



MALVERN HILLS ENTERPRISE SCHEME APPLICATION PACK

Terms and conditions

Scheme administration

The Economic Development Team will administer the scheme on behalf of Malvern Hills District Council.

Scheme aim

The aim of the scheme is to support new and young businesses in the Malvern Hills 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.

Overview of the scheme

Pre-start businesses and new businesses that have been trading less than 36 months can apply for a grant of up to £500, or up to £1,000 if they meet any of the following criteria:

- The business is in or moving into premises that are liable to business rates
- The business employs or will employ 2 or more FTE employees (in addition to the applicant)
- The business operates in the low carbon economy
- The grant will be used towards expenditure that supports the business' environmental sustainability

The grant must be match-funded, pound for pound (at least), 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 is received by Malvern Hills District Council.
- The business must be located within Malvern Hills district.
- The applicant will be expected to have received business start-up advice from an accredited adviser. In exceptional circumstances, if the applicant has not received appropriate advice and the Economic Development Team are unable to refer the applicant to an appropriate source of advice, then the application will be considered at the discretion of the Economic Development Team.
- The applicant must have a business plan. It will be expected that the business plan has been approved by an accredited adviser. In exceptional circumstances, if the applicant's business plan has not been approved by an accredited adviser, then the application will be considered at the discretion of the Economic Development Team.
- The business must **not** be eligible for any available ERDF funded Enterprising Worcestershire grants.

- Businesses that have previously received a Business Start Up Grant from Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills District Council.

Amount of grant and eligible expenditure

Businesses can apply for a grant of up to £500, or up to £1,000 if they meet any of the criteria outlined in '**Overview of the scheme**' section of this Application Pack. The grant must be match-funded, pound for pound (at least), from the business's own resources.

Only capital expenditure on an approved project/investment is eligible. As a general rule, 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, etc).
- 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 Malvern Hills 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).

Please note, to aid the administration of the scheme, the maximum number of invoices/receipts that can be submitted as part of the grant claim is 10.

Availability of grant

All grants are made at the discretion of Malvern Hills 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. If an application passes this initial screening and following feedback from the business start-up adviser / accredited adviser (if appropriate), the grant application will then be considered by the Economic Development Officer at Malvern Hills 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. Malvern Hills District Council will not enter into a commitment until the formal acceptance of the offer of the grant.

Decision on application

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

- i) The eligible applicant
- ii) The eligible expenditure
- iii) The maximum amount of grant awarded
- iv) The date by which the expenditure should be completed (receipted invoices should be received by Malvern Hills District Council within one month of this date)

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

The offer of grant

An offer of grant 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Malvern Hills District Council must be notified immediately of any variations needed to the agreed offer and before any variation to the application takes place.
4. Variations to the agreement must be approved in writing prior to such work commencing. Malvern Hills District Council reserves the right to refuse the grant for changes to the specification which it deems not appropriate for the scheme.
5. Approved schemes must be completed by the date specified in the offer letter unless agreed otherwise by Malvern Hills District Council. The applicant must inform Malvern Hills District Council immediately if the deadline cannot be met. Malvern Hills 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.

Payment of grant

1. Grants are discretionary and Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills 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. The maximum number of invoices that can be submitted as part of the grant claim is 10.
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, Malvern Hills District Council is not obliged to increase the grant amount. Increases to the grant payment will only be made in exceptional cases.
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.

Malvern Hills District Council liability

Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills 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 grant

Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills 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 Malvern Hills District Council. If it is found that such debts exist, Malvern Hills District Council reserves the right to withhold grant payment until such debts are cleared.

Data Sharing

Malvern Hills 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.