

Additional Restrictions Grant Policy

July 2021

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1 Introduction

Government funded Business Grants, such as Local Restrictions Grants and Re-Start Grants were withdrawn with effect from 1 July 2021 and can no longer be claimed.

The Council continues to manage an Additional Restrictions Grant fund, which can be claimed, in line with this policy until 31 March 2022.

Under the Additional Restrictions Grant, the council received a one off lump sum payment amounting to £20 per head of population as national restrictions were imposed on 5 November.

The Council is required to write a policy to allocate those funds during the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022. Local Authorities can use this funding for any business support activities. The government envisage this will primarily take the form of discretionary grants, but the council also use this funding for wider business support activities.

This council will take a phased approach to the allocation of these funds.

It is proposed that Stafford Borough Council's Additional Restrictions Grant will comprise the following strands:

- Support to start-up a business
- Support for hospitality tourism and leisure businesses
- Support for rural business to business organisations
- Skills and training support in partnership with and delivered by Staffordshire County Council
- Support of apprenticeships in partnership with and delivered by Staffordshire County Council

2 Funding for Start-Ups

Stafford Borough Council has launched a new fund to support those who are thinking of starting a business and whose business start up plans have been impacted by Covid-19. The Stafford Borough Start Up scheme offers a one-off grant of up to £5,000 for permanent Borough residents who are seeking to start up a business within the financial year 21/22.

The fund will be open for applications until 30 September 2021.

Applications are invited from:

- An individual who has recently been made redundant or is facing redundancy and seeking to establish a business within Stafford Borough
- An economically inactive resident who is seeking to establish a business within Stafford Borough

- An economically active resident who is seeking to start a business within Stafford Borough

Applicants must be some way towards opening a business without actually having started to trade (e.g. registered at Companies House, or signed a lease or opened a business bank account etc) and have been prohibited from doing so by Covid-19 restrictions that have been in place.

The grant, which requires no match funding, can be spent on for example:

- Capital equipment
- Marketing materials - eg leaflets, business cards, posters, hire of exhibition stands
- Website creation, social media and APP development
- Specialist advice eg HR, finance, legal, planning, marketing
- Advertising, PR and publicity

(This list is not exhaustive)

Priority will be given to applicants who:

- Have attended a start-up workshop, taken business advice or attended an online start-up course
- Are facing redundancy or have been made redundant and those who are economically inactive
- Will be creating employment
- Planning to take on commercial premises

Businesses that are open and have been trading are not eligible for this strand of funding.

Application Process

Applicants are required to complete an online grant application if they feel they may be eligible. Applications will be reviewed in order of receipt. A business advisor will make contact to discuss the business needs further and how the grant will help with starting a business.

Documents required to support application:

- Information on start-up advice received
- Application form
- Business Plan
- Financial Forecast
- Quotation for the service/product being purchased
- Bank statement for payment verification purposes
- Copy of commercial property lease (if appropriate)
- Proof of UTR number or National Insurance Number

Following receipt and subsequent approval of all the above documentation, the grant will be paid directly into the applicant's bank account. Successful applicants do not have to pay for the project before being able to draw down the grant monies. The grant cannot be used to pay for purchases already made.

3 Hospitality Tourism and Leisure Businesses

Stafford Borough Council has launched a fund to help support small to medium businesses (SMEs), that are located within Stafford Borough utilising the Additional Restrictions Grant. Applications will be open from 6 September 2021 to 1 March 2021

Grants of up to £5,000 will be available to businesses in the Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure sector who have plans to develop and grow their businesses in 2022.

Applications are invited from the following businesses:

- Amusements and visitor attractions (family entertainment centres)
- Art Gallery / Museum (privately owned)
- Bars, Pubs, Restaurants
- Bowling Allies, Ice Rinks
- Cafés with indoor / outdoor seating
- Camping, Glamping and Caravan sites
- Discotheques, Night Clubs
- Dance centres
- Hotels, Registered B&B (not Airbnb accommodation)
- Private Leisure Centres
- Private Outdoor Pursuits Centres
- Private Play Centres /Soft Play Centres/Trampoline Centres
- Private Golf Courses and Driving Ranges
- Sexual Entertainment Venues
- Sports Clubs (eg football, rugby)
- Theatres / Cinemas / Event Spaces

Eligibility

Please do not apply if any of the following applies to you, as you will not be eligible:

- Your business does not fall within the categories listed above
- Your business is registered from domestic premises and is home based
- You cannot provide a full set of trading accounts
- You cannot outline plans for growing or developing your business
- You cannot demonstrate a 30% loss of income
- If you employ more than 250 full-time equivalent persons
- If you have an annual turnover exceeding £40 million

Examples of eligible expenditure:

- Website design
- Marketing material - brochures, flyers, leaflets, posters
- Specialist Advice - HR / Finance / Marketing / Legal/Planning
- Capital equipment - coffee machines, catering equipment, IT equipment
- New signage, seating, marquees
- Advertising, PR, Publicity costs

Application Process

Businesses will be invited to complete an Expression of Interest form.

- Applications will be reviewed in order of receipt
- A business advisor will make contact to discuss the business needs further and how the grant will help with recovery and growth plans

Eligible Businesses will then be required to complete a grant application form.

Documents required to support full application

- Application form
- 1 Quote for each project cost.
- Full set of trading accounts
- Businesses **must** provide at least one piece of evidence which clearly shows the impact of the coronavirus pandemic upon their business, evidence must show a minimum 30% reduction in turnover and provide a comparison for a minimum of 2 months, such as:
 - Bank statements showing the decline in revenue / sales to give a comparison between non lockdown / restrictions and lockdown / restrictions month
 - Business's financial accounts, showing decline revenue / sales to give a comparison between non lockdown / restrictions and lockdown / restrictions months

4 Rural Business to Business Funding

Stafford Borough Council has launched a fund to help support small to medium rural based businesses (SMEs), that are located within Stafford Borough. Application process will be announced at a later date.

Grants will be available to support businesses in rural areas who have plans to develop new products and services. Rural areas are defined as those where there are less than 10,000 residents.

Applications are invited from the following sectors:

- Manufacturing
- Wholesale
- Construction
- Logistics, storage, transport
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Information and communication
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing

This fund is open to those businesses where a minimum of 75% of their income is from sales to other businesses.

Eligibility

Please do not apply if any of the following applies to you, as you will not be eligible:

- Your business is not in a rural area
- Your business is not in the sectors listed above
- Your business is not in commercial premises
- You cannot provide a full set of trading accounts
- More than 25% of income is from consumers
- You employ more than 250 full-time equivalent persons
- You have an annual turnover exceeding £40 million

Examples of eligible expenditure:

- Website design
- Marketing materials for new product or service
- Specialist Advice on New Product Design, Financial, Planning
- Capital equipment
- Advertising, PR, Publicity to launch new product or service

Application Process

Businesses will be invited to complete an Expression of Interest form.

- Applications will be reviewed in order of receipt
- A business advisor will make contact to discuss the business needs further and how the grant will help with recovery and growth plans

Eligible Businesses will then be required to complete a grant application form.

Documents required to support full application

- Application form
- 1 Quote for each project cost.
- Full set of trading accounts
- Businesses **must** provide at least one piece of evidence which clearly shows the impact of the coronavirus pandemic upon their business, evidence must

show a minimum 30% reduction in turnover and provide a comparison for a minimum of 2 months, such as:

- Bank statements showing the decline in revenue / sales to give a comparison between none lockdown / restrictions and lockdown / restrictions months
- Business's financial accounts, showing decline revenue / sales to give a comparison between none lockdown / restrictions and lockdown / restrictions months

5 Other Businesses

The Council retains discretion to award grants, in exceptional circumstances, to businesses not meeting the above criteria. Such awards will need the approval of 2 Senior Members of the Economic Growth Team. The factors used to determine the grants will include but not be restricted to:

- Severe financial hardship.
- Disproportionate impact of trading restrictions.
- Eligibility for other grants or external funding streams.
- Any benefit to the local community of services provided by the business.
- Detriment to the local community of the business being forced to close.

6 Appeals Process

Grants are paid at the discretion of the Council with awards being determined within the Economic Growth and Revenues teams as appropriate. No formal right of appeal exists, but an applicant who is dissatisfied with a grant determination make request that it be reviewed by a more senior officer within the department. Following this a further appeal can be made via the Councils Complaints procedure.

7 Exclusions to Additional Restrictions Grant funding

Businesses that have already received grant payments that equal the maximum permitted levels of subsidy will not be eligible to receive funding.

For the avoidance of doubt, businesses that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made, are not eligible for funding under this scheme.

ARG funding should not be used as a wage support mechanism, for capital projects that do not provide direct business support, or to fund projects whereby Local Authorities are the recipients.

Grant income received by a business is taxable. The Additional Restrictions Grant will need to be included as income in the tax return of the business.

Further information can be found here relating to ARG payment guidelines https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/994386/additional-restrictions-grant-la-guidance.pdf

8 How we use your personal information:

The information provided will be used by Stafford Borough Council, as the data controller, to allow us to administer grant applications. We will only share your information, when necessary, with agencies involved in the processing of grants or where the law requires or allows us to. For further information, please see <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/business-grant-applications-privacy-notice>

