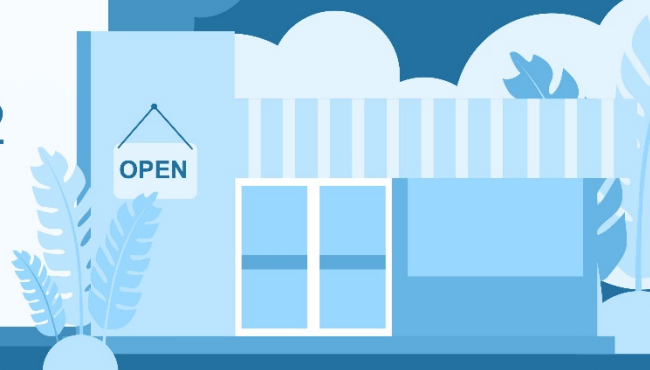


Small Settlement Business Support Grant Scheme 2022

Meanwhile Space Grant
Commercial Façade Grant



An Roinn
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Department for
Commonities



APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES

Opening:-

9th November 2022 at 14:30

Closing:-

1st December 2022 at 12.00 noon

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to Programme

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has secured funding in collaboration with the Department for Communities (DFC) and the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to deliver a Shop Facade Improvement scheme and Meanwhile Use Grant scheme as part of the COVID – 19 Recovery Small Settlement Regeneration Programme.

1.1 Grant Tiers

The grant schemes has two tiers aimed at supporting businesses located with Small Settlements with a population between 1000 and 4999 (Appendix 1).

Tier 1 - Small Settlement Commercial Façade Grant aims to support businesses to improve their facade, while creating a more welcoming environment to existing/new customers while also enhancing the wider benefits for the small settlement. **The maximum grant value to applicants under this scheme will be £3,000.** If you are VAT registered, your grant will be paid on the nett amount.

Tier 2 - Small Settlement Meanwhile Space Grant aims to help businesses transform underused space. The grant will be used to improve and reconfigure the interior of the building so it can be brought into use or better utilised, thus creating more opportunities for start-ups/growth of existing businesses and overall benefit the local economy. **The maximum grant value to applicants under this scheme will be £20,000.** If you are VAT registered, your grant will be paid on the nett amount.

Both Schemes can provide funding up to 80% towards eligible costs up to maximum of £20,000 per property for a Meanwhile Use Project and up to £3,000 for a Façade Grant. Applications must provide a minimum of 20% match funding contribution towards the project.

	Total Project Cost	Maximum Grant award	Applicant Funding	Match
Example 1- Shop Façade	£3,750	£3,000	£750	
Example 1- Shop Façade	£5,000	£3,000	£2,000	
Example 2- Meanwhile Use	£25,000	£20,000	£5,000	
Example 2- Meanwhile Use *	£60,000 +	£20,000	£40,000 +	

*There is no maximum total project cost, however the maximum grant award will be £20,000 for Tier 2 for a Meanwhile Space Grant and £3,000 for Tier 1 Commercial Façade Grant

** If you are VAT registered, your grant will be paid on the nett amount.

Only one application per property will be considered.

This is a competitive process and any grants awarded will be determined on the basis of their ability to meet the criteria and subject to available budget.

1.2 Who Can Apply?

The grant schemes are open to owners or leaseholders of eligible properties in the settlement limits of a Small Settlements located of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. The list of the small settlements can be found under Appendix 1.

- Commercial businesses;
- Social Enterprises;
- One application per business address; and
- Applicants who have not received façade and meanwhile use funding in the last 3 years (November 2019 – November 2022) from Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Grants.

To be eligible, applications must meet the following criteria:

- The property must be located within the settlement limits of the small settlements Appendix 1
- Leaseholders must have written permission from the property owner or landlord to apply and owners/landlords must have written support from other tenants within a buildings such has multiple occupants (if applicable)
- For the Meanwhile Use scheme all applicants must demonstrate they have a robust plan in place to revitalise and repurpose the commercial property for retail, residential, office, leisure or other economic use to generate return on investment and increase footfall to the small settlement. This will include commitment to make the property available for tenancy or occupancy within 3 months of the project completion.
- Have a bank account in the name of the property owner or leaseholder. All transactions must be made to this bank account for the scheme.
- Successful applications will be required to demonstrate that they have the financial resource to complete the project in full (i.e. 100% of project costs). This may be demonstrated by a current bank balance or a letter from the bank to confirm the required funding is available this will be requested if the applicant has been successful at application stage.
- Demonstrate a suitable level of viability and solvency.
- Demonstrate that all statutory requirements e.g. planning, licencing etc. are adhered to.
- Provide proof of building and contents insurance.

Both schemes are aimed at supporting regeneration that will have economic benefit to the small settlements such as creating employment, business expansion and retention of commercial properties.

1.3 Who Cannot Apply?

Ineligible applicants / businesses / organisations are as follows:-

Applicants whose property is not located with the settlements limits of the small settlements listed (Appendix 1)

Applicants whose subject property owner or leaseholder is political party or organisation, membership organisation, religious organisations/churches, sporting groups, community and voluntary groups which are not social Economy Enterprises.

Where the owner or leaseholder is a bank or financial institution.

Where the property owner or leaseholder is a public sector organisation or public service provider e.g. Libraries, statutory organisations, funded by another funded body

1.4 What can be funded?

Both schemes are to support property capital schemes either to bring back into use or enhance/replace shopfront façade. If you are VAT registered, your grant will be paid on the nett amount.

Examples of eligible expenditure for Tier 1 & 2

- Capital building works e.g. signage, shutter and wire removal and replacement of toughen glass, lighting, painting, rain water goods
- Building repairs (non routine e.g. cleaning of gutting)

Additional eligible expenditure for Tier 2

- Building extensions or conversions to improve the use of the building
- Fixed building fit outs for commercial use. (this can include decorating if they are an integral part of a wider capital works or repurposing)
- Service and utility upgrades to bring the property back into use.
- Internal shop fit out;
- Splitting units so they are better utilised and
- Re-purpose space enabling it to be utilised for enhanced capacity.

Please note that the list above is not exhaustive.

Please note for any project involving building works or external modification all relevant planning permission and building control permissions must be in place prior to the project starting or expenditure being incurred, however statutory fees are not considered eligible items of expenditure.

1.5 What cannot be funded?

Examples of ineligible work items that will not be funded?

- Land and property purchase
- Demolition
- Legal Costs
- General maintenance /repair works
- Technical, design, professional fees (including architect fees, quantity surveyor fees or fees to develop specification and tendering documentation)
- Statutory planning permissions costs, building control fees or any other statutory fees
- Improvements or refurbishments of any existing residential property including attics, garages etc.
- Labour costs not directly associated with the capital works/items

- Projects that have already commenced or expenditure has been incurred prior to a letter of offer.
- Revenue items such as marketing, websites, training, studies, personal protective equipment etc.
- Motorised vehicles including vans, Lorries, forklifts etc.
- Cost of advertising for quotations/tender
- Business running costs
- Bank Interest Charges or fees
- New build accommodation and provision of additional bed space for existing accommodation
- Existing residential properties are not eligible for building works or modifications in any circumstance however re-purposing of vacant commercial or retail properties for residential commercial use is an eligible project cost e.g. rental, self-catering etc.
- Gap site developments and new build developments
- Any cost which is another statutory agency's responsibility;
- VAT, if registered for VAT
- Costs incurred prior to a Letter of offer;
- Loan repayments and bank charges;
- Costs not clearly linked to the scheme;
- Running costs,;
- Projects/equipment etc. that has received façade and meanwhile use funding in the last 3 years (November 2019 – November2022) from other Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council grants and other programmes. ;
- Late applications;
- Insurances;
- Interest payments;
- Retrospective works carried out prior to the letter of offer date;
- Hire of goods;
- 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;
- Multinationals or chains which have corporate frontage;
- Rent or rates; and
- Salaries and wages.

Please note this list is not exhaustive, please email smallsettlements@armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk if you have any further queries.

2.0 THE PROCESS

2.1 Application

Applicants are required to utilise the council's grant hub to make an application at <https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.eformz.info>.

Applicants will be required to register an account and then select the grant being applied for.

Incomplete or late applications will not be assessed.

2.2 Supporting Documentation

Additional supporting documentation including quotations for work must be provided and uploaded for all works proposed. It will be recommended that the applicant obtains at least a 30 day valid quotation, as the letter of offer and value of funds are based on the documentation provided with the submission of application.

Other supporting documentation to be upload:-

1. Consent from property owner to complete the proposed work.
2. If required, statutory consent has been applied for.
3. Images of the building which is applying for grant assistance
4. Specification of work to be completed

2.3 Quotations required with application

<i>Estimated Value</i>	<i>Process To Be Used</i>
Where estimated cost does not exceed £1,500	A minimum of 2 written competitive quotations required
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 over £20,000	Publicly advertised tender is required

If you want to accept a tender other than the lowest tender, you must provide a written justification when submitting your application. If the assessment panel does not agree with your rational, any grant awarded will be based on the lowest quotation or tender.

Please note the application should ensure that no conflict of interest shall arise in the appointment of any person to provide goods, works or services which may be wholly or partly funded by council, and shall upon request provide the Council with written confirmation that no such conflict arises.

2.4 Assessment Process

Applications received will be assessed and scored against the criteria set and detail provided by the applicant.

Stage one in the process will be to assess the application for eligibility as per the criteria in Section one if the application is eligible, it will be forwarded to stage two for a full assessment and scored against the stated criteria.

The Council will have a cross departmental grants assessment panel to score applications.

If the applicant meets to eligible criteria, the information supplied will then be scored according to the established assessment criteria below

It is important to note: - This is a competitive application process and applications will be considered on their respective merits against pre-determined scoring criteria. 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 for Commercial Facade Scheme

	WEIGHTING	SCORE
Project Need	8	40
Impact on key Indicators Tier 1 How the project makes a contribution to improving the façade of the property and creating a more pleasing environment resulting in wider benefits for the public realm and civic pride.	8	40
Value for money – cost v benefit	4	20

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria for Meanwhile Use Scheme

	WEIGHTING	SCORE
Project Need	6	30
Impact on key Indicators Tier 2 How the project makes a contribution to help businesses transform underused space - to improve and reconfigure the interior of the building so it can be brought into use or better utilised, thus creating more opportunities for start-ups/growth of existing businesses and benefit the local economy.	6	30
Forward Planning – generate a return on the investment and occupied in 3 months after completion.	4	20
Value for money – cost v benefit	4	20

Following assessment eligible projects are ranked in order of highest to lowest score. Funding will be awarded to the highest scoring eligible project based on the scheme being applied for and work down the list until budget has been allocated.

If the fund is oversubscribed, additional eligibility criteria and assessment measures may be applied (both essential and desirable)

A reserve list or call off list will be established and will be made up of projects which scored above the minimum threshold. This list will be prioritised via the assessment process.

2.5 Outcome from Assessment Process

When the scores are finalised, the applications will be presented to Council for approval. Successful/unsuccessful applications will be notified within 12 weeks of their application being received.

If successful, Council will issue a Letter of Offer along with an invitation to attend a mandatory workshop. Your Letter of Offer will form a legal agreement deliver the proposal outlines in the application form. Pre-commencement conditions will be included which must be accepted and returned within 20 days of receipt. The council will not reimburse applicants for any expenditure incurred before the letter of offer has been accepted and returned.

All successful applicants will be required to attend a Letter of Offer workshop which will explain the process and procedures that relate to the programme monitoring and evaluation requirements and process for verification. Applicants who do attend this workshop and agree to the conditions will forfeit the offer of funding.

Projects must be complete, paid in full and cleared the bank account by the end date on the Letter of Offer or the project will be deemed ineligible and no grant payment will be paid

For the Programme it is important to note that officers and/Quantity Surveyor will arrange visits in order to verify spend and discuss the monitoring information with the businesses.

If Unsuccessful – a letter will be issued to the applicant and reason provided.

An appeals process/review procedure is in place, where you can request within 20 days of notification. The appeals process will provide an independent process through which an applicant will have the opportunity to submit information to an independent 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. The decision of the Review Panel will be final.

3.0 CONDITIONS OF GRANT

- Any grant offered will be subject to a number of conditions; if your application is successful. Please note this is a sample of the conditions, will full details provided if you receive a letter of offer.
- Requirement to submit full specification of works for alike project expenditure and full works programme with timetable.
- Works requiring building works and/or external modification require all relevant full planning permissions and building control permissions prior to commencing project or expenditure being incurred. For all works which will require statutory permission, it is the applicant's responsibility to cover these costs and ensure that these are obtained.
- The grant must only be used for the eligible works detailed and to the specified property.
- This grant will not be transferable to another property, project or person.
- To work can commenced until the applicant has receive permission to start and satisfied all pre-commence conditions.
- Letter of Offers must be accepted and return within 20 days of the issue date.
- Work must be carried out by the lowest quoting contactor or supplier – unless previously agreed in writing by the council. (Copies should be supplied an application stage in line with procurement guidance). All quotations must be for the address of the business and property proposed.
- All works must be completed and claimed 28 days after the completion date on the Letter of Offer
- After grant the business must continue to maintain the works area and keep in a reasonable state of repair
- All works is completed to the satisfaction of council and appointed Quantity Surveyor; the grant may be reduced or withheld if the grant eligible work price is less than estimated or if the work is not carried out to a satisfactory standard.
- As an applicant your agent or your contractor are responsible for all risks in connection with the public and employers liability associated with works.

- Council or the Department for Communicates and Department for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs may record the fact that a grant has been made in any publicity, reports and other relevant publication/online forums.
- Upon completion Council, at its discretion, may contact suppliers, contractors to directly verify expenditure has taken place in accordance to the application and claim for funding. Cases of suspected double funding or fraud will be reported to the police.
- The applicant is responsible for supplying the correct contact details and for checking correspondence from Council. The Council cannot be held accountable for non-responses or missed communications from either email which renders the application void.
- Work should commence within three months of the grant being offered, the grant offer maybe withdrawn at the discretion of the Council if this does not occur.

4.0 CLAIMING THE GRANT

Grant aid will be paid in arrears once a signed claim form with supporting invoices, bank statement, claim form, pictures, proof of Public Liability Insurance and Post Project Evaluation are submitted and satisfactorily verified by council staff - a site visit to inspect the work carried out may be undertaken by the council.

Payment of grant will be made to the applicant via direct BACS payment. No cash or cheque payments will be made. If requested stage payment may be accommodated.

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

Grant

Tier 1 successful applicants will receive grant aid of up to 80% - maximum grant £3,000

Example

Project cost £2,000 grant aid 80% £1,600. Applicant contribution £400

Project cost £3750 grant aid 80% £3000. Applicant contribution £750

Project cost £5,000, grant aid 80% £3,000 (maximum grant aid). Applicant contribution £2,000

Tier 2 successful applicants will receive grant aid of up to 80% - maximum grant £20,000

Example

Project cost £15,000, grant aid 80% £12,000. Applicant contribution £3,000

Project cost £25,000, grant aid 80% £20,000. Applicant contribution £5,000

Project cost £30,000, grant aid 80% £20,000 (maximum grant aid). Applicant contribution £10,000

5.0 GUIDE ON COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

All sections of your application form must be completed fully and concisely as possible as only this information can be used to assess your project proposal. Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be assessed. Please note the maximum word limits per question.

Q1. Applicant Details

Please state

- 1.1 your applicant name
- 1.2 your relationship to the property – Owner, tenant, other (please state)
- 1.3 if you are not the property owner if you have permission from the owner to take part in the scheme – you must gain permission from the owner prior to work starting
- 1.4 the correspondence address

Q2. Property Details

Please state

- 2.1 name of Business trading in the property
- 2.2 property address
- 2.3 your VAT status – if you are registered for VAT please provide your VAT registration number
- 2.4 which settlement you are located in

Q3. Project Details

3.1 Please provide details of your proposed project – (what do you want to do? what difference will your project make to your business)

3.2 Please indicate why your project is needed – have you completed any research or surveys to determine need? what added value will this project bring to your business? what problems are you trying to solve through this project? what is the opportunity you want to develop through this project?

3.3 Please include external and internal images of the property – please attach images of how the property currently looks

(Tier 1 only)

3.4 Please detail how your project makes a contribution to improving the façade of the property and creating a more pleasing environment resulting in wider benefits for the public realm and civic pride – how will the project improve the façade and surrounding public realm?

(Tier 2 only)

3.4 Please provide details of how your project makes a contribution to help business transform underused space to improve and reconfigure the interior of the building so it can be brought into use or better utilised, this creating more opportunities for startup/growth of existing businesses and benefit the local economy

(Tier 2 only)

3.5 Please explain how your project will generate a return on the investment and you plan to have the property occupied within 3 month after completion

Q 4. Project Cost and Administration

4.1 Quotation or tender details must be included in section 4. Up to £1500 2 quotes, £1501-£7,500 3 quotes, £7501- £20000 4 quotes and over £20,000 open tender. Please list the name of the supplier and value of the quotation or tender. A copy of the quotation must also be attached.

4.2 If you do not wish to use the cheapest supplier please indicate why and provide a justification when submitting your application. If the assessment panel does not agree with your rationale, any grant awarded will be based on the lowest quotation or tender.

4.3 The applicant should ensure that no conflict of interest shall arise in the appointment of any person to provide goods, works or services. Please detail if any conflicts of interest e.g. relative providing a quotation.

4.4 Please provide details of the total project costs both nett of VAT and inclusive of VAT. Maximum grant aid will be up to 80% of eligible expenditure up to £3000 in Tier 1 and £20,000 in Tier 2 please indicate how much grant aid you are seeking.

Q5. Declaration

Applicants must read the conditions and agree the information included in the application is true and accurate.

6.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 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 e.g. 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 – 028 3752 9616; Banbridge 028 4066 0603; Craigavon 028 3831 2500

Environmental Health

Phone: 0300 0300 900

Email: health@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

6.2 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.

6.3 State Aid

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

6.4 All Other Queries

For this programme, if you have any queries and wish to speak with a member of the team please email smallsettlements@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk, or contact the Business Support Helpline on 028 38 312 571

Appendix 1

Eligible Small Settlements with a populations 1,000-4,999

Waringstown
Tandragee
Keady
Richhill
Rathfriland
Dollingstown
Gilford
Donaghcloney
Markethill
Magheralin
Laurelvale/Mullavilly
Aghagallon
Bleary