

South Cambridgeshire District Council Small Business Grant Scheme

Draft Version 1

Introduction:

This document sets out how the Council will deliver a Small Business Grant Scheme funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The scheme aims to support local businesses who are looking to start up or grow within South Cambridgeshire district.

Details:

South Cambridgeshire District council has been allocated a sum of £100,000 to provide support to new and existing businesses operating in South Cambridgeshire to get help to startup and to support those already trading that have ambitions to grow.

Free Business Support is offered for those looking to start up a new business. Through South Cambridgeshire District Councils partner relationships with Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) and The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Growth Hub, resources will be available to help support a new start up business to help ensure that a new business is viable, to provide advice on creating a business plan, and to support on how to market a business. Only when a new business is registered as trading, will they become eligible to apply for funding.

The funding will be available during the 2024-25 financial year, however, the fund will close once the full allocation is spent.

The scheme is open to applications from businesses with 0 – 9 employees who are in South Cambridgeshire and have a business plan demonstrating:

- An innovative and ambitious business plan for growth over the next two years with evidence of the businesses ability to grow.
- Evidence of how any funding received will be used.
- Where applicable, evidence of how any funding received may be used to adopt new technologies and changing market conditions.
- Number of jobs safeguarded
- Number of new jobs created
- Benefit to the local economy.
- Steps your business is taking towards achieving net zero carbon and decarbonisation of your business activity and your supply chain

Indicative Grant Values:

The maximum grant available to any successful applicant is £5,000. The Council reserves the right to award funding depending on the merit of the supporting detail provided with each application. As the funds end, awards will be apportioned based on the remaining funds available. The Council reserves the right to close the scheme at any time and will do immediately upon 100% fund allocation.

Exclusions:

The following are ineligible for the programme:

- Business that have already received grant payments that equal the maximum permitted levels for Subsidy Control.
- Business intermediaries acting on behalf of other businesses.
- Partnerships that only exist to operate investment or where a striking off notice has been made.
- Those intending to use funding as a wage support mechanism.

Examples of what the Scheme can support:

Grants of up to £5000 are available to fund:

- Website development
- Brand development

- Training programmes for example on new capital equipment
- Training for upskilling existing staff
- Marketing campaigns
- Commissioning of research
- Funding towards the use of workspace at South Cambs Hall
- Purchase Machinery and associated tooling
- Purchase of office or technical equipment
- Electric Business Vehicles
- Purchase of IT hardware
- Renovating buildings or businesses premises/furnishings

Examples of What the Programme Cannot Support:

- Paying off debts or refinancing Salaries, travel, or subsistence
- Ongoing normal business costs (i.e., business rates, overheads etc)
- Any statutory or legislative obligations, duties, or requirements
- Software unless integrally linked to the running of specific equipment.

Application Process

Applications will be open until 31 October 2024. Businesses may only make one application. We reserve the right to close the application window earlier should the level of demand exceed the maximum funding available.

All applicants will be required to complete a full online application form and must include a supporting statement of up to maximum of 1,000 words explaining why they should receive the grant.

As part of the grant application process, we require applicants to provide three quotations for the proposed expenditure applied for. Each quotation must be from a different supplier or service provider where possible & include contact information for each supplier or service provider. If it is not possible to provide three quotations,

please email Businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk explaining the reason why as it may still be possible to consider the application dependant on the circumstances.

The application process will allow the Council to undertake proportionate pre-payment checks to confirm eligibility relative to grant scheme.

Completed application forms will be assessed and scored by a panel of two officers from South Cambridgeshire District Council and one officer from the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority Growth Hub.

Final grant award decisions will be made by South Cambridgeshire District Councils Lead member for Economic Growth and Lead Member for Finance.

Any conflicts of interest will be declared ahead of assessment and scoring.

Supporting Information

The application process will request up to three quotations for the expenditure the grant will support. Should an award be agreed, the business will be reimbursed on receipt of satisfactory provision of proof of expenditure in strict accordance with the original application. This scheme will only support reimbursement of invoices for the support requested through this application process.

Grants must be claimed within 2 months of receiving the offer letter, and by 31 January 2025.

The scheme will not reimburse any work undertaken before the award of funding. No verbal orders or deposits should be placed before a decision on the application has been reached. Funding cannot be awarded as retrospective payment for goods or services procured before a formal offer of grant has been received and accepted.

Net Costs (excluding VAT) must be used when calculating the project value on the application form. All grant payments will be based on the Net Cost paid by the



applicant unless the applicant is, for whatever reason, unable to reclaim VAT, in which case the full, gross cost will be used to calculate the Investment in Business payable.

You are not obliged to accept the lowest quote received but a written explanation of rationale behind any such decision will be required. All applications must be accompanied by three written quotations where possible, for any expenditure for which grant support is sought, unless it can be evidenced that there are specific reasons why this is not possible.

Any expenditure incurred before receipt of the formal offer letter is entirely at the applicant's own risk and is deemed to be ineligible expenditure for grant assistance.

Decisions relating to the allocation of funding will be published on the Council's website in line with transparency requirements and the associated exemptions under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Applicants will be informed within approximately four weeks of the closure of the application window as to the decision and the value of any funding granted.

Permissions, consents and licences

If a project needs specific permissions, consents and licenses for the proposals to go ahead, the applicant must send confirmation that they are in place to the Local Authority. This includes planning permission and environmental health or licensing consents.

Note – If the applicant confirms that full planning permission for a building is not needed, written proof of this should be included with the application.

Proof of tenancy

If the activity involves investments in immoveable assets and the applicant is a tenant, the landlord's written permission for the improvements must be obtained



where this is a condition of the tenancy. In addition, the applicant must provide written evidence of the tenancy agreement, including the duration of the agreement remaining if it is a fixed term arrangement.

It is the applicant's responsibility not to make any substantial changes to the assets or how they are used and continue to use them for the purpose described in the application, for at least 5 years after receiving payment. In the event that the tenancy agreement ends within the 5-year period and is not renewed on substantially the same terms as the previous agreement, the applicant must contact the Local Authority as it may be necessary to repay some, or all of the grant monies received.

For evidence of the tenancy agreement, applicants must send a copy (not original documentation) of the tenancy agreement sections that show:

- The holding address,
- Tenant,
- Landlord,
- Signatures and
- For fixed term agreements, the tenancy term

Conditions of grant funding

A funding agreement will be prepared for all successful applicants. Standard practice will be for grants to be paid in arrears once expenditure has been incurred and payment made in full. Payment will only be made to the business bank account associated with the application.

Expenditure must be made from the business bank account before claiming the money back from the Council (Purchases through Personal Credit Cards will be deemed ineligible)

The District Council reserves the right to visit any company receiving grant assistance to ensure the grant has been used for the purpose it was intended and as

stated in the application form, check the location of the asset, and inspect records to show costs have been incurred in line with the grant award letter.

An end of project evaluation must be submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council within 6 months of project completion.

Any publicity must acknowledge the award provided and must adhere to the [Branding and Publicity](#) section 7.7.

Appeals:

Award decisions will be based on the merit of the application received demonstrating clear outcomes on their business plan.

However, if a business is dissatisfied with a decision, they can write to businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk within one week of the initial decision and detail the reasons why a review is considered necessary, providing any additional supporting information required. The review will be undertaken by an independent officer at South Cambridgeshire District Council. And a final decision will be made within 2 weeks of receipt of the appeal.

UK Subsidy Control Regime:

You will need to declare all grant funding received in the last 3 years. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the 'Act') came into force on 4th January 2023. The Act sets out the UK's prevailing subsidy control rules.

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Payments received by the applicant from any business grant schemes administered by local authorities or anything similar from the government, for all business properties they are responsible for, counts as Subsidy Allowance.

Full details can be read on the [Gov.uk Subsidy Control Statutory Guidance webpage](#).

To qualify for this grant your business must not have received more than £315,000 of subsidy allowance in the last three years.

Other Key Information

Grant income received by a business is taxable. The Small Business Grant will need to be included as income within a business tax return. However, only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

Anti-fraud Measures

As part of the appraisal of each application, credit checks may be conducted which will include overdue creditors bankruptcy, county court judgments and director disqualification. The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any business caught falsifying their records to gain grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back, as may grants paid in error.

Our Internal Audit and Fraud teams will use government schemes such as the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) to ensure the Council takes reasonable steps in prevention of fraud and error. Data will be shared with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

Use of organisational & personal information

Information submitted by organisations applying for grant funding may be shared with partner organisations to support marketing activity, to assess impact and to undertake independent programme evaluations.

Information provided to the Council will be disclosable to Government offices such as Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government and the Cabinet Office.

The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and as such may be compelled to release details of applicant's application form, personal details will be redacted. Business financial details will also be redacted for up to 2 years after the application period but then potentially become disclosable.

Where there is a specific "commercial sensitivity" application this must be advised at the time of application. South Cambridgeshire District Council Privacy Notice can be found on the [Cambridgeshire County Council Website](#).