

Wychavon business start-up grant

Guidance notes

Our scheme is available to support new businesses to start up and grow in Wychavon by providing grants and access to a fully funded support package of business advice. We seek to encourage the occupation of commercial premises to help regenerate town centres, stimulate entrepreneurship, create new jobs, and enhance the sustainability of new businesses.

Pre-start businesses and new businesses that have been trading less than 36 months can apply for a grant of up to £1,000, or up to £1,500 if they are in or moving into 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 on an approved project/investment is eligible.

Criteria for eligibility

- The scheme is open to pre-start businesses and new businesses that started trading within 36 months of the date the application to Wychavon District Council
- The business must be located within the Wychavon district.
- The applicant will be expected to have received business start-up advice from an accredited adviser.
- The applicant must have a business plan. It will be expected that the business plan has been approved by an accredited adviser.
- Businesses that have previously received a business start-up grant from Wychavon District Council are not eligible for this grant.
- The business must have the ability to make a 'cash' match funding contribution of at least 50% towards the costs of the proposed project/investment. The match funding must be used towards the cost of the project/investment and must be from the business's own resources.
- The applicant must hold a business bank account (a 'trading as' account is acceptable).
- 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 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 other outstanding debts payable to Wychavon District Council.

Amount of grant and eligible expenditure

Businesses can apply for a grant of up to £1000, or up to £1,500. The grant must be match-funded, pound for pound from the business's own resources.

Generally, capital expenditure 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, marketing, 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, licences.
- 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 made on production of relevant receipted invoices. It is recommended that the applicant requests a receipted invoice from the supplier on payment of the eligible goods/services.

Availability of the grant

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 by the Economic Development Officer who will check eligibility and the extent to which they meet the aims of the scheme. A decision will be made to:

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

Wychavon District Council will not enter into a commitment until the grant offer is formally accepted.

Decision on application

The offer of grant will be made in writing confirming:

- The eligible applicant
- The eligible expenditure
- The maximum amount of grant awarded
- The date by which the expenditure should be completed. Received invoices should be received by Wychavon District Council within one month of this date.

The decision of Wychavon District Council is final. It reserves the right to vary the level of grant or reject an application.

The offer of grant

A grant offer must be accepted within 21 days of receipt of the offer letter by returning a copy of the offer of 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

The grant is not retrospective and therefore cannot be used for the reimbursement of goods/services already purchased before the date of the offer letter.

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.

Wychavon District Council must be notified immediately of any variations needed to the agreed offer and before any variation to the application takes place.

Variations to the agreement must be approved in writing prior to such work commencing. Wychavon District Council reserves the right to refuse the grant for changes to the specification which it deems not appropriate for the scheme.

Approved schemes must be completed by the date specified in the offer letter unless agreed otherwise by Wychavon District Council. The applicant must inform Wychavon District Council immediately if the deadline cannot be met. Wychavon District 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.

Grant payment

1. Grants are discretionary, and Wychavon District 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 Wychavon District 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. Payment of the grant will only be made when Wychavon District Council 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.
6. 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.
7. If the costs of the proposed project exceed the maximum grant awarded as agreed in the offer letter, Wychavon District Council is not obliged to increase the grant amount.
8. Payment of the grant will be made into the applicant's business bank account or 'trading as' account via BACS.

VAT

Applicants who are VAT registered will have their grant assessed on the net cost of eligible projects, non-registered applicants on the gross cost. If the applicant does not know whether they are VAT registered or not they must seek advice from HM Revenue & Customs.

Wychavon District Council liability

Wychavon District Council, its officers and agents shall not at any time be held liable to any person in relation to any loss or damage arising, either directly or indirectly, as a result of compliance by the applicant with these terms and conditions of grant. Award of the grant does not imply that Wychavon District Council 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 the grant

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

- The applicant is found to have improperly tried to influence the decision of any officer or Elected Member of Malvern Hills District Council in the award of a grant.
- The business is sold or ceases to trade for whatever reason within a 12-month period from receipt of the grant.
- The business relocates outside the boundaries of Wychavon District within a 12-month period from receipt of the grant.
- Any information provided in the application form or other correspondence is found to be substantially incorrect, misleading or incomplete.

- The applicant fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions of this scheme.

Debt

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, Wychavon District Council reserves the right to withhold grant payment until such debts are cleared.

Data sharing

Wychavon District Council, in partnership with Worcestershire County Council and the other Worcestershire District Councils, use a shared Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database which helps us to monitor and record business enquiries including grant applications. It also helps us target services and products that you might be interested in such as grants, funding and business support.

The CRM database is shared with Worcestershire Business Central, programme partners and programme providers, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It will also be shared with Liberata, Worcestershire County Council's financial operations partner.

Data supplied in this application form will be held on the shared database in accordance with Data Protection legislation. We will hold, process and store your information in accordance with Data Protection Law. For more information please see our privacy notices on our website.