



# Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant - Online Application Guidance Notes and Processes

## Background:

As part of Stafford Borough Council's 2025-26 UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme, Stafford Borough Council has chosen to invest in delivering a grant programme for small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) based in commercial premises within the local authority area of Stafford Borough.

The Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

**Note:** Applications will close on **30 November 2025** subject to funds still being available.

This grant is open to businesses who can fulfil the criteria below.

## Criteria:

You are strongly advised to read the Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant Policy before completing your application form.

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

To apply for funding from the Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant your business must meet the SME criteria as follows:

The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and an annual turnover of less than or equal to £44m or a balance sheet total of less than or equal to £38m from all sectors.

If the business is owned by another company or combination of other companies, please refer to the guidance on the government website:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/supplementary-information-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-definition-html](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/supplementary-information-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-definition-html)

In addition, we will fund businesses where there is demonstrable need for the proposed project and clear evidence of future growth of the business as a direct result of the project.

Businesses from all sectors are eligible for consideration, except for charities, those of a political or religious persuasion, activities involving pornography or clairvoyance and any business activity that is illegal or deemed as unsuitable for public support by Stafford Borough Council.

You must have been actively trading for 2 years or more and be profit-seeking. Both capital and revenue expenditure are eligible for consideration.

## **Subsidy Control:**

The grant operates in accordance with subsidy allowance, where you are allowed up to £315,000 (subject to exchange rates) in Minimal Amounts of Financial Assistance over any rolling period of 3 financial years.

Please see the government website for further information:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/subsidy-control-a-guide-for-beneficiaries/subsidy-control-a-guide-for-beneficiaries](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subsidy-control-a-guide-for-beneficiaries/subsidy-control-a-guide-for-beneficiaries)

Any subsidy which is awarded to you under the Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant will need to be declared if you have applied for any other public funding. Therefore, if successful, the offer letter must be retained and shown to any other public body to which you apply for funding for the three years following the offer. False declarations will lead to the recovery of the value of the assistance provided plus interest.

Please note that where a business is part of a group, the £315,000 limit applies to the group as a whole for public sector support within the United Kingdom.

## **Stafford Borough Council Privacy Notice - GDPR:**

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we are committed to protecting your personal data and processing it in a transparent and secure manner. When you provide your data as part of a grant application, we ensure that it is used only for the specific purposes outlined in the application, such as evaluating your eligibility and the potential impact of your project. We collect and process data lawfully, ensuring it is accurate, up-to-date, and necessary for the evaluation process. Your data will not be shared with third parties unless required for the fulfilment of the grant or as legally required.

We will keep you informed by the means of our monthly newsletter of any future upcoming grant or business support schemes, which we believe will be of interest to you.

You have the right to opt out at any time and the right to access, correct, or delete your personal data at any time.

We implement appropriate security measures to protect your data and ensure its confidentiality. If you have any concerns regarding how your data is processed, you can contact us directly for clarification or to exercise your rights under GDPR.

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/business-grant-applications-privacy-notice](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/business-grant-applications-privacy-notice)

## **Completing the online application form:**

The use of consultants or third parties to complete the application form for you is an ineligible cost. Applicants are encouraged to use partner organisations for any additional support which is at no cost e.g. Business Advisor. Alternatively, please contact the Business Growth Team at Stafford Borough Council and we can support you through the process.

If you are unable to use the online application form, we can arrange to have a paper version sent to you electronically or by post.

The application form must be digitally signed by a person legally responsible for the business identified as the 'Applicant' in the application form

All your supporting documentation should be uploaded via the online process. If you are having difficulty with achieving this for any reason, please send the documentation directly to [economy@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:economy@staffordbc.gov.uk) stating your business name and Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant in the subject header.

The questions in this form have been thoughtfully designed to help the council gain a clearer understanding of how your business is operating, ensuring that public funds are used effectively and in a way that best supports local businesses.

The online form can be saved if you need to revisit it later; good practice is to read through the checklist and questions below before you start.

We do not require huge quantities of information in the free flow boxes, just an overview of what the question requires. The maximum word count is 500 words per detailed question.

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Please note the following guidance notes have been written to support you whilst completing your online application.

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## **Questions and guidance:**

### **Section 1: Applicant Details**

#### **The date your business began trading:**

Please state the date and year your business started trading.

#### **What is the registered name of your business?**

Enter the full registered name of your business.

#### **How is your business registered?**

Please select the type of registered business from the drop-down tab.

#### **Is your business part of a group?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

If yes, please give more detail in the next box.

#### **Additional information:**

Please explain how the group is structured.

#### **What is your main business activity and registered SIC code?**

Please state what is the main activity of your business and what is your dedicated SIC code if you are registered with Companies House or if other please state your business activity.

[resources.companieshouse.gov.uk/sic](https://resources.companieshouse.gov.uk/sic)

#### **What percentage of your sales are B2B and what are B2C?**

B2B sales are those attributable to selling directly to other businesses.

B2C sales are those attributable to selling directly to the consumer and members of the public.

#### **Provide a brief history of your business since it started:**

Please give an overview of how the business started.

**Business trading address including post code:**

Please state your business trading address including the post code.

**Registered address including post code if different to trading address:**

This will be your registered address if it is different than the actual trading address.

**Business rates account number:**

Please provide your business rates account number found on your business rates bill. If you are in shared commercial space and not responsible for business rates, please specify.

**Companies House Registration Number:**

This is your company number if you are a limited company.

**Unique Tax Reference Number:**

If you're a sole trader, you can find your individual UTR number in your personal tax account in the HMRC app or on previous tax returns and other documents from HMRC or your accountant.

If you cannot find your UTR on any documents or online, contact HMRC.

**VAT registration number:**

Please enter your VAT number or mark N/A if you are not VAT registered

**Business Website:**

Please let us know your website if you have one, if you do not have one please also state this.

**Turnover, Net Profit and Number of full-time equivalent employees for the year 2024:**

These are set out in individual boxes.

Only include direct employees, excluding any self-employed, sub- contracted, agency staff, casual staff, apprentices, graduate placements, or any zero hour contracted staff.

If you do not employ any people, please put in the box '1' as you need to count yourself as an employee of your own business.

## **Forecasted Turnover, Net Profit and Number of full-time equivalent employees for the year 2025:**

These are set out in individual boxes.

Only include direct employees, excluding any self-employed, sub- contracted, agency staff, casual staff, apprentices, graduate placements, or any zero hour contracted staff.

If you do not employ any people, please put in the box '1' as you need to count yourself as an employee of your own business.

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## **Section 2: Primary Contact**

### **Contact Name:**

This will be the applicant who has the authority to digitally sign the application form at the end of the process.

### **Contact Position:**

Please state the position of the applicant, for example, Managing Director, Director, CEO, CFO.

### **Contact Email:**

The best direct email address for further correspondence. This will be the default email we will use throughout the grant process.

### **Contact Telephone:**

The best direct contact number for further correspondence. This will be the default contact number we will use throughout the grant process.

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### Section 3: Project Information:

**Please explain what your project is and how has this need been identified?**

Please explain to us what your project is and why is there a need for you to do this.

**Please list the goods/services you wish to purchase and the costs and why you have chosen these suppliers:**

**Please Note:**

- If your business is VAT registered, please provide your quotes as NET VAT.
- If your business is not VAT registered, please provide your quotes including the VAT if its applicable.

Please list the goods or services in the table like for like that you wish to purchase with the support of the grant and give a reason why, next to each one: e.g. reputable supplier/value for money/used them before.

<b>Expenditure Items</b>	<b>Cost of Item (Net VAT)</b>	<b>Cost of Item (Gross including VAT)</b>	<b>Supplier Name</b>	<b>Reason for Selection</b>
	£0	£0		
	£0	£0		
	£0	£0		

**What will the grant assistance be used for?**

What will the grant assistance be used for and why do you need to apply? For example, to support the company in the purchase of capital expenditure (plant, machinery, ICT equipment / infrastructure), expansion / relocation (partitions, desks, electrical installation), new product development and market development (pull ups, brochures)

The matched funding support will enable the business to move forward with its growth project.

**What new market, business opportunities, improved services or products will your project generate?**

For example: diversification of markets, new clients, offer new services, new products, break into new sectors

To be able to apply for contracts and tenders.

**Is the project likely to generate jobs or safeguard employees? Please explain in more detail if your answer is yes:**

For the purposes of job targets, the definition of a full-time job is 1 person working 35 hours or more a week and any jobs created will be expected to be sustained for a minimum of 1 year.

If jobs are being safeguarded, how can you evidence they were at risk and will be safe as a result of the support?

**Please note there is not any set criteria within this grant for a job to be created.**

**Will your project have any environmental impact on the business, for example energy efficiency, reduction in waste? Please explain in more detail:**

Please explain in this question if your project outcome will implement any environmental processes / savings or energy benefits.

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## **Section 4: Business Strategy**

**What are the main business objectives and any future projects you anticipate which will support the scaling up of your business?**

We would like to know what are your future growth plans if you are successful in receiving the grant funding and how will this impact on your business? Could state the percentages of growth/sales/income/new clients.

**Outline any previous experience, employment or other work that you have done that is relevant to your business activity or project:**

Please explain what experience, knowledge and skills the person has who will be managing the project.

Do you foresee any risks associated with this? For example. employees leaving, growing at a rapid rate and not being able to manage the growth.

**Briefly describe your target audience and how you propose to reach them, through your marketing channels. How do you secure new customers and promote your business?**

For this question, we would like to know who are your target audience and how do you propose to reach them to increase sales and secure new clients as a result of the implementation of your project?

**What research have you conducted to understand your target market, including your industry, regions, customers, competitors?**



For example: Research can be defined as customers needing a new product or service, keeping up with competitors so work is not lost, or changes in legislation.

**Unique Selling Point: What sets your business apart from your competitors?**

What makes you stand out from the rest and are different from your competitors?

**What do you see as the main business strengths?**

For example: skilled workforce, leadership, financial stability, continued growth etc.

**Can you identify any weakness in the business?**

For example: unskilled workforce, high staff turnover, customers not paying invoices on time affecting cash flow.

How do you plan to rectify these issues you have identified?

**What current or future opportunities are available to you?**

What current or future opportunities are available to you? For example, applying for contracts, tenders, government services.

How will these opportunities affect your growth?

**Do you foresee any threats to your business?**

Do you foresee any threats to your business? Such as legislation changes, tax rises.

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## **Section 5: Project Funding**

**Without support from Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant, what would happen to your proposed project and why?**

Would you be able to cashflow the project without the support of the grant?

Or would your project still go ahead anyway?

Or would the project not go ahead?

**If the grant amount you requested was reduced, what would be the impact on the project and why?**

For example: if it was reduced, this would have a financial impact on our cashflow and leave the company at risk.

**Have you applied for funding from other sources for this project?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

If yes, explain from whom and how much, and whether this has been confirmed or awarded yet?

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## **Section 6: Funding Summary**

**How much is your request from the Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant? (80% of project costs from SBC/20 % from the SME). Minimum project cost: £2,500, maximum project cost: £31,250**

Please note - your project must be completed within 13 weeks of receiving a fully signed funding agreement.

Please state the amount in £ of what you are requesting.

### **Applicant's contribution:**

Please state the amount which will be your contribution at 20%:  
[percentagecalculator.net/](http://percentagecalculator.net/)

### **Other contributors:**

Are there any other contributions being made towards the amount, other than SBC, for example investors/shareholders.

### **Total Project Cost:**

Please state what is the total project cost.

**Please confirm that you **have not and will not** purchase the project goods/services until after the funding agreement has been signed, subject to a successful grant application assessment:**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

**Subject to grant approval, are you able to pay for 100% of the project costs before drawing down the actual grant monies awarded:**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

**Subject to grant approval, please specify when you plan to spend the grant monies and will have drawn down the grant funding by?**

**Please note that your project must be completed within 13 weeks of being awarded the grant.**

Please state what date you anticipate your project to be completed and the grant money drawn down from SBC.

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## **Section 7: Project Risks**

**Please describe what you perceive to be the main risks to your project and what mitigation plans you have in place. Try and consider as many areas as possible to show your consideration to risk:**

For example risks could be:

- Staff leaving
- Cashflow issues
- Change in legislation - supply chain
- A future viral pandemic
- Machinery not delivered on time.

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## **Section 8: Public Sector Funds**

**Have you received any public sector funding before (e.g. EU, Local Authority, Government Departments etc.) within the last three financial years?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no' and you will need to download the grant declaration form to sign to confirm this information.

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## **Section 9: Consents**

**Please confirm if any of the following have been addressed: planning permission; building regulations other statutory permissions (please specify):**

Only if this applicable to your business.

**Please provide further details or list any other permissions or consents required and their status:**

Only if this applicable to your business.

**Are you related to, or do you have a relationship with, any officers working for Stafford Borough Council or the programme's delivery partners?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

**Have you ever had any County Court Judgements served against you?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

**Have any other Partners or Directors of your business ever had any County Court Judgements served against them?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

**Have you or any other Partners or Directors of your business ever been adjudged bankrupt or been a Partner, Proprietor or Director of a company which has gone into liquidation or receivership?**

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

Where you answer 'yes' to any of the 4 questions above, please provide full details that will appear in the drop down box.

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### **Financial Information:**

If you have any outstanding debts, such as bank loans or overdrafts please advise us of what these are, how much is outstanding and the date they need to be paid by.

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### **Checklist of documents required:**

These are to be uploaded within your online application form if applicable.

- A current bank statement clearly showing the name of the bank, account, account number and sort code for the grant to be paid into and address pertaining to the business.
- Latest management accounts of 2 years or for self-employed person latest self-assessment tax returns for 2 years.
- Forecast of a Profit and Loss statement for the next 12 months
- Basic Cashflow Forecast of 12 Months
- A company letterhead is required which includes your business name, trading address, bank sort code and bank account number
- A company letterhead is required which includes your business name, trading address, bank sort code and bank account number
- Copy of business insurance document

- Evidence of project funding balance, if the owner's funds are part of bank loan or other grant funding or please state not applicable
- Signed grant declaration form (please sign and date this form before it is uploaded.) This form is available to be downloaded on the Stafford Borough Business Growth Grant web page.
- Quotes like for like for the goods or services to be purchased using the grant.

This value could be for one item/service or the sum of many items from one supplier. Quotes should not be less than £1,000. Quotes required as follows: (Please name your preferred quote/s and upload them in one scanned file).

- £1,000 - £10,000 - 2 written/evidenced quotes are required from different suppliers. This can be done by undertaking price comparisons on website.
- £10,000 - £30,000 - 3 written/evidence quotes are required.
- £30,000 - £60,000 - 3 written/evidence quotes obtained through a formal tendering process. For further information contact the Business Growth Team [economy@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:economy@staffordbc.gov.uk)

**Please Note:**

- If your business is VAT registered, please provide your quotes as NET VAT.
- If your business is not VAT registered, please provide your quotes including the VAT, if its applicable.