

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council Revitalisation Recovery Grant Scheme

Guidance for Applicants

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as ‘The Council’), in conjunction with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), are offering businesses the opportunity to apply for financial assistance to address some of the operational challenges that have arisen during the COVID 19 Pandemic. The funding is designed to aid the recovery of the various settlements across the Borough and applicants will have to demonstrate how their project will assist with this.

1.2 Aim of the Scheme

Village, town and city centres are important focal points for our local communities. The onset of the COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on these areas and a significant period of rebuilding will ensue to revitalise them, enhance their appeal and ensure that they are safe and welcoming for all visitors. These settlements provide much needed employment as well as recreation and leisure opportunities for all our citizens and for visitors from outside the Borough.

The Council fully appreciates the efforts of businesses to innovate and adapt their normal working procedures to cope with the impact of the pandemic and to address the challenges that the restrictions have placed on normal life. We acknowledge that the pandemic is still a major consideration for businesses and we want to support our traders to ensure that they can move towards new models of service and enhance their capacity to serve customers whilst continuing to operate safely and within Public Health Authority and other Government guidelines.

1.3 Level of grant aid

There are two levels of grant aid available:

- Up to £7,500
- Up to £20,000

The minimum grant available will be £1,000.

Please note that beneficiaries of this funding will be required to adhere to the Council's relevant procurement procedures (Annex A). If procurement is not in compliance with the appropriate procedures, Council reserves the right to withdraw your offer of financial assistance. The grant funding can cover up to 100% of project costs but if your project exceeds £20,000, the business will be required to meet the additional costs and evidence of the availability of match funding will need to be provided to the Council and/or its professional advisors.

The scheme **will not** fund:

- Statutory fees – namely planning, building control, pavement café license;
- Architect or other consultant fees;
- Professional fees – solicitor/surveyor
- Insurances;
- Interest payments;
- Retrospective works carried out prior to the letter of offer date;
- Hire of goods;
- Minor works i.e. paint and façade improvements;
- Projects outside the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area;
- Costs which are deemed excessive by the Council and/or its Professional Advisors.;
- Projects that in the Council's opinion are poor value for money, or that are purchased outside of Council procurement guidelines;
- Cash expenditure will not be eligible for refund from Council;
- VAT;
- Second hand equipment;
- Rent or rates;
- Running costs; and
- Salaries and wages.

Please note this list is not exhaustive and if you have any queries please contact your designated contact Officer.

Section 2 – Practicalities

2.1 Who Can Apply

Applicants must be an eligible commercial business or social enterprise actively trading within the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough

This scheme is open to businesses or social enterprises within urban and rural settlements whose normal business activity has been negatively affected by the onset of the COVID 19 Pandemic and who wish to invest in capital items designed to address some of these negative impacts. Particular focus will be given to businesses from within the retail, hospitality, tourism, culture, professional services (accountants, solicitors, architects, surveyors etc.) and hair and beauty sectors who can demonstrate that the proposed investment can play a significant role in attracting customers back in to the settlement that they are based within, enhance their trading capacity or assist with the sustainability of their business.

Ineligible properties include government organisations, political organisations, religious organisations and churches, community and voluntary groups, financial institutions and membership organisations.

Please note that businesses with multiple properties across the Borough will only be eligible to apply for a maximum of £20,000 either through one application for a single property or split across multiple applications for a number of properties. If you have a query related to your eligibility, please contact your relevant contact Officer.

2.2 What can be funded

This is a capital grant scheme designed to support the purchase of new capital items with a particular focus on addressing some of the challenges that the onset of COVID 19 and its associated restrictions related to social distancing and safe trading have imposed on businesses.

Examples of eligible expenditure include:

- Purchase of equipment to support safe trading and social distancing requirements;
- Purchase of infrastructure to enable safe and enhanced trading capacity ie utilising unused indoor or outdoor space;
- Projects that will repurpose vacant space enabling them to be utilised for enhanced capacity or to facilitate safe trading;
- Provision of hand sanitisation stations or associated infrastructure;
- Purchase of computer equipment/tablets to facilitate bookings and reservations;
- Signage and information provision related to safe trading and social distancing.

If your proposed scheme consists of a variety of elements, ie some fit-out work of unused space as well as the acquisition of equipment for this space, namely tables, chairs, heaters etc this may be considered subject to the maximum grant thresholds previously outlined.

Please note that the list above is not exhaustive so if you have queries related to the eligibility of your proposed project, please contact your nominated Officer.

2.3 Procurement

Applicants will be required to comply with the Council's procurement policies and thresholds. If an individual item to be purchased costs less than £1,500, then value for money should be demonstrated by having 2 comparison quotes. If an individual item to be purchased costs over £1,500 but less than £7,500, 3 written quotations from 3 different suppliers will be required. If an individual item to be purchased costs in excess of £7,500, 4 written quotations from 4 different suppliers will be required. **Please refer to Annex A for details of the Council's Procurement Policy and if you have further queries, please contact your designated contact Officer.**

Please note that only actual costs incurred will be reimbursed and a copy of your invoice(s) and relevant bank statements will be required as part of our monitoring and payment procedures.

2.4 Statutory Consents

It is the applicant's responsibility to ascertain if any statutory consents are required for the project and ensure the relevant applications are made eg planning, building control, listed building consent or pavement café license etc. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all approvals are legally complied with. A 'Certificate of Lawful use or Development' may be requested to prove that planning consent is not required if there is any uncertainty.

Local Planning Office

Phone: 03002007830

Email: planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Web: www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Building Control Department

Armagh – 02837529616; Banbridge 02840660603; Craigavon 02838312500

Environmental Health

Phone: 0300 0300 900

Email: ehealth@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

2.5 Assessment Process

INCOMPLETE AND LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ASSESSED

It is in the applicant's best interest to ensure that all the required information is supplied with the application form to ensure it is assessed. Offer letters will be issued to successful applicants with time bound completion dates. Works should not commence nor should any piece of equipment be purchased until an offer letter has been received, signed and returned to the Council.

This is a competitive application process and applications will be considered on their respective merits against pre-determined scoring criteria. A selection panel appointed by the Council will conduct the assessment of applications. In circumstances where capital works to your premises is proposed, Council's professional advisor will be involved in the assessment process and will conduct visits to premises prior to the works, at various stages during the works and on completion to verify the works.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

	WEIGHTING	SCORE
Project Need	8	40
Impact on key indicators – enhanced capacity, potential to increase footfall, contributing to sustainability of business etc.	8	40
Value for money – cost v benefit	4	20

SEE ANNEX D FOR SCORING GUIDANCE INFORMATION

2.6 Payment of grants

- Do not commence work, pay deposits or confirm the purchase of any equipment until an offer letter has been signed and returned to the council. **Council will not retrospectively fund projects;**
- Grant funding will only be released for payment following inspection of the equipment or works to be funded under this scheme by Council Officers and/or its professional advisors. Interim or staged payments may be accommodated.
- Payment of grant will be made to the applicant via direct BACS payment. No cash or cheque payments will be made.

- Payment will only be made upon receipt of a completed claim form with the following documentation:
 - Copy of invoice(s) for works/equipment purchase(s);
 - Copy of cheque(s)/BACS payment(s) to contractor(s) and/or supplier(s);
 - Copy of relevant bank statement(s). Electronic banking printouts will be sufficient for these purposes;
 - Payment for equipment and to contractor(s) must be made via Cheque or BACS.

NB: CASH EXPENDITURE WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PUROPOSES OF THIS FUND

2.7 Fraud

You must repay to us any Grant that we have paid you if:

- you have, in our opinion, given us fraudulent, incorrect or misleading information;
- you have acted negligently in any significant matter or fraudulently in connection with the project;
- any competent authority directs the repayment of the Grant; or
- you knowingly withhold information that is relevant to the content of your Application.

2.8 State Aid

Please note that this financial assistance may be considered as State Aid and successful applicants will be required to complete a State Aid declaration form.

2.9 Recovery of equipment purchased under this scheme

In the event that the business ceases to trade within the period up to 31st March 2021, any item of equipment purchased under this scheme may be recoverable by Council.

Section 3 – How to Apply

3.1 Next steps

Step 1 Seek written quotations from the requisite number of contractors/suppliers Under £1,500.

Price checks for project total cost under £1500 must be captured using the price check table in ANNEX B, if using online checks, screen shots and full web address, access date must be visible, for telephone quotes the name of supplier, telephone number, address and contact person must be retained along with the price.

£1,501 to £20,000

A detailed specification should be prepared for each item to include delivery and installation costs if applicable. All suppliers invited to quote should be issued with the same specification and email evidence may be required, eg copy of email sent to the supplier. Applicants should complete ANNEX C for quotations.

Quotations sought should be like for like, particularly for specific items to enable direct comparison in order to verify value for money.

Ensure all costs are quoted and accounted for eg delivery and installation.

Email quotations are acceptable and the covering email from suppliers must be provided.

Quotations must be sought and received within the period of the 'Grant Application Period' and contain the suppliers details.

All quotations and price checks must be excluding VAT.

Quotations in other currencies should be compared using the rate of exchange through www.x-rates.com on the quotation date, and screen shot of x rate included in the application.

Step 2 Complete an application form

All sections of the application form must be completed in full, as this information provided will be used in the assessment. Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be assessed.

Include all evidence of seeking price checks and quotations for the value of your project.

Include completed Annex B and/or Annex C

Scanned copies of the quotations can be accepted with your application.

Please refer to the Application Checklist provided at the end of the Application Form

Step 3 Return your application form to Council by email
recoverygrant@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Or send/hand deliver it to Banbridge Civic Building, Downshire Road, Banbridge, BT32 3JY and marked Revitalisation Recovery Grant Scheme and For the Attention of: Ann- Marie Dale

3.2 Key dates

This is the first call for applications under this scheme and further calls may be announced in due course. Key dates are:

- Programme launch Tuesday 11th August 2020
- Deadline for call 1 12noon on Friday 28th August 2020
- Offer letters to be issued Wednesday 9th September 2020

3.3 Unsuccessful applications and appeals process

If an application is not successful, Officers from the Council are available to discuss the application and provide practical developmental support to address areas of concern.

An Appeals Process/Review Procedure is also available if an application is unsuccessful. The purpose of this is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed for individual applications are applied fairly and consistently.

The Review will provide an independent process through which an applicant will have the opportunity to submit information to the Review Panel indicating that either:

- the outcome was unreasonable or;
- the proper procedures were not followed.

Appeals on any other grounds will not be considered.

3.4 Further queries

If you have further queries related to the scheme, please contact your designated officer as indicated below:

Armagh City, Banbridge or Dromore Julieann Spence
Julieann.spence@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Portadown or Lurgan Helen Donnelly
Helen.donnelly@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Craigavon Peter Scott
Peter.scott@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Rural settlements Rosemary Hughes
Rosemary.hughes@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Annex A – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council’s Procurement Policy

<i>Estimated Value</i>	<i>Process To Be Used</i>
Where estimated cost does not exceed £1,500	No quotation required but reasonable effort must be made to obtain value for money. Officers must retain evidence of efforts made to obtain value for money e.g. screen dumps of relevant sites, notes of companies contacted, the name of the person contacted and the telephone number called as well as dates and times.
Where estimated cost is £1,501 - £7,500	A minimum of 3 written competitive quotations required.
Where estimated cost is £7,501 - £20,000	A minimum of 4 written competitive quotations required.
Where estimated cost is £20,001 - £30,000	A minimum of 4 selected tenders

ANNEX B PRICE CHECK COMPARISON FOR GRANTS UP TO £1,500

PRICE CHECK COMPARISON			
Item description:			
Supplier 1	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Source of price
Supplier Name:			Phone Y/N
Contact Name			Online Y/N (please provide link)
Address:			
Tel no:			
Web address:			
Supplier 2	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Source of price
Supplier Name:			Phone Y/N
Contact Name			Online Y/N (please provide link)
Address:			
Tel no:			
Web address:			
Supplier 3	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Source of price
Supplier Name:			Phone Y/N
Contact Name			Online Y/N (please provide link)
Address:			
Tel no:			
Web address:			
Date price checks were undertaken:			
The supplier demonstrating value for money for this item is:			
At a price of:			

ANNEX C

QUOTATIONS FOR GRANTS FROM £1,501 TO £20,000

QUOTATIONS RECORD			
Quotation description:			
Supplier 1	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Date quote returned
Supplier Name:			
Contact Name			
Address:			
Tel no:			
Email:			
Supplier 2	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Date quote returned
Supplier Name:			
Contact Name			
Address:			
Tel no:			
Email :			
Supplier 3	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Date quote returned
Supplier Name:			
Contact Name			
Address:			
Tel no:			
Email:			
Supplier 4	Details	Price £ (ex VAT)	Date quote returned
Supplier Name:			
Contact Name			
Address:			
Tel no:			
Email:			
Quotations were sought and returned in correct timeframe:			Y/N
Evidence of quotations available emails, quotation document:			Y/N
All prices returned are in sterling:			Y/N
The supplier demonstrating value for money for this item is:			
At a quotation price of:			

ANNEX D – SCORING GUIDANCE

Scoring Guidance		
Analysis of Answer	Description	Score
Excellent response that meets the requirements. Indicates an excellent response with no obvious weaknesses.	Excellent	5
A good response that meets the requirements. Demonstrates good understanding.	Very Good	4
Meets requirements. The response generally meets the requirements, but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher mark.	Good	3
A response with reservations. Lacks convincing detail. Medium risk that the Scheme objectives will not be met.	Poor	2
An unacceptable response with serious reservations. Limited detail. High risk that the Scheme objectives will not be met.	Very Poor	1
The applicant failed to address the question.	Did not answer question	0