

COVID 19 Outdoor Improvements Recovery Fund

Guidance notes for applicants



Glossary

Within the application pack there are a number of terms used. The glossary below provides definitions of some of the terms used:

Enterprise – *this includes, but is not limited to, any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form. This includes self-employed persons and partnerships or associations regularly involved in an economic activity.*

Large enterprise - *Any enterprise that is not an SME.*

Medium enterprise - *Employs fewer than 250 people and either has an annual turnover that does not exceed EUR 50 million, or an annual balance sheet not exceeding EUR 43 million.*

Positive impact on townscape - *Improvements to the external facade of buildings which enhance the building's contribution to the streetscape whilst being in line with Council Design Guidance.*

Small enterprise - *Employs fewer than 50 people and has an annual turnover or annual balance sheet total that does not exceed EUR 10 million.*

Variation - *is an alteration to the scope of the works in a construction contract in the form of an addition, substitution or omission from the original scope of works.*

1. Introduction

1.1 This funding is to be used for external interventions in order to facilitate social distancing and a lower density of occupation in external areas where customers and members of the public are to congregate, be served food / drink or rest. The improvements undertaken must be within the applicant's ownership or leasehold of the property.

1.2 Eligible Works: The following guide includes examples of the type of works that could be supported. Each scheme will be assessed by officers on a case by case basis to determine eligible works. Items may include -

- Outdoor awnings, canopies, igloo bubbles, outdoor heating, marquee coverings. These external enhancements need to be delivered in such a way so as to ensure that they are aligned with current medical advice. They should facilitate outdoor trading space. The effects of sunlight, wind direction and intensity, social distance and effective handwashing should all be considered alongside any intervention.

Specifically in regards to the use of physical coverings, awnings, gazebos or marquees should be open on 3 or 4 sides so as to be considered and treated as an external environment. Coverings, awnings, marquees or gazebos need to be either transparent or of light cover so as to ensure transmission of sunlight. It is imperative that if marquees are to be adopted for use they need to be effectively used and policed so as not to allow

for an excessive confined congregation which would not accommodate effective social distancing.

Outdoor tables, chairs and seating provision to be delivered in accordance with current guidance on social distancing requirements

Outdoor screening, bollards, planters to be delivered in accordance with current social distancing requirements. Any proposals delivered should not impede pedestrian traffic on pavements, pathways or public realm areas.

- Outdoor servery facilities
- The establishment of park lets (using parking spaces and the provision of decking on which to construct timber structures so providing small covered areas offering some weather protection).
- Small Green Infrastructure schemes especially where there is seating provision
- The establishment and adoption and temporary use of vacant trading spaces to facilitate overspill, meanwhile uses, pop ups and entrepreneurship action
- Electricity supply and lighting to outdoor trading space
- The establishments of outdoor market provision to include electricity provision.
- Social distancing measures
- Other interventions can also be considered that facilitate social distancing and a lower density of occupation in the external environment such as shop front modifications, courtyard / rear garden improvements, and adaptations to the public realm (subject to planning and local approval)

Whilst this is considered a short term and immediate solution, all of the proposals to be supported should be able to demonstrate that they have lasting impact on our town centres and be aligned where possible with wider proposals relating to public realm adaptations.

2. The Grant

2.1 The grant will be a maximum of 80% of eligible costs, up to a maximum grant award of £10,000 exclusive of VAT (if applicable). Each application will be considered on the basis of its specific circumstances.

2.2 All grants are at the discretion of the Council and are subject to budget availability. The amount of any grant offered will be assessed on an individual project basis. There is limited allocation of grant funding and will be awarded on a competitive basis.

2.3 Grants will normally be awarded exclusive of VAT. If the applicant cannot recover VAT this may be accepted as an eligible cost at the discretion of the Council, subject to the applicant undertaking to repay to the Council any VAT element which later becomes reclaimable from HMRC as a result of a change in the applicant's VAT status.

2.4 The Grant will usually be paid in agreed instalments on the production of invoices/receipts and interim certificates and defrayment evidence etc. (See Section 13. Payment of Grants)

2.5 A minimum of 10% of the total Grant award will be withheld (Retention) until the Council is satisfied that all of the work has been completed to the required standard, as declared by an independent Quantity Surveyor, and a copy of the practical completion certificate has been received.

2.6 Any variance to approved works will need to be agreed in advance with the Council.

3. Eligible applicants

3.1 The programme is open to Freeholders, Sole Traders, Partnerships, Limited Companies, Community Businesses, Co-operatives and Registered Social Landlords as well as the Local Authorities and Town Councils.

3.2 Grants for works to properties will only be available to owners of the freehold interest in the property or to lessees holding a current lease on the property, at the time of receipt of a valid application. If a leaseholder, applicants must provide a letter of consent from the freeholder to the proposed works and a copy of the lease agreement if works are being undertaken to the property

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all the necessary land ownership requirements are in place to implement the scheme

4. Application Process

4.1 The application process will require the submission of the following supporting documentation to accompany the application form:

- Subject to the value all works require 2-3 itemised quotations to be submitted
- Recent photographs of the property
- Copies of all relevant statutory consents (where applicable)
- Copy of building insurance certification
- Letter of consent from Freeholder (if Leaseholder)
- Copy of lease agreement from Freeholder (if Leaseholder)
- Evidence of match funding – please confirm how you intend to finance your contribution to the whole project. Confirmation should be in the form of a bank letter or other official documentation (original paperwork will be required) such as a bank statement.
- Survey Report (if applicable)

5. Contractors

5.1 Contractors wishing to quote may be required to demonstrate a track record of working on similar projects.

5.2 Where applicants have an interest in companies wishing to quote for the work, this will be permitted, but restricted to a maximum of one company per project.

5.3 It is possible that project applicants, or persons connected with them (such as relatives, business partners or friends) may wish to quote for a contract being offered by the project applicant. Whilst this is not unacceptable, such relationships must be declared, and the applicant will still need to ensure that they conduct the transaction in an open and transparent manner. The quotes must be from registered trading companies

5.4 Before quoting (where applicable), prospective contractors must carry out a mandatory site visit to ascertain the nature of the site, access and local conditions and restrictions likely to affect the execution of the works.

5.5 Contractors must price all items on the quotations.

5.6 Each contractor (where applicable) will be required to submit a copy of their current Public Liability Insurance

5.7 Contractor management is the responsibility of the Applicant unless agreed in writing by the Council.

6. Procurement

6.1 When procuring goods or services applicants should aim to get value for money whilst offering a range of businesses the opportunity to provide those goods or services in a fair and transparent manner. The applicant must therefore ensure that the following procurement procedures are adopted according to the estimated maximum value of the contract at quotation stage.

Estimated Value	Quotation required
£0 to £5000	2 quotations
£5001 to 10,000	3 quotations

6.2. The amount of the grant offered to each project will be determined by the Council

7. Outputs

7.1 Applicants should note that projects will be expected to deliver against the following outputs -

Number of new jobs created
Number of existing jobs safeguarded
Number of businesses operating in the building
Number of local contractors / suppliers

7.2 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that evidence to support any outputs is made available to the Council, even if the property is leased out to a third party.

8. Statutory requirements and expectations

8.1 Applications should provide confirmation of any required consents, such as Planning Permission, Building Regulations, Change of Use, or Listed Buildings consent. Applicants are responsible for seeking the appropriate consent(s) needed to carry out the project and ensure that all works comply.

8.2 Applicants will be expected not to be in arrears with payments or in dispute with the Council at the grant approval stage and payment stage of the project.

8.3 Where applicable all works need to comply with the Design Guidance issued by the Council and guidance within the schedule letter. Council officers are also on hand to provide advice on compliance with the Design Guidance.

8.4 Listed properties or properties within a Conservation Area will be subject to further conditions as advised by the Council.

8.5 The applicant must ensure that their business and premises are compliant with all relevant environmental health, trading standards and consumer protection legislation and have no history of non compliance or convictions in respect of the current or former businesses operated by the same.

9. Decision making Process

9.1 An assessment of the completed application and full supporting documentation will be undertaken by Council Officers. During this process additional information may be sought from applicants.

9.2 Successful applicants will be issued with a grant offer letter together with relevant terms and conditions.

9.3 Unsuccessful applicants will be issued with a notifying letter.

10. Insurance

10.1 For a period of five years from the grant award date, the applicant must comprehensively insure the property with a reputable insurance company and, if requested, provide the Council with evidence of such insurance.

11. State Aid

11.1 In order to minimise distortion of competition the European Commission sets limits on how much assistance can be given to organisations operating in a competitive market. Each application will be considered on the basis of its specific circumstances.

12. Payment of grants

12.1 Payment of the grant will not be made until all works are completed to the satisfaction of the Council and subject to the following:

- i. Submission of original invoice(s) / receipts and Grant claim form.
- ii. Satisfactory revenues check (confirmation that applicant is not in arrears with the Council).
- iii. Confirmation that all necessary statutory consents relating to Environmental Health and/or public protection (if applicable) have been complied with.

- iv. Confirmation that all necessary statutory consents including but not limited to *Planning Permission, Building Regulations, Change of Use, or Listed Buildings Consent* have been complied with.

12.2 Interim payments are considered at the discretion of the Council.

12.3 Invoices paid through credit card/hire purchase/extended credit agreements/finance leases/contra invoices and cash purchases **will not** be considered for grant funding; Payments must be in the form of BACS, Faster payments, Debit Cards, CHAPS or cheque.

13. Publicity

13.1 The Council and Welsh Government reserves the right to publicise any project supported.

14. Monitoring

14.1 Officers of the Council will be permitted full access to the property in order for them to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant aid and compliance with its terms and conditions. The applicant will be contacted in due course in order to arrange a monitoring visit. Visits to the grant-aided scheme by representatives of the Council will take place to monitor the progress of works. Thereafter, these visits will be arranged at 6 monthly intervals until all conditions and outputs are attained and demonstrated.

15. Terms and conditions

15.1 A copy of the terms and conditions for the COVID 19 Fund will be provided with the formal grant offer.

16. Welsh Language

16.1 Applications in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications in English, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

17. Submission of applications

17.1 Applications should be sent to the following address:-

Regeneration@bridgend.gov.uk