

Business Innovation Support Scheme

Guidance Notes





As part of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's (BMSDC) Economic Strategy and post-covid Recovery Plan, we are helping to deliver sustainable economic growth by supporting businesses within our districts who are seeking to innovate, reduce their carbon footprint and stimulate the local economy.

The Business Innovation Support Scheme is designed to specifically support local businesses by increasing productivity and encouraging economic growth.

There are 4 new grants that will help our local businesses from start-up to expansion:

- **Enterprise & Innovation Fund**
- **Growth & Increased Productivity Fund**
- **Environmental Sustainability Fund**
- **High Street Premises Enhancement Fund**

These grants are available to businesses based within Babergh or Mid Suffolk District.

These guidance notes are provided to help applicants understand the aims of the Business Innovation Support Scheme and how to make an application.

PLEASE NOTE: The grant cannot fund projects retrospectively, or elements of works already completed or in progress. This grant cannot be used to fund projects already funded by grants dispersed by BMSDC and any grant funding previously received from BMSDC (e.g. Discretionary Restart Grant and/or Back To Business) cannot be used as match funding for this grant.

Overview of the schemes:

The Business Innovation Support Scheme is designed to support our local independent businesses by stimulating innovation, economic growth, reducing carbon footprint, creating new jobs and increasing productivity.

This grant fund is also open to entities planning delivery of projects that provide a significant contribution to the economic recovery of the district such as job creation, increased productivity, improved visitor experience and increased use of town and village centres.

A maximum grant value of between £2,500 - £5,000 depending on the individual grant you are applying for is available. The minimum application value is £500 and any grant will need to be matched with an equal sum of money (i.e. if the grant is £5,000 you will need to include £5,000 of match).

Applicants should be aware that it is unlikely that there will be enough funding for every application received, some applicants may be offered a lower level of grant, and some will be unsuccessful.



Grant Conditions:

Businesses are only eligible to apply for one grant in each financial year (running from 01 September to 31 August) and cannot apply for the same fund again. Applicants should be aware that previous grant support received will be taken into consideration when reviewing applications, and applications received from businesses who have not received previous grant funding will be prioritised.

Grant funding is limited and will be on a first come first served basis.

- Applications for the third year of the scheme will close on 1 September 2024, or until funding is fully allocated within each financial year.
 - This grant cannot be used to fund projects already funded by grants dispersed by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils AND any grant funding previously received by BMSDC (e.g. Discretionary Restart Grant and/or Back To Business) cannot be used as match funding for this grant.
 - The grant schemes will run for 3 consecutive years from the launch date of September 2021.
 - All applications that meet the criteria below will be assessed by a grant panel, with written decisions issued following the panel meetings.
 - Total funding for these schemes will be £50,000 per district, per year, or until the funding is allocated/over-subscribed, or at the discretion of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.
 - The applicant must give consent for BMSDC to involve the business in publicity e.g., press releases and photographs.
 - The applicant must not have any other outstanding debts payable to BMSDC.
 - All grant decisions are at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Economy and Regeneration.
 - All applications will be assessed on the criteria and priorities of the scheme.
 - All the necessary statutory approvals and legal requirement must be complied with before payments will be made.
 - The grant is repayable should any of the conditions be breached or if the project is not implemented in full
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Priorities of the Business Innovation Support Scheme

- Encouraging a partnership approach to local projects delivering economic recovery
- Projects supporting job creation and increased productivity
- Improvements to business resilience and sustainability
- Improvements to environmental performance including lower carbon footprint
- Delivery of an enhanced visitor experience to the district
- Increased footfall in town and village centres

Who can apply?

Any business or organisation trading from Babergh or Mid Suffolk who can provide a project outline or summary of activity to be supported by this funding.

The following organisations/businesses are ineligible:

- National retailers/chains/multiples with more than 3 locations
 - Betting Shops/Pawnbrokers
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- Four horizontal lines of varying colors (purple, dark blue, orange, and pink) are stacked at the bottom of the page.

How to apply

Applications must be made online, and will be available on the Babergh Mid Suffolk website

[https://bmsdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Business Innovation Support Scheme](https://bmsdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Business_Innovation_Support_Scheme)

Applicants will be required to provide statutory information and upload the following evidence:

- Valid business insurance certificate
- Confirmation of compliance with Subsidy Control restrictions <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities/technical-guidance-on-the-uks-international-subsidy-control-commitments>
- Project plan (see further information below)
- Evidence of match funding required at 50% (e.g., copy of savings account bank statement)
- Minimum of 3 quotes for the proposed works and justification for not choosing the lowest quote (if applicable). Grant offers will be made based on the lowest quote.
- A copy of a bank statement dated within the last 3 months in the business name
- Funding cannot be used to fund projects that have already been funded by Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council.

Project Plan - Hints and tips

If you are unsure of what to put in a project plan here are some suggestions that you may wish to consider:

What are you going to do? Provide a statement about the activity you want to fund using this grant money

Why do you want to do it? Describe how this will add value to your business and what difference it will make, for example, would it enable you to;

- **Diversify your product range**
- **Improve your productivity**
- **Increase your useable customer space**
- **Access new customers**
- **Create jobs**
- **Encourage visitors to the area**

How much will it cost?

We need to see a breakdown of how you have reached the total fund you are asking for. This doesn't need to be to the penny but should evidence your main costs, confirmation of match funding, and estimates or quotes which could include detail of equipment costs, suppliers etc

How does it match our priorities? Our priorities for the scheme are outlined in the guidance and are as follows:

- Encouraging a partnership approach to local projects delivering economic recovery
- Projects supporting job creation and increased productivity
- Improvements to business resilience and sustainability
- Improvements to environmental performance including lower carbon footprint
- Delivery of an enhanced visitor experience to the district
- Increased footfall in town and village centres


We do not expect that your project will meet all of these, however your plan needs to describe where it does support those it can.

What will the outcomes for your business be: Provide figures to illustrate the anticipated improved outcomes for your business for example:

- Increased sales
- Increased customers
- Greater business efficiency
- Job Creation
- Skills improvements

When will the project start and finish? Provide expected dates including any milestone dates that will occur during the project, for example if new equipment is arriving when will start to be used.

Our expectation is that projects will start in the near future and will be completed within 12 months.



The grant will not fund:

- Recurring revenue costs (including salaries, existing premises costs e.g., rent, utility charges etc).
- Equipment deemed as a basic requirement for new starters or existing members of staff to do their job e.g. laptops, mobile phones, telephony equipment, office furniture etc
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC (VAT therefore needs to be omitted from total project costs)
- Repaying existing loans or debts.
- Companies in difficulty.
- The grant cannot fund projects retrospectively, or elements of works already completed or in progress.

Decision Process

Applications will be considered by a panel and a decision will be made on your application, unless further information is required from you within 28 days of the application being made.

All grant offers will be made in writing via email. If your project requires consents or permissions it is your responsibility to ensure that these are in place. The scheme operates independently of the planning process and any offer of a grant does not imply that planning consent will be granted.

There is no appeal process.

Offer of the Grant

All offers will be made via email and must be accepted within 10 working days by the applicant.

After this date the offer will be automatically withdrawn. The applicant will then have to re-apply if they still wish to proceed after this date.

If you wish to withdraw your interest, please confirm this in writing via email to: bmsdceconomicdevelopment@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Payment of Grant

- The grant will be paid in arrears on proof of payment and production of relevant invoices that meet the set criteria, invoices dated before the date of the offer letter will not be eligible for payment
- The applicant must submit the claim (including receipted invoices) for grant assistance within one month of the completion date as stated in the offer letter
- Payment will be subject to the applicant having satisfactorily completed the project and complied with all terms and conditions of the scheme
- If the actual costs are less than those outlined in the application and agreed in the offer letter, payment will be restricted to the actual amount in accordance with the receipted invoices
- If the costs of the proposed project exceed the maximum grant awarded as agreed in the offer letter, Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council is not obliged to increase the grant amount.
- Payment of the grant will be made into the applicant's business bank account (or 'trading as' account) via BACS

PLEASE NOTE: Any claim for payment of the grant can only be made for the items and/or work agreed as per your offer letter and project plan. If elements of your project change you will need to contact us to discuss the changes by emailing bmsdceconomicdevelopment@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk Your offer may be withdrawn and you may be advised to reapply.

Repayment of Grant

BMSDC reserves the right to recover all or part of the grant it has provided if:

- The business is sold or ceases to trade for whatever reason within a 6 month period from receipt of the grant
 - The business relocates outside the boundaries of BMSDC within a 6 month period from receipt of the grant
 - Information provided in the application form or other correspondence is found to be substantially incorrect, misleading or incomplete.
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The Business Innovation Support Scheme is available to businesses based within Babergh or Mid Suffolk District

Businesses must employ less than 250 employees and not be part of a larger group.

Additionally, the High Street Premises Enhancement Fund is also available for registered charities.

Matched funding of at least 50% must be provided by the applicant.

Grants cannot be given retrospectively for any costs already incurred.

If you have any questions prior to applying please contact the grants team: BMSDCEconomicDevelopment@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk



Enterprise & Innovation Fund

Who is this for?

Any start-up or new business that has been trading for less than 12 months.

How much can I get?

Up to £5,000 towards helping the new business to utilise innovative ideas, processes or products.

What will it cover?

Projects that are focused on innovation such as internal process improvements or creating innovative products and/or services. This could include set up costs including purchase of equipment & new technology, payment for professional advice such as legal or patent protection as well as obtaining new skills or training to upskill your existing workforce.

Please note the fund will not cover recurring revenue costs including salaries, payment of apprenticeship qualifications, or equipment deemed as a basic requirement for new starters or existing members of staff to do their job e.g., laptops, mobile phones, telephony equipment, office furniture etc.

How can I apply?

[https://bmsdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Business Innovation Support Scheme](https://bmsdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Business%20Innovation%20Support%20Scheme)



Growth & Increased Productivity Fund

Who is this for?

Any business that is looking to increase productivity, increase commercial floorspace or create new jobs or apprenticeships.

How much can I get?

Up to £2,500 towards a project that will help to achieve business growth or increased productivity.

What will it cover?

Physical works to a building, professional advice, purchase of new equipment or technology, training or skills development.

Please note the fund will not cover recurring revenue costs including salaries, payment of apprenticeship qualifications, or equipment deemed as a basic requirement for new starters or existing members of staff to do their job e.g., laptops, mobile phones, telephony equipment, office furniture etc.

How can I apply?

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Environmental Sustainability Fund

Who is this for?

Businesses wanting to improve their environmental performance, reduce energy costs, use renewable energy and lower their carbon footprint.

How much can I get?

Up to £2,500 towards improvements to buildings, fixtures, fittings, vehicles or machinery that will reduce energy consumption.

What will it cover?

Installation of Heat pumps or boilers, Solar panels, LED Lighting or Electric charging points for vehicles. Also upgrading machinery or using new technology and improving the thermal performance in buildings.

How can I apply?

[https://bmsdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Business Innovation Support Scheme](https://bmsdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Business%20Innovation%20Support%20Scheme)



High Street Premises Enhancement Fund

Who is this for?

Anyone who owns or rents a shop or commercial premises in a town or village centre (including registered charities).

How much can I get?

Up to £2,500 towards improvements to the premises

What will it cover?

Materials and labour for works such as: new shop fronts, external lighting schemes, cladding, signage for shop fronts, and new awnings. Also guttering and drainpipe repairs and replacement.

Improvements to access such as nosing on steps, widening of doorways, ramps for doorways or removal of steps, handrails, portable ramps, power assisted doors, disabled access signs, doorbells and training staff to assist disabled customers.

How can I apply?

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