainable future income is proven

- The business is a micro, small or medium sized business, i.e. up to 249 employees and a turnover less than 50 million Euros
- The business needs to be established and you will need to demonstrate **growth** through increased productivity/turnover from the last two years accounts. If you haven't yet started your business, or have been trading for less than 18 months, you won't be eligible for this grant, but you may be eligible for a Business Start-Up Grant
- The business needs to be trading from business premises, i.e. liable to pay business rates to Bolsover District Council (businesses located in Bolsover that are in receipt of small business rate relief, exempt from paying business rates for agricultural land/buildings and those in shared office space are also eligible). Businesses are also eligible if they will be liable to pay business rates as part of the grant funded project, for example, the grant will enable the business to move into business premises within the Bolsover district. **Businesses who use a virtual office in the district of Bolsover as their trading address are excluded from applying for a Growth Grant. Businesses that are trading from a residential property are also excluded from applying for a Business Growth Grant**
- You will need to be able to demonstrate that the grant will enable the business to create job(s) and improve productivity/profitability. If the business has been adversely affected by the impact of Covid-19 and can demonstrate that the grant will help your business to recover from income losses, then it may still be eligible. You will need to declare any other grant funding applied for/received due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Funding will be available to all industry sectors subject to Subsidy Control rules

2.5 Measuring the impact of the project

The impact of the proposed project being undertaken by the business will be measured against the outcomes that have been determined by the funders. In addition to job creation, applicants will need to demonstrate that at least one of the following outcomes will be achieved as a result of receiving funding:

- Introduce new products to the business
- Engage in new knowledge transfer activity
- Adopt new or improved products or services
- Increase the amount of investment into the firm
- Access improved digital connectivity
- Introduce new technologies or processes

In addition, at least one of the following outcomes will be achieved:

- Increase productivity
- Experience growth
- Increase turnover

For more information about the outcomes please refer to the separate document “Outcomes, definitions and evidence” document.

2.6 Application process

Initially you will need to have a discussion with a member of the Economic Development Team at the Council who will be able to go through a check list of eligibility requirements with you. You will then be asked to submit an Expression of Interest which will give you the opportunity to supply information about the business and your project proposal.

Once you have completed the Expression of Interest it will be checked by the Economic Development Team. If your project meets the criteria of the Business Growth Grant Scheme, you will be invited to complete an on-line application which must be submitted within 12 weeks of receiving the invitation. This will consist of:

Part 1 Application Form – here you will need to provide information about the business, what the funding will be used for, your project plan and proposed timescales, options, and project risks

Part 2 Excel spreadsheets – there are three appendices which need to be completed:

- a breakdown of costs and funding sought
- profit and loss results and forecasts
- what outputs/outcomes are expected as a result of the investment

During the application process, you may also be asked to provide further information to support the application, for example, a business plan.

It is important that you are realistic with your project timescales and assume a project start date of at **least eight weeks** from the date of your submission.

Advice and guidance can be sought from the Economic Development Team at any time during the application stage.

2.7 Application submission and timescales

The application (Part 1 and Part 2), along with supporting documentation, will need to be submitted electronically to regeneration@bolsover.gov.uk

After the application has been submitted, you will receive an acknowledgement by email. The form will be checked to ensure that it includes all the right information. Applicants should ensure they complete the form with as much information as possible, as requests for more information may result in the application being delayed.

The application will be assessed against a criteria to determine whether the project will be supported. We aim to notify the applicant of the outcome of their application within eight weeks provided that the application is complete at the time of submission.

Note: Applications are subject to a competitive process and there is no guarantee of funding being granted. Depending on the volume of applications received, funds will not be available in line with applicant's desired timescales.

2.8 Supporting documentation

- Last two years accounts plus trading figures up to the point of application, one year's accounts plus trading figures up to the point of application if the business is less than 24 months old
- Three written quotes for any single item of equipment or services costing over £500. This is to ensure that the project will get the best value for money. Quotes should be like-for-like and valid within the last three months. If you are unable to submit three quotes you must give an explanation as to why not
- Proof of match funding (copy of bank statement)
- Evidence that any specific permissions, consents and licences needed for proposals to go ahead are approved, such as planning permission (or written proof from the local authority that this is not required) or permissions to work with children, hazardous materials etc. The cost of obtaining permissions cannot be included in any claim, and no grant will be approved until all relevant permissions are in place
- Proof of landlord's consent for the proposed project for businesses who do not own their premises and details about their tenancy agreement, including duration of the lease. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the assets remain in use, for the purpose set out in the application, for at least two years after the final payment of the grant

Note: We will only assess applications that have been endorsed by the Economic Development Team. However, this does not guarantee that your application will be successful as it will be assessed by a Grant Panel separately.

2.9 Assessment criteria

Applications will be appraised against a range of criteria (including those listed in 2.5) so it is important that you answer all the questions in the application form and supply detailed answers where applicable.

Once an appraisal of the project has been completed a recommendation will be made to the Grant Panel and the overarching decision of the Panel will be to obtain the greatest economic impact for the investment.

Should applicants have any conflicting interest's e.g. Council employees/members, immediate relations to senior officers/members, we will ensure that the project appraisal is undertaken by an independent third party and the interest is declared to the Panel before considering the recommendation.

2.10 Notifying the outcome of applications

If your application is refused, we will write to you to let you know and provide a summary of the reasons why it was unsuccessful. The decision of the Grant Panel is final and cannot be appealed.

If your application has been successful, the amount of grant approved, intervention rate and terms of the grant will be set out in the grant offer letter. The terms need to be followed throughout the whole period and for up to two years after the date of the payment. This will be explained in more detail when a grant is offered. If the terms set out within the grant offer letter are not followed, the Council may withdraw the grant and recover some, or all, of the money already paid.

2.11 Start date

The project start date should ideally be at least eight weeks from the date of submitting the application form. This must be considered when detailing project start/end dates and delivery milestones.

2.12 Paying for the project

Grant payments are made in arrears after the work is undertaken and been paid for. Therefore, applicants need to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to pay for the project until grant payments are received.

CASH TRANSACTIONS WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT PAYMENT.

Please note that the grant is not retrospective and therefore any payments for work carried out, deposits paid, or orders placed BEFORE a business has received, signed and returned the grant offer letter **WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT PAYMENT**

Where appropriate phased payments of the grant can be made to remove cash flow issues and this will be agreed at the discretion of the Council. A proportion of the grant (up to 25%) may be held back until grant conditions have been met.

2.13 How to claim the grant

The Council will send you a claim form, with instructions about what to do next. This should be completed and returned with:

- certified copy invoices that match the costs and suppliers stated in the offer letter
- evidence that invoices have been paid in full (copy of business bank statement)
- photographs of the project, activity or equipment
- a list of all the items (an asset register) the grant has contributed towards
- where relevant, evidence of outputs achieved, for example, an employment contract for a job created, audited accounts for increases in turnover
- visit by Economic Development Officer before payment is made
- a progress report explaining what progress has been made so far, including details of any delays

2.14 Changes during the grant period

You are expected to use the grant to contribute towards items as specified in the application and grant offer letter. During the grant period, exceptional circumstances may arise where you need to change elements of the project. In such circumstances, you must inform the Council in writing and where appropriate seek a contract variation.

Changes to a project may include:

- changes to equipment or any other assets bought with the grant
- disposing of or selling any of the assets
- closing, selling or transferring the business that is associated with the grant

The Council will try to accommodate necessary project changes, but there is no guarantee that a change or contract variation will be agreed.

2.15 Monitoring, evaluation and publicity/promotion

Once a grant has been awarded, a member of the Economic Development Team will be in touch to assess the impact and monitor at key times:

- a) Project inception
- b) Once spend is complete but prior to grant payment
- c) After an agreed period in which the impact can be measured (if applicable)

The monitoring process also allows for the gathering of information which may identify successes and be used as case studies which can be promoted on Bolsover TV, in the Council's InTouch magazine and via press releases and Business Bolsover Ebulletins to share good news stories. By accepting the grant offer letter, you are giving consent for case studies, testimonials, photos,

etc. to be used by the Council as appropriate. Any publicity and promotional materials in relation to the award of grant must acknowledge the contribution made by the Council. Bolsover District Council and UKSPF Levelling Up logos will be provided with the grant offer letter.

A business may only apply to the Business Growth Grant Scheme once. Any business who is offered and claims an amount from the Scheme will not be eligible to apply again.

3. Business Start-Up Grant Scheme

The Business Start-Up Grant Scheme offers a grant of up to £500 and is available to pre-start and new businesses who have been trading for less than 18 months. Businesses in any sector are eligible, providing they are located and trading, within the district of Bolsover. Businesses who use a virtual office in the district of Bolsover as their trading address, but do not live in the district are excluded from applying for a Start-Up Grant.

Those who wish to apply must be working with a business adviser to be eligible. Applicants do not need to be trading at the time of application.

3.1 Eligible expenditure includes but not limited to:

- Equipment, tools and machinery
- Fixtures and fittings
- Website – only where this can be demonstrated to be a critical part of the business model for example shopping carts
- Marketing materials – for example business cards, flyers and brochures (this can include design costs)
- Computer hardware/software
- Exhibition stands and stalls and associated costs (excluding travel)
- Activities that support new ways of working
- Specialised and accredited training required to develop the business

3.2 Ineligible expenditure includes but not limited to:

- Stock/consumables
- Professional fees e.g. architect, accountant, consultant
- Planning Application and Building Regulation fees
- Essential running costs including wages/salaries, utility bills, overheads, insurance, tax
- Replacement items
- Vehicles
- Radio/vehicle/newspaper/online (e.g. Facebook) advertising
- Rental agreements for items including equipment and machinery
- Subscriptions

3.3 Grant parameters

Up to 100% of the total project cost can be applied for up to a maximum of £500.

An Expression of Interest will need to be completed and if your project meets the Start-Up Grant Scheme criteria you will be invited to complete a short application form along with a completed business plan (template supplied) and relevant quotes. We will endeavour to inform you of the outcome within 20 working days of receipt of your completed application.

If the grant is approved, you will be sent a grant offer letter which you will need to sign, we will also request your bank account details. On receipt of the signed grant offer letter and business bank account details a payment of 80% of the project cost or £400, whichever is lower will be made within 10 working days.

Following on from this, applicants will be required to supply additional information to prove that the grant has been used in accordance with the application for grant funding. Proof that purchase of the agreed items will be required before the remaining 20% of the project cost or £100 whichever is lower will be paid.

CASH TRANSACTIONS WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT PAYMENT.

Please note that any payments for work carried out, deposits paid, orders placed or items purchased BEFORE a business has received, signed and returned the grant offer letter WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT PAYMENT.

For further information, please contact a member of the Economic Development Team at: regeneration@bolsover.gov.uk or on 01246 242512

****maximum grant contribution of 80% of the project cost up to £10,000 is not guaranteed. The Grant Panel have the discretion to offer a lower grant intervention rate to applicants***

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