

Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme – Tranche 2

Guidance for Applicants

Closing Date:

12noon on Monday 1 February 2021

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Terms of Reference

Ards and North Down Borough Council – The Council

Department for Communities – DfC

Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - DAERA

Proprietor(s)/ Tenant(s) – The Applicant

1.0 Introduction

Many businesses will need to adjust their properties in order to respond to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has been awarded further funding by the Department for Communities and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for the implementation of tranche 2 of the Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme which will now cover businesses outside the town centre boundary area and all the rural areas.

The Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme will provide financial assistance to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties that service their business, in order to assist them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19.

The maximum grant of £2,500 is available per application. If an award has already been made, in the first tranche this will be taken against the maximum grant award.

2.0 Applicant Eligibility

The scheme allows **active** and **customer facing businesses*** to apply for a Business Adaptation and Improvement Grant.

Applications must be submitted by the business owner(s) and/or the proprietor(s).

Where the applicant is the tenant applying, you must have permission from the proprietor(s) for works to the building. The proprietor(s) signature will be required on the application form confirming consent for the works to be carried out to their premises.

The applicant is the named person to receive grant. The applicant must remain the same throughout the process and will be the person responsible for making and receiving payments.

Applications are limited to a maximum grant of £2,500 per property (tranche 1 & 2 combined) over the lifetime of the scheme.

Priority will be given to applications received from businesses outside the town centre boundary but within the outer town limit, 30/40 mph zone (where applicable). This area is coloured red on the attached map. Any applications from a business within the town centre boundary (coloured blue on the attached map) will be only considered after assessment of the applications received from the outer limit red zone, subject to funding being still available.

All rural businesses outside 30/40 mph zone of the town can apply.

The boundary areas can be viewed at the following link;

<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/grants/business-adaptation-and-improvement-grant-scheme>

Please Note: There cannot be any duplication of funding between Government funded initiatives.

**An active business is a business which has been commercially trading for a minimum period of 3 months prior to submitting their application. A customer facing business is a business which can demonstrate that customers enter their business and engage in face-to-face interaction.*

3.0 Eligible Works

Only capital items which are an improvement and/or adjustment to your business in order to assist you to continue to operate, and/or improve your business, and/or ensure the health and safety of your employees and customers in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19 are eligible – applicants must demonstrate this within their application.

Examples of eligible capital items:

- Access improvements/ amendments (i.e. motion sensor doors, queuing adaptations, etc)
- Internal adaptations (i.e. reorganisation to meet Covid requirements)
- Exterior shelter (i.e. awning, canopy, seating areas, gazebo's etc)
- Signage in relation to Covid 19, (i.e. wall signage, free-standing signage, stencils, new business delivery methods etc)
- Health and Safety provisions (i.e. sanitiser stations/units, protective screens, barriers, etc)
- Outdoor provisions (i.e. tables, seating, benches etc)
- Shop Front improvements (preparation and painting, signage)
- Technology or other innovative solutions

This list is not exhaustive and can include any other capital works/items that can be demonstrated as an adjustment and/or improvement as a result of Covid-19.

All items and works must comply with all statutory obligations and take account Section 75 requirements the needs of people with disabilities.

All items and works must adhere to the public health guidance in relation to Covid-19 regulations.

4.0 Statutory Consent

It is the applicant's responsibility to make enquiries as to whether any statutory consent is required for their works and ensure the relevant applications are made e.g. for planning permission, for building control, listed building consent etc.

In the case of tenants, the proprietor's permission must be obtained in writing.

All internal works to listed buildings will require listed building consent.

New signage (with/without illumination) generally requires Advertisement Consent- any proposed signage should be in accordance with [The Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#). Please refer to Schedule 3 of

these Regulations for those classes of advertisements which may be displayed with deemed consent (i.e. without the need for an application for advertising consent).

Some external works to a building (excluding a listed building) can be carried out without the need for planning permission. Details of those works that are deemed to be 'permitted development' can be found in the Schedule to [The Planning \(General Permitted Development\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#), under Part 34 – Shops, Financial and Professional Services Establishments, and Part 35 – Office Buildings.

Alteration of buildings, entrances and internal layouts are likely to require a Building Control application. Please contact the Building Control office on the details below for further guidance.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure permissions are attained prior to the commencement of works, and that copies of the approvals are made available to the Council.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all statutory approvals required are lawfully complied with.

Note – Consultancy and statutory application fees for obtaining necessary approvals are not grant eligible under this scheme.

Relevant contacts:

Ards and North Down Borough Council Planning Department 2 Church Street, Newtownards, BT23 4AP 0300 013 3333 planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk Mon-Fri 9.00am – 3.00pm Fees for planning applications can be viewed here	Ards and North Down Borough Council Building Control Department Town Hall, The Castle, Bangor, BT20 4BT 028 9120 8015 buildingcontrol@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk Mon-Thu 9.00am – 5.00pm Friday 9.00am – 4.45pm Fees for building control applications can be viewed here
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The scheme operates independently of statutory consent(s) and any offer of a grant does not imply in any way that statutory consent(s) will be forthcoming.

All grants will be conditional on the applicant securing the statutory consent(s).

5.0 Risk and Insurance

The applicant, agent and/or contractor is responsible for all risks in connection with public or employer liability associated with the works.

The Council and the Department does not and will not accept liability or responsibility in respect of the grant aided work carried out to the applicant's property; accordingly the applicant should not rely on the inspection or payment of grant monies by the Council as any proof or guarantee that the contractor engaged to execute the works has completed the said works to a proper standard prior to payment; the applicant is strongly advised to satisfy themselves that the works have been carried out to a satisfactory standard

It is the responsibility of applicant to satisfy themselves that any contractor they appoint to undertake works has the appropriate insurance cover for that type of work.

6.0 Funding

The grant offered will fund 100% of project costs up to a maximum of £2,500 (between tranche 1 & 2).

Applicants must fund any further costs exceeding £2,500.

Council will **not** fund:

- Statutory application fees
- Consultancy fees
- Professional fees (e.g. solicitor/ surveyor/architect)
- Insurances
- Retrospective expenditure where works/items have already been obtained and paid for prior to a Letter of Offer
- Consumable items such as masks/gloves/sanitiser refill etc
- VAT*
- General Upkeep
- Marketing and Advertising
- Costs that are already covered by other funding

**VAT – this is applicable to businesses that are VAT registered.*

This list is not exhaustive, should you have any queries please contact:

covidbusinessgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

7.0 Scheme Process

7.1 Application

In order to apply for the Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme, applicants must complete and return the Application Form and additional information no later than 12noon on Monday 1 February 2021

In order to consider your application, the Council request the following documentation:

- Completed Application Form - detailing the works that you intend to carry out and detailing the need.
- Proof of permissions (where required) – if you are the tenant(s) of the property you will need the proprietor(s) to countersign your application to show that they have given permission for the building works to be carried out.
- Costs for all items, labour and materials. Written or email costs must be dated and include the supplier name and contact details. For items that are being purchased online, a screen shot or print off showing price, date and supplier must be submitted. It is the applicant's responsibility to conduct a price check to show value for money. Please refer to section 8 for further details.
- Before photographs of all capital works as set out in the application.

7.2 Assessment

Applications will be assessed on the following basis;

1. Business location within the agreed boundary area as per maps provided
2. First come basis* where all documentation is provided (completed application for all supporting information to include prices/quotes for each item)
3. Clearly demonstrating the need for the proposed works in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19
4. Ability to achieve the works within the scheme timeframes

Incomplete applications will not be assessed and the applicant will be notified.

**Completed applications will be assessed on a first come basis until the total grant is allocated. Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible and the application will be rejected. The date and time of the submission of application to the Council will be recorded as per the date/time of the email received.*

7.3 Letter of Offer

Applicants **cannot** start works or purchase items within their application until a 'Letter of Offer' for the grant has been issued and the acceptance form is returned to the Council.

The Council will **not** retrospectively fund projects. (i.e. items purchased/works commence prior to a Letter of Offer being issued)

Grant funding must be accepted within one working week of the date of the Letter of Offer.

If your project requires statutory consent and your grant is approved, the Council will issue a Letter of Offer, subject to these approvals. Works cannot be undertaken until all consents have granted. Consent must be granted and works complete no later than Friday 30 July 2021.

7.5 Works Complete

Works must be completed in accordance with that listed on the application form and for which a Letter of Offer has been issued. Where alternative works or additional works is undertaken no payment will be made unless the Council's approval has been obtained prior to works commencing. The grant may be reduced or withheld if the grant eligible work proves to be less than estimated.

7.6 Payment

The applicant will be responsible for paying all supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) directly following completion of the work. The applicant will then be required to complete a Claim Form to recover the grant funding. Grant funding will be paid directly to the applicant within 28 days of having received the applicants completed Claim Form with the following documentation.

- Original invoice(s)/receipt(s) for works and materials which must be dated, marked as paid and provide the supplier/contractor details
- Copy of cheque/ BACS/ bank transfer/ debit card payment to contractor(s) and/or supplier(s)
- Printed bank statement showing associated payment leaving applicant's account
- Photographs of all items and works as set out in the Letter of Offer

Applicants will have to provide all evidence requested, if requested documentation is not supplied, payment will be withheld. Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these items.

Payment of grant will be made to the applicant via direct BACS payment.

Payment from the applicant to supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) must be made via cheque/ BACS/ bank transfer/ debit card

Cash payment is **not** acceptable and will not be eligible for refund from the Council – this is also applicable for deposit payments.

Applicants are responsible for paying the supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) and claiming back VAT if applicable.

8.0 Costs

Applicants **must** conduct a price check in order to demonstrate best value for money. The price check should be carried out and recorded. The applicant may be requested to provide evidence of such to the Council and the Council may then use this evidence to verify the process*

**The Council may verify the process via a telephone call to the supplier(s) and/or contractor(s)*

The process must be open and fair. The best value for money must be secured and the successful supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) must be properly qualified to undertake the works, meeting health and safety requirements in relation to the individuals performing the works and for members of the public. The applicant will be responsible for any additional costs over and above the costs provided.

A cost for each element of the proposed items/works must be submitted within the application form (Item, labour and materials).

Each cost must be dated and include;

- Supplier contact details
- Items/Works detail such as quantities, item description, size, finish required etc.

All supplier(s) and/or contractor(s) asked to provide a cost must be given an identical specification and all costs received must meet the works description as per the application.

If you, or a business of which you are an owner/ partner/ director, or a family member, intend to supply goods, services or works for the project for which you have been offered grant please contact the Council immediately for advice. Failure to comply with this requirement will deem your process as ineligible.

Any proposed changes to the agreed grant eligible works must be agreed by the Council in writing before the work takes place (including any changes to the contractor). The applicant cannot deviate from the works and costs provided; this will render the application as invalid.

9.0 Timescales

The Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme will launch Monday 18 January 2021.

Applications must be returned as soon as possible as grant funding is allocated on a first come basis, an incomplete application with missing supporting information will be deemed ineligible prior to the deadline.

The closing date for applications is 12noon on Monday 1 February 2021.

This scheme accepts application and claim documentation in electronic form. If you are unable to submit your application electronically, please make contact to arrange alternative method.

Completed applications to be sent to:

covidbusinessgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Applicants will be required to have completed and paid for all grant eligible works by Friday 30 July 2021 (ensuring compliance with all terms and conditions of

the grant Letter of Offer) Claims for grant payment in the appropriate manner should be made within 28 days.

10.0 Unsuccessful Applications

If your application is **incomplete** or not eligible, you will be notified, and the reasons will be outlined. A review process will be available.

11.0 Monitoring & Evaluation

Applicants will be required to participate within a monitoring and evaluation process following the completion of works. This will be in the form of a survey or telephone call.

Applicants should be aware that before and after photographs will be required – this may be conducted via site visit or video call. This will be discussed with the applicant following assessment of their application.

12.0 Contact

If you have any queries regarding an application or would like some assistance in ensuring that you can obtain all the information required, please contact:

Beverley Skillen

Email: covidbusinessgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Telephone: 073 4208 6106

13.0 Data Protection

The applicant should be aware that the information contained within the applicant's application and the applicant's claim for payment will be stored on computer and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, and that such information may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000; in addition this shall include any applicable national implementing Laws as amended from time to time including (i) the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED) and (ii) Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 to the extent that it relates to processing of personal data and privacy; and (iii) all applicable Law about the processing of personal data and privacy.

Applications to be returned to:

covidbusinessgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

This scheme is funded by the Department for Communities and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, and is delivered by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

