

# **Forest of Dean Business Start-Up Grant**

Guidance Notes and Application Form



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**Guidance Notes**

# About

The Forest of Dean District Council is committed to supporting local businesses in response to today's fast changing global landscape. As part of this we are offering the Business Start Up Grant, which aims to support ideas for growth and to help create vibrant and sustainable local towns, villages, and business hubs. Our grant scheme is part of a bold vision for the Forest of Dean to become a thriving, low-carbon district leading the way in innovation and sustainable growth.

This funding can be used towards a variety of business and social enterprise start-up activities including: research and development, installing clean technologies, premises, equipment and product/service launch. Please note this is not an exhaustive list – we want to hear from you with your ideas.

## 1. Key information

- Any locally based business or constituted social enterprise organisation can apply individually or in partnership.
- Applicants must be registered after April 2022 and be **both** located and registered within the Forest of Dean.
- Home-based businesses are **not** eligible. However, a mobile service business, such as a dog groomer or tree surgeon, where the service delivery is predominantly within the Forest of Dean would be eligible.
- There will be a maximum of £1,000 per application. The grant amount will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate match funding amounting to at least 10% of the project's total cost to include cash and in kind elements.

## 2. Applying for the grant

### Key outcomes

Successful applications **must** deliver at least 2 of the following 6 desired outcomes which align with the FoDDC's Council Plan:

- New business or enterprise
- Job creation
- Demonstration of innovation, including the design and delivery of new products/equipment/services, highlighting how this varies from what is already on offer in the Forest of Dean.
- Demonstration of decarbonisation and sustainable activities, renewable energy use, regenerative farming practices, or the introduction of clean technologies.
- Occupation or creation of new commercial floorspace and/or agricultural farmland or buildings for business use.

- Increased footfall / visitor numbers / visitor spend / turnover for individual business, town or village centre.

## Key objectives

Your application **MUST** clearly demonstrate the following, which form the basis of the assessment criteria:

- How your new business will deliver **2 or more** of the 6 identified outcomes (see previous).
- How you will measure & record success of your new business.
- How you can demonstrate the need or demand for your business or social enterprise, for example, consultation work, informal or formal market research, industry specific research.
- A business plan outlining the business aims & objectives over the next 3 years and any wider economic benefits, with a supporting cash flow forecast for the next 12 months.
- How you plan to raise additional financial support to complement the grant funding, for example, personal funds or other grant funding.

## 3. Application Assessment

Applications will be assessed by a grant panel with the closing dates for all applications being:

- 21 November 2025
- 20 February 2026
- 21 May 2026
- 20 August 2026
- 19 November 2026

The panel will assess applications against the following criteria and objectives as above (see section 2 – applying for the grant).

## Evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed using the following evaluation criteria:

Project Application	Weighted Score
1. Fit with the Council's Plan to prioritise a sustainable economy (see section 2).	/30
2. Demonstration of viability over medium to long term (3+ years) or demonstration of financial planning. Or demonstration of how grant support will impact the business/project plan.	/30
3. Demonstrates innovation.	/10

4. Demonstrates evidence of decarbonisation or working towards Net Zero targets.	/10
5. Evidence of need and quality of objectives.	/5
6. Value for money.	/5
7. Measurements of success & record keeping.	/5
8. Project cost / funding requirement / match funding.	/5
<b>Total</b>	<b>/100</b>

Score	Interpretation
30/10/5	Excellent – <i>The criteria are fully met as well as at least two of the outcome objectives. Shortcomings are minor</i>
20/8/4	Good – <i>The criteria are well addressed, but improvements are possible</i>
10/5/3	Fair – <i>The criteria are broadly met, but with significant weaknesses that would need improving</i>
2	Poor – <i>There are serious weaknesses evident in relation to the criteria</i>
1	Very Poor – <i>The criteria are only addressed in a cursory manner and is unsatisfactory</i>
0	<i>Fails to address criteria or cannot be judged as information is missing or incomplete</i>

## 4. After your application

All applicants will be informed in writing by the Sustainable Economy team at the Forest of Dean District Council.

Before the project starts, the council will enter into a grant agreement with successful applicants which will set out obligations of the two parties. The grant agreement will be sent to successful applicants shortly after the panel.

Within 60 days of the end of the project, a claim form needs to be submitted, along with receipts and invoices used in the claim. The claim form captures the project spends and how the outcomes of the project have been achieved. A blank copy of the claim form is available on the [Finance & Funding](#) page. This is important because the way in which the money is used may be subject to inspection and audit. The Forest of Dean District Council reserves the right to audit any project for which funds were issued. Your monitoring plans will also help us ensure that the project is progressing along the right tracks.

### Expectations of successful applicants

Please be aware that as this is public money, the funding will be subject to inspection and audit. Any fraudulent activity will be quickly identified and reported to the police.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposed business start up requirement complies with all planning, licensing, highways, health and safety, and any other relevant legislation. If applicable, attach a list of all permits required and standards known to apply to your business needs, and describe how you comply with them.

Where the business involves working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, you **MUST** share your safeguarding policy.

Applicants **MUST** have current and relevant liability insurance in place before any agreement can be signed, and you will be expected to provide copies to prove this. Applicants will be held liable for any damage caused to public property and the council will not accept any liability for claims for damage, loss or injury resulting from this work.

Applicants will be responsible for the project management and delivery of the successful grant awards. Consequently, the panel will look for applications that demonstrate clarity of both planning and delivery of the business start up requirement, with an understanding of what permissions will be required to see successful implementation of the project.

Other funding must be in place for the grant to be paid. However, we recognise that for many organisations, there may be the need to organise fundraising activities. Consequently, the award will be held open for 12 months from the decision to allow for other funds to be secured.

Successful applicants will be expected to credit the Council for grant funding in PR/marketing material and, on completion of their grant funded work, report back about how the money was used and how it benefited the economy of the Forest of Dean with a claim form. Once the grant agreement is signed, any reports, updates and information included on the claim form may be used as case studies and promotional material on the Forest of Dean District Council's website and social media channels. This promotional work may be before you have received the grant money.

Successful applicants will automatically join the [Forest Economic Partnership](#) mailing list to receive invites to business events, stakeholder meetings, and a monthly bulletin. Please let us know if you would prefer to not be added. The Sustainable Economy team may also send successful applicants' information about events or opportunities that could benefit Forest of Dean based businesses.

## 5. Essential Information

- You will need to be registered on Companies House or, if a sole trader, we will need your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) number.
- You must send in a 3-year cash flow forecast, business case, and your market research.
- Applicants are expected to provide at least 10% match funding.
- Payment is made in arrears and will not be paid in advance.
- You must evidence payment through invoices that are both fully paid for and dated after the grant agreement date.
- Payment can only be made for products/services/activities as per the application. We cannot accept any invoices that vary from what has been applied for. Any changes to the proposed grant funded activity must be notified in writing beforehand.

**Essential information checklist** – have you completed everything on the checklist?  
Please indicate Yes or No. If answered No, please provide a reason why.

Is your business registered after April 2022 and both located and registered within the Forest of Dean district?	
Have you provided your Unique Taxpayer Reference or company number?	
Does your application deliver 2 or more of the 'key outcomes'?	
Does your application evidence how you will measure & record success of your new business?	
Have you provided comprehensive market research evidencing a need for your business?	
Have you provided a business plan outlining the aims & objectives over the next 3 years?	
Have you provided a cash flow forecast for the next 12 months?	
Have you provided robust evidence of match funding?	
Have you provided evidence of the correct insurance, licencing, permits and safeguarding policies in place, if applicable?	

## 6. How to apply

Please ensure you have read and understand this document prior to applying.

If you have any questions, please email [Sustainable.Economy@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:Sustainable.Economy@fdean.gov.uk) or call 01594 812641.

Please ensure all pages of the application form are complete and you have included the required information as listed in the 'essential information checklist', see section 5.

Once you are satisfied the application is complete, please email the documents to [Sustainable.Economy@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:Sustainable.Economy@fdean.gov.uk).

# Forest of Dean Business Start-Up Grant

## Application Form

Closing dates for applications in 2025/26 are detailed on page 3 of this guidance.

### 1. Contact details

<b>Name of organisation:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Name of contact person:</b>	
<b>Position in the organisation:</b>	

### 2. Organisational status Please tick all that apply:

<b>Sole trader:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Community Interest Company:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Limited Company:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Company Number:</b>
<b>Company Limited by Guarantee:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Constituted Social Enterprise:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other:</b> (please explain)	
<b>Date of Company Registration/Constitution:</b>	

### 3. About your new business

**Please provide an overview of your business:**

**Please give a brief description of how you would use the start up funding:**

**How will your project deliver 2 or more of the 6 identified outcomes?**

1. New business or social enterprise registrations
2. Job creation
3. Demonstration of innovation including the design and delivery of new products/equipment/services
4. Demonstration of decarbonisation and sustainable activities, renewable energy use, regenerative farming practices, or the introduction of clean technologies.
5. Occupation or creation of new commercial floorspace and/or agricultural farmland or buildings for business use
6. Increased footfall / visitor numbers / visitor spend / turnover for individual business, town or village centre



<p><b>How do you know that there is a business need and what market research have you done?</b></p>
<p><b>How will you measure and record the success of your start up activity?</b></p>
<p><b>How will your business help generate sustainable economic growth in the area? In addition to your own self-employment, will your business create any new jobs for others? Please provide details.</b></p>
<p><b>What practical steps will you put in place to ensure your business survives after 12 months? Please provide details.</b></p>
<p><b>In addition to the start up grant, how will you be investing your own or other grant funding to get the business up and running? Please provide details.</b></p>
<p><b>What permissions and/or licences do you need to achieve your project and what are your plans/timescale to secure these permissions?</b></p>

<b>Who else will you work with to deliver the actions?</b>

**4. Please complete if your new business involves children, young people or vulnerable adults.**

<b>Do you have a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy?</b>
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<b>Yes / No / not applicable</b>
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*Please note we may wish to see copies of these policies
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Are all your staff and volunteers who will be associated with the project Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked?
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<b>Yes / No / not applicable</b>
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If not, what measures do you have in place to safeguard children and young people or vulnerable adults on your project?

More information on safeguarding is available from the following websites:
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<a href="#"><u>Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board</u></a>
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<a href="#"><u>Safe Guarding adults in Gloucestershire</u></a>
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**5. About the money you are asking for**

	£
Total amount your project will cost	

Amount you are asking the council for	

Where is the rest of the funding coming from?  
Please itemise each source.

SOURCE	£	Is this funding secured?
		YES / NO
		YES / NO

## 6. How you will spend the money

Please breakdown how you expect the money, including grant funding, will be spent during this project. Please provide detail.

Indicative project cost breakdown	Total spend	Grant requested
<b>TOTALS</b>		

**This part is to be signed by all applicants.**

Please submit either a scanned or photograph copy of your application by email or in person at FoDDC Coleford offices.

### Declaration and Data Protection Statement

Data Protection Act



I confirm that the organisation/group named in this form has authorised me to sign this application on their behalf.

The information contained in this application is correct, to the best of my knowledge, and I confirm that any grant funding received will be used solely for the purposes specified in the application.

- ☐ I agree to my name and my organisation's details being held on electronic files.
- ☐ I understand that the information in this form may be shared with other local funders.

**Don't forget to send the following:**

- **Your cash flow forecast for the next 3 years**

- Your business case
- The market research you have completed
- Company number (if registered)
- A copy of your constitution (if social enterprise)
- Insurance certificates (if required)

<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Name of person signing</b>	
<b>Position in Organisation</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

Please send your application to: [Sustainable.Economy@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:Sustainable.Economy@fdean.gov.uk)