

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 recognises the enterprising spirit that exists within this unique part of the world and is keen to continue direct support to businesses following the Covid-19 pandemic and to help them deal with fluctuating energy costs. The Council wishes to encourage a vibrant, low-carbon economy within the towns, business parks, industrial and farm estates, and surrounding villages in the Forest of Dean.

To support this, the Council have been providing the Business Start Up Grant since September 2020. 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 and your ideas.

1. Before applying for the grant

Who can apply?

Any locally based new 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.**

There will be a maximum of £1,000 per application. Allocation will be agreed on projects at an appropriate scale and the ability to proceed to the implementation stage. The fund is competitive so applications need to be realistic, deliver results, demonstrate value for money and local economic growth potential. The panel reserves the right to consider any applications being submitted for funding outside the maximum range.

Organisations can make more than one grant application, however only one application can be approved for funding.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate match funding amounting to at least 50% of the project's total cost to include cash and in kind elements.

Who cannot apply?

- Home-based businesses are not eligible, however a mobile service business, such as a hairdresser/dog groomer/construction trades/tree surgeon, where the service delivery is predominantly within a Forest of Dean target market would be eligible.
- Businesses who have been in receipt of +£5,000 local government, central government, or European Funded grant aid prior to 2019.

2. Applying for the grant

Successful applications must deliver AT LEAST 3 of the following 6 desired outcomes:

- 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.

Applications must include economic outputs which are measurable, e.g. revenue generated for the organisation/businesses, creation of new jobs, investment in new equipment or premises, and have lasting economic benefits for the Forest of Dean.

Key objectives

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

- How your new business will deliver **three or more** of the five identified outcomes (see previous)
- How the **success of your new business will be measured** – how the business will produce economic results for the Forest of Dean and how you will measure this.
- Evidence that there is a **need** and/or **demand** for your business or social enterprise – reference to consultation results, market research, agri-tech or other industry specific research, project / business plan.
- The business's **contributions towards a sustainable local economy** – what benefits are likely to come from the continuing existence of the business.
- For **projects that will run beyond an initial 12 months**, how the organisation will ensure the sustainability of financial support.
- How your business is **not solely reliant on public funding** – the application budget should illustrate how you plan to raise additional financial support or support in-kind to complement any grant funding.
- If your project is eligible for other funding, how the Business Start-Up Grant will **complement and add value to** those other sources of funds.

3. Application Assessment

Applications will be assessed by the panel following 6 rounds of funding in 2025/26 with the closing dates for all applications being:

- 23 May 2025
- 22 August 2025
- 21 November 2025
- 20 February 2026

The panel will assess applications against the following criteria and objectives above (see section 2 – applying for the grant). The panel will be looking for evidence that the applicant will secure the necessary permissions to enable the business start-up to proceed.

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	/20
2. Delivering a sustainable economic impact	/20
3. Demonstration of viability over medium to long term (5+ years) or Demonstration of financial planning? Or Demonstration of how grant support will impact your business/project plan?	/20
4. Demonstrates innovation	/10
5. Evidence that the project meets at least three desired outcomes	/5
6. Evidence of need and quality of objectives	/5
7. Value for money	/5
8. Measurements of success	/5
9. Project cost / funding requirement / match funding	/5
10. Demonstrates evidence of decarbonisation or working towards Net Zero targets	/5
Total	/100

Score	Interpretation
20/10/5	Excellent – The criteria are fully met as well as at least two of the outcome objectives. Shortcomings are minor
18/8/4	Good – The criteria are well addressed, but improvements are possible
15/5/3	Fair – The criteria are broadly met, but with significant weaknesses that would need improving
2	Poor – There are serious weaknesses evident in relation to the criteria
1	Very Poor – The criteria is only addressed in a cursory manner and is unsatisfactory
0	Fails to address criteria or cannot be judged as information is missing or incomplete

4. After your application

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing by Wendy Jackson, Regeneration Manager at 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. This is important as the way in which the money is used will be subject to inspection and audit, and your monitoring plans will help us ensure that the project is progressing along the right tracks. The grant agreement will be sent to successful applicant shortly after the panel.

Your organisation must be equipped to keep appropriate records and to submit reports on the project/activity, including evidence of expenditure incurred on the project. All receipts and invoices must be maintained. Forest of Dean District Council reserves the right to audit any project for which funds were issued.

Within two months (60 days) of the end of the project, a monitoring report and claim form must be submitted. The report must include information about whether the project's goals were met, how its success was measured, level of economic growth and the sustainability of the project.

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 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. Once the grant agreement is signed, we will use any reports and updates 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 Regeneration team may also send successful applicants' information about events or opportunities that may benefit Forest of Dean based small businesses. Again, please let us know if you'd prefer not to receive these emails.

5. Payment of the grant

- Applicants are expected to provide at least 50% match funding for the project. For example, if an applicant requests the full £1000 grant, they must evidence spend of £2000. If a project totals £1500, the council will pay £750.
- Payment is made in arrears and will not be paid in advance, it is important that you consider this before applying. You must evidence payment through invoices dated **after** the grant agreement date. Invoices **must** already be paid to be considered eligible.
- 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. For example. if the grant is approved for funding marketing materials, the grant cannot then be used for renovations.

6. How to apply

Please ensure you have read and understand **ALL** of this document prior to applying. If you have any questions, please email Regeneration@fdean.gov.uk or call 01594 812641.

Please ensure **ALL** pages of the application form are completed and you have included a copy of your business plan, cash flow forecasts, insurance/safeguarding policies where relevant, and a copy of your constitution where appropriate. You **MUST** include all the above documents. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Once you are satisfied the application is complete, please email the documents to Regeneration@fdean.gov.uk

For help, guidance and any queries call 01594 812641 or email Regeneration@fdean.gov.uk

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Application Form

Closing dates for applications in 2025/26 are detailed on page 2 of this guidance.

1. Contact Details

Name of Organisation	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Name of Contact Person	
Position in the organisation	

2. Organisational Status Please tick all that apply:

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

Date of Company Registration/Constitution:

3. About Your New Business

Name of 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 three or more of the six 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.
6. Occupation or creation of new commercial floorspace and/or agricultural farmland or buildings for business use

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

How do you know that there is a business need and what market research have you done?

How will you measure the success of your start-up activity?

How will you generate sustainable economic growth and create new jobs?

How will you make sure that the new business creates lasting benefits and what are your plans for the project once the grant funding has come to an end?

How will you add value to the Forest of Dean Business Start-Up Grant by using any grant to raise additional financial support or match it with support in-kind?

What permissions and/or licences do you need to achieve your project and what are your plans / timescale to secure these permissions?

Who else will you work with to deliver the actions?

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

Do you have a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy?

Yes / No / not applicable

*Please note we may wish to see copies of these policies

Are all your staff and volunteers who will be associated with the project Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked?

Yes / No / not applicable

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:

[Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board](#)

[Safe Guarding adults in Gloucestershire](#)

5. About the money you are asking for

	£
Total amount your project will cost	
Amount you are asking the council for	

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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 be specific and provide as much detail as possible as this will help us assess your grant application.

Indicative project cost breakdown	Total spend	Grant requested
TOTALS		

This part is to be signed by all applicants.

If you are submitting this form by email, please print and send a signed scanned copy of this page.

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 aid 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)**

Signature	
Name of person signing	
Position in Organisation	
Date	

Please send your application to: Regeneration@fdean.gov.uk