Empty to Energised Grant Scheme – Grants Between £10,000 and £40,000 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These FAQs provide a summary of the key eligibility requirements and grant conditions. Applicants should read the full Guidance Notes before making an application. Please speak to a Council Officer if you have any queries on this scheme.

Q. Who can apply?
A. Property owners can apply, or where the property / land title is leasehold, provide evidence of a leasehold interest with a minimum of 10 years remaining.

Q. What properties / lands are eligible?
A. Derelict, vacant and underused properties/sites within the Ards and North Down Borough vacant, derelict or underused for at least 12 consecutive months.

Q. What projects can be funded?
A. Structural repairs and refurbishment, conversion works, upper / lower floor reactivation, works required to enable occupation and long-term use, site clearance and preparation costs, access improvements, new or improved lighting, replacement/upgrade of windows/doors. Improvements such as fitting out, upgrading fixtures and fittings, permanently fixed equipment, customer facilities, improved security features.

This list is not exhaustive, and Council reserves the right to exclude any cost, activity, project or applicant that it considers inconsistent with the aims, objectives or requirements of the scheme.

Q. How much funding is available?
A. Grants are capped at a maximum of £40,000, up to 80% of eligible project costs. The total project cost cannot be any more than £50,000.

Q. Do I need match funding?
A. Yes. You must demonstrate the ability to fund at least 20% of eligible project costs.

Q. Do I need planning permission or building control approval?
A. Any required statutory approvals must be approved before a Letter of Offer (Grant Award) would be issued. Further information on statutory approvals is included in the Guidance Notes.

Q. Can I start work before approval?
A. No. Costs incurred before the Letter of Offer (Grant Award) are ineligible.

Q. How are applications assessed?
A. Eligible applications are scored and ranked. Meeting the minimum score does not guarantee funding.

Q. How is the grant paid?
A. In arrears, against eligible expenditure and supporting evidence.

Q. Do procurement rules apply?
A. Yes. Successful applicants must follow Council procurement requirements. These are outlined in the Guidance Notes.

Q. What happens after completion?
A. Every effort must be made to occupy the property within six months. Sale or change of use within five years may result in clawback of grant.

Q. Who can I contact?
A. If you have any queries regarding your application, please contact emptytoenergised@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk