



**WEST MIDLANDS SME GRANTS PROGRAMME (WMGP) PROGRAMME CRITERIA,
GRANT APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES AND PROCESSES**

PROGRAMME CRITERIA

For Birmingham, Solihull MBC and Shropshire based businesses, this is a Capital only grant programme.

For Cannock Chase based businesses, both capital and revenue expenditure are eligible for consideration.

A. BACKGROUND

The West Midlands SME Grants Programme (WMGP) is open to small to medium sized businesses fulfilling the criteria below which are based within, or locating to, the Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Shropshire Council areas. The grant is part funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and administered by Birmingham City Council (BCC).

To support your application a Free Business Advisor diagnostic will need to be completed. (If not already completed please complete the [online form](#)). Please note that on receipt of your application, your details will be shared with either a Growth Hub business advisor to arrange a free business diagnostic appointment.

Note: Funding is subject to availability.

B. CRITERIA

In order to apply for UKSPF funding from the WMGP, your business **must** meet the following criteria:

The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and a turnover of less than €50 million or balance sheet total of less than €43 million, from all sectors. If the business is owned by another company or combination of other companies, please refer to [government website](#).

In addition, we will fund businesses where there is demonstrable need for the proposed project and clear evidence of future growth of the business as a direct result of the proposals. Also, the applicant must contribute to the 'wider economy'; i.e., job creation, commercial floorspace increased/created and jobs safeguarded.

Businesses from all sectors are eligible for consideration, except for charities, those of a political or religious persuasion, activities involving pornography or clairvoyance and any business activity that is illegal or deemed as unsuitable for public support by Birmingham City Council.

You must have been trading for 12 months or more (unless the business is a start-up),

You must be profit-seeking;

The programme operates in accordance with subsidy allowance under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance – you're allowed up to £315,000 (subject to exchange rates) in Small Amounts of Financial Assistance over any rolling period of 3 financial years.

Your business must pay or be going to pay business rates if relocating/ starting up; to one of the local authorities within the areas covered by this programme and those payments must not be in arrears.

Eligible local authorities are limited to the Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Shropshire Council areas.

C. ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

- i) The assistance from WMGP is in the form of a grant contribution of between £1,000 - £7,500 for brand new start-ups or businesses trading less than 12 months looking to consolidate
- ii) The assistance from WMGP is in the form of a grant contribution of between £1,000 - £100,000* for existing businesses undertaking the following activities:
 - Relocation, expansion and growth of existing businesses
 - Develop new markets opportunities
 - Promotional activities
 - Innovation – Including the development of new products including prototyping, testing and commercialisation
 - Improving systems and processes
 - Capital investment, eg, new plant, machinery and equipment
 - Increase in productive capacity of new and existing premises through new property builds/refurbishment/extensions.
 - Rural business diversification activities (for Shropshire businesses)

The grant funding cannot be used for training and skills development

A list of Eligible and Ineligible Project Costs that can be included as part of the grant is available on the website.

(* Grant request for over £20,000 will only be considered on large scale more complex projects subject to negotiation and availability of funds).

- iii) Eligible applicants must be able to financially complete their projects within 3 months* from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement including spend, defrayal and claiming the grant. (** For high value, more complex projects, project timescales are subject to negotiation*).

Priority will be given to investment-ready projects that can be completed before this time.

- iv) Eligible projects must lead to the growth of the business:
 - Jobs created output: the creation of at least 1 full-time equivalent job* for every £10,000 of grant awarded appointed within 6 months from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement.
 - Jobs safeguarded will only be considered if new jobs are being created as part of the application.

*Start-Up Businesses based seeking funding from £1,000 to £7,500 will need to create at least 1 equivalent full-time job.

Note the Jobs created outputs is not a mandatory requirement in the Solihull MBC area.

- v) The grant has to be match funded by the applicant business. This is the difference between the grant you are seeking and the remaining cost of your project. The source of the match funding cannot be from other Public Funds. A financial arrangement whereby an item is paid for in instalments will require prior approval before an application. Loans, overdrafts, savings or company funds are considered to be eligible cash match and these must be secured and in place prior to approval of a WMGP grant.

D. DATA PROTECTION

- i) Birmingham City Council will retain this information to ensure compliance. BCC will put the information you give on to a computer to assist with record keeping. The information you provide is confidential and subject to the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and The Data Protection Act 2018. This personal data will be held and processed by BCC (local authority registered with the ICO,

Regulation number Z4594350) in order to provide and share data amongst the organisations involved in WMGP.

- ii) The personal details you provide may also be shared with third parties involved in Birmingham City Council's WMGP (including West Midlands Combined Authority, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Shropshire Council & Cannock Chase District Council) for the purposes of the provision of this support on the basis that they treat the information as confidential as well or as part of any statutory duties requiring such disclosure and to protect the public funds it collects and administers. Any data may be used to prevent fraud or the misuse of resources. For further information of our privacy notice, visit [BCC Privacy Information](#).

E. SUBSIDY CONTROL

Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance – you're allowed up to £315,000 (subject to exchange rates) in Small Amounts of Financial Assistance over any rolling period of 3 financial years

[Gov.Uk Subsidy Control Website](#)

Any aid awarded to you under the WMGP will have to be declared if you apply, or have applied, for any other public funding. Therefore, if successful, the offer letter must be retained and shown to any other public body to which you apply for funding for the three years following the offer.

False declarations will lead to the recovery of the value of the assistance provided plus interest.

Note that where a business is part of a group, the £315,000 limit applies to the group as a whole for public sector support within the United Kingdom.

F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

- i) If you are a Birmingham or Solihull MBC based business, then to support your application a free Business Advisor diagnostic will need to be completed. (If not already completed please complete the online form). You should contact WMGP@birmingham.gov.uk to discuss your eligibility and request the WMGP grant application form.
- ii) The use of consultants or third parties to complete the application form is an **ineligible** cost. Applicants are encouraged to use partner organisations for any additional support at no cost.
- iii) However, if you choose to use a consultant or third parties, you must provide their details including: name, contact details, payment terms and role relating to this project.
- iv) The application form must be signed by a person legally responsible for the business identified as the 'Applicant' in Section of the application form.
- v) Your signed application and all supporting documentation requested in Section 16 Checklist (listed below) should be submitted in electronic format only.
- vi) When submitting your application, only include documentation which has been requested in the application form. Documentation submitted which has not been requested will not be considered as part of your application.

Checklist

1. Microsoft word version (unsigned) and scanned signed application form
2. For existing businesses last two years full accounts and where the applicant is part of a group, consolidated group accounts
3. Management accounts up to present day (only if most recent account are more than 6 months old or a newly trading Start-Up business)
4. Financial projections on a month-by-month basis including profit and loss, cash flows and balance sheets for the next 12 months (if request is more than £30,000 for the next 24 months period)

5. A robust business plan where the business has traded for less than 12 months or is a new start-up and evidence business is registered
6. Evidence of match funding
7. A minimum of 3 written quotations are secured for each item* above £2,499 listed in Section 9 provided with your application along with the evidence relevant process in WMGP Procurement guidance notes has been followed. *one item or the sum of many items from one supplier
8. Evidence of existing staff numbers (printout of payroll)
9. Copy of a current, up to date business bank statement for the applicant business showing bank name, business name and address, account name, account number, sort code.

GRANT APPLICATION FORM GUIDANCE NOTES

Note the following guidance when completing the application form:

All light grey shaded fields must be completed. Incomplete forms will be rejected. Once the application form is completed, it must be saved as word format: .doc or .docx. Illustrations and graphics cannot be included in the Application Form.

1. Business Details	
Field	Guidance
Business name	Enter the full registered name for the Applicant and the company number if applicable (as provided by Companies House).
VAT Number	VAT is not claimable on grants and all item costs should be entered excluding VAT
Number of full time staff Employed Number of part time staff Employed	Full time staff are those that work for the applicant company for 36 hours a week or more and meet the criterion below for direct employees, any working below this will be considered as Part time on the WMGP. Only include direct employees, excluding any self-employed, sub-contracted, agency staff, casual staff, apprentices, graduate placements, or any zero hour contracted staff.
New jobs to be created	Enter the number of jobs that will be created using the guidance below to calculate. At least 1 equivalent full-time job must be created for every £10,000 of grant support received from WMGP. Start-Up Business based only seeking funding from £1,000 to £7,500 will need to create at least 1 equivalent full-time job. The project must result in net new jobs which are calculated by comparing existing staff levels at the start of the project with those at the end of the project. For the purposes of job targets, the definition of a full time job is one of 36 hours or more a week. The jobs created will be expected to be sustained for a minimum of 1 year. Note the Jobs created outputs is not a mandatory requirement in the Solihull MBC area.
Applicant contact details	Enter the full name, position (must be Owner, Managing Director/ Chief Executive), postcode, e-mail address and telephone number of the main point of contact. There will only be direct communication between us and the named applicant

Match Funding	<p>The grant must be match funded by the applicant.</p> <p>The source of the match funding cannot be from other Public Funds, Hire Purchase or similar financial products involving a financial arrangement whereby an item is paid for in instalments, as this does not provide full evidence of defrayed expenditure. Loans, overdrafts, savings or company funds are considered to be eligible cash match and these must be secured and in place prior to approval of a WMGP grant.</p> <p>We may need evidence of more than just the portion of project costs you will cover. How are the costs ringfenced for the spend? For example, if the spend is via current balance of the bank account, please provide workings that evidence of how the total project costs to be defrayed prior to any grant claims being paid. This must take account of payments in and out of the account.</p>
Total project cost	This field will auto update from the values inputted in section 9. Project Costs
Grant request	<p>Enter the amount of aid requested using the guidance below to calculate.</p> <p>At least 1 full-time equivalent job for every £10,000 of grant awarded appointed within 6 months from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement. Start-Up Businesses only seeking funding from £1,000 to £7,500 will need to create at least 1 equivalent full-time job. The intervention rates below will also need to be applied.</p> <p>Grant request for over £20,000 will only be considered on large scale more complex projects subject to negotiation and availability of funds.</p> <p>Note the Jobs created outputs is not a mandatory requirement in the Solihull MBC area.</p>
Project start date Project end date	<p>The start date cannot be before the submission and a decision is made, this can take up to 6 weeks therefore the start date should be a minimum of 4 weeks after the submission.</p> <p>Note: Approved businesses must: financially complete their projects within 3 months* from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement including spend, defrayal and claiming the grant. Any expenditure or job appointments made before an approval decision and a funding pack has been accepted and signed will be ineligible to be claimed as part of the WMGP programme. (<i>* For high value, more complex projects, project timescales are subject to negotiation.</i>)</p>

2. Eligibility Criteria

The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and/or which have an annual turnover not exceeding £36 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding £18 million. If the business is owned by another company or combination of other companies, please refer to Legislation.Gov.Uk Website

3. Business Background	
Question	Guidance
i) Provide a brief history of the business since it started	Provide brief history of your company including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date Established • Ownership • Location • Business Activity • Current number of employees • Current turnover and profit.
ii) What type of work does the business undertake including details of any specialist or niche product/service or any own brand/designs? (If Start-Up state what the business proposes to undertake)	Product and services supplied or if Start-Up business proposing to supply.
iii) Provide details of your current markets including the details of 5 main existing customers (if Start-Up the target markets/customers).	Current or if Start-Up Target market including which sectors, named customers if any etc. List 5 existing or target customers
iv) How do you currently market your business? (If Start-Up how do you propose to market the business).	Current marketing tools used or planned to be used, if Start-Up.

4. Project Proposal	
Question	Guidance
What will the grant assistance be used for? (For Birmingham, Solihull MBC and Shropshire based businesses, this is a Capital only grant programme. For Cannock Chase based businesses, both Capital and Revenue expenditure are eligible for consideration).	For instance: capital expenditure (plant, machinery, ICT equipment / infrastructure), expansion / relocation (partitions, desks, electrical installation), new product development and market development (pull ups, brochures, etc).
i) Why do you need to undertake the project?	For instance: to expand, grow the business, to deliver new contracts, etc.
ii) What market research has been undertaken to demonstrate the need for the project?	For Instance: Any internal or external information that supports the project.
iii) What new market, business opportunities, new to market/improved products or services will the project generate?	For Instance: diversification of markets, new markets, new services, new products, new sectors this project will attract, new ecommerce facilities etc.
iv) What impact will this project have on the growth of your business?	For Instance: increased turnover, profit, new products and market opportunities, potential new contracts and employment growth, etc.

Note: Approved businesses must: financially complete their projects within 3 months* from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement including spend, defrayal and claiming the grant. Create new jobs within 6 months from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement.

Priority will be given to investment-ready projects that can be completed before this time. * For high value, more complex projects, project timescales are subject to negotiation.

5. Business Relocation/Expansion/Start-Up Premises	
Question	Guidance
i) Does your project involve: Start-Up premises? Relocating to new premises? Expanding into additional premises?	Select the relevant option from the list.
ii) Premises details	State details of current premises, Full address, site area (sq. m/ft.), Lease details (if applicable) and rates payable. State details of New/additional premises, Full address, site area (sq. m/ft.), Lease details (if applicable) and rates payable. Provide a copy of the new lease agreement when signed once the relocation to new/additional premises has been completed. Note: New Lease agreements need to be for a minimum of three years.
iii) What date do you anticipate moving into the new premises?	State the date move will be completed by. Note: Approved businesses must financially complete their projects within 3 months* from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement including spend, defrayal and claiming the grant. (<i>* For high value, more complex projects, project timescales are subject to negotiation.</i>)

6. Project Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 1 equivalent full-time job must be created for every £10,000 of grant support received from WMGP. - For existing SMEs at least 1 equivalent full-time job must be created for £1,000 - £10,000 of grant support received, and for every £10,000 thereafter - Jobs safeguarded will only be considered if new jobs are being created as part of the application. - Start-Up Businesses only seeking funding from £1,000 to £7,500 will need to create at least 1 equivalent full-time job. - The project must result in net new jobs which are calculated by comparing existing staff levels at the start of the project with those at the end of the project. - For the purposes of job targets, the definition of a full-time job is one of 36 hours or more a week. - The jobs created will be expected to be sustained for a minimum of 1 year. - A payroll printout or HR records should be submitted with the application form to evidence the number of direct* employees in your business before your project is undertaken. Once the project has been completed, you will be required to provide signed Contracts of Employment for new employees and an updated payroll printout to evidence the increase in net new jobs. <p>*direct employees, exclude any self-employed, sub-contracted, casual staff, agency staff, apprentices, graduate placements, or any zero hour contracted staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any new jobs created as a result of the project should not include any of the job categories listed above, as they are ineligible. <p>Note the Jobs created outputs is not a mandatory requirement in the Solihull MBC area.</p>

<p>How many new full time equivalent jobs (lasting 1 year or more minimum of 36 hours a week) that will start after the date of the acceptance of the funding offer letter?</p> <p>Approved businesses must create new jobs within 6 months from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement. Priority will be given to projects that can create jobs before this time.</p>	<p>Provide details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new jobs (full-time equivalent) to be created • When the jobs will be created • Job titles • Hours • Annual salary • Skill levels <p>Note: Failure to achieve the forecast job outputs may result in claw back of grant already paid.</p>
<p>How many jobs will be safeguarded?</p>	<p>Provide details of jobs at risk if investment is not carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job titles • Hours • When the jobs are at risk

7. Project Management	
Question	Guidance
<p>i) Identify all known risks (low/medium/high) and specify the mitigating actions you will take to address each of these risks and how will they be managed? Including details of what the consequences to your business would be if your bank balance was negatively affected by 10-15%. What is the likelihood of this happening and what mitigations are in place to reduce this possibility?</p>	<p>You should focus on the arrangements for managing and mitigating risk as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the key risks and uncertainties of the project. (For instance: delivery date of new machinery, planning permission, purchase of property, budgetary issues, change of cashflow circumstances and finance). • Detailed risk analysis for the project content and approach, including the technical detail. • Commercial, managerial and environmental risks as well as other uncertainties associated with the project. • Key risks must be rated as High/Medium/Low (H/M/L) <p>State how the management team would mitigate against these key risks.</p> <p>You should address all significant and relevant risks and their mitigation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key project management tools and mechanisms that will be implemented to provide confidence that sufficient control will be in place to minimise operational risk and, therefore, promote successful project delivery. • Identify the person responsible for managing the risk. Provide a copy of any risk register or risk management plan if available.
<p>ii) How will the project be managed to ensure successful delivery?</p>	<p>Provide evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the management team to successfully deliver the proposed project (for instance: track record of delivering similar projects) • Management roles and responsibilities (for instance: staffing structure, line management and roles of key personnel) • Appropriate skills to deliver the project (for instance: professional and technical qualifications). • Name and position of Lead.
<p>iii) Who within your business will be responsible for the management and delivery of the project and what is their position in the business?</p>	<p>Provide name and job title of the person who will manage the project.</p>

8. Funding and Added Value	
Question	Guidance
What are the key milestones for project activity?	State the key milestones for project activity including the start date, end date, financial completion, lead time for delivery and job creation dates.

9. Project Costs	
Question	Guidance
Provide a description for each element of expenditure	<p>Provide evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List each project expenditure item and your preferred quotes business name and give a brief reason for your selection in each case. The supporting proposals, tender documentation or three quotes for each item* above £2,499 relating to expenditure as listed in the project costs as explained in the WMGP procurement guidance document. These files need to be named in accordance to the different expenditure listed in the table under the Expenditure fields. This will assist in determining if the procurement requirements have been met. If under £2,499 the one quote for the chosen supplier. <p>*one item or the sum of many items from one supplier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the project has more expenditure items than the rows in the tables below, consolidate items on to one row.
How much private sector match funding will the project attract? (i.e. owner's investment, company funds, bank loan, other funding).	<p>Confirm the source of match funding. The source of the match funding cannot be from other Public Funds, Hire Purchase and similar products that involve payment by instalment.</p> <p>Provide evidence of confirmation of the level of private sector match funding to deliver the proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal company resources Directors loans Bank loans and overdraft Other funding including (equity and non-bank finance).

10. Existing Financial Summary	
Question	Guidance
i) Provide full details of any existing bank loans or overdraft facilities including current balance. (If you do not have any bank loans or overdraft facilities, state none.)	<p>Provide confirmation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declare existing bank loans or overdraft facilities including current balance. If you do not have any bank loans or overdraft facilities, state none.

11. Other Funding from Public Sector Bodies	
Question	Guidance
Detail the amount of aid received from public sources in this financial year and the two previous financial years (if a group, this needs to include all funding across all business within the group).	<p>Provide confirmation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declare the amount of public sector funding the amount of aid received from public sources and the number of job created in this financial year and the two previous financial years. If no public sector funding has been received, state N/A in the table.

12. Declaration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration must be signed by the Owner or Managing Director/ Chief Executive. 	

13. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Overview

As stated in the Application Form.

14. Marketing

- Select where you heard about the WMGP from the list in the application.

15. Equalities Monitoring

Complete the table (age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation) for the owner director (referred to as the 'Applicant') and all the employees in the business.

16. Checklist

Requirements	Guidance
Microsoft word version (unsigned) and scanned signed application form	Submit completed unsigned Application Form in Microsoft word format (.doc or .docx file) Submit signed scanned Application Form.
For existing businesses last two years full accounts and where the applicant is part of a group, consolidated group accounts.	Grant requests will be required to submit last 2 years annual accounts which do not need to be audited. Also, where the applicant is part of a group must provide consolidated group accounts or sperate accounts for each entity within the group.
Management Accounts up to present day.	For Existing businesses only if most recent account are more than 6 months old: Up to date Management Accounts starting from the date of the last annual accounts. A Start-Up business trading for less than 12 months Up to date Management Accounts starting from the date trading commenced. Management Accounts are not required for a brand-new Start-Up business.
Financial projections on a month by month basis including profit and loss, cash flows and balance sheets.	For grant requests for up to £30,000 Financial projections including profit and loss, cash flows and balance sheets for 12 months starting from the end of the period of most recent accounts provided. For grant requests for more than £30,000: Financial projections including profit and loss, cash flows and balance sheets for 24 months starting from the end of the period of most recent accounts provided.
A robust business plan and evidence business is registered	Only where the business has traded for less than 12 months or is a new start-up: A formal Business Plan: As a minimum, this should include an executive summary, owner's background, products/services, market analysis/ research and strategy, competitor/SWOT analysis, pricing strategy and Profit & Loss accounts/financial/cash flow forecasts for 12 months. Evidence business is registered: eg if a limited company, Companies House registration, for a Partnership, copy of a Partnership Agreement, or for a sole trader, copy of HMRC self-employed registration is required

16. Checklist	
Requirements	Guidance
Evidence of match funding.	<p>Confirmation of match funding to deliver the project:</p> <p>Internal resource (eg bank statements, existing loan and overdraft facility).</p> <p>External finance (eg new loans, overdraft facility, equity investment, evidence of funds from directors or shareholders).</p> <p>Funding from one company to another is only allowable within a group structure (as defined by the Companies Act).</p> <p>Hire Purchase or similar financial products involving a financial arrangement whereby the purchase of equipment is paid in instalments, which does not provide evidence of defrayed expenditure for the full amount) are ineligible. Loans, overdrafts, savings or company funds are considered to be eligible cash match, these must be secured and in place prior to approval of a WMGP grant.</p> <p>We may need evidence of more than just the portion of project costs you will cover. How are the costs ringfenced for the spend? For example, if the spend is via current balance of the bank account, please provide workings that evidence of how the total project costs to be defrayed prior to any grant claims being paid. This must take account of payments in and out of the account.</p>
A minimum of 3 written quotations are secured for each item* above £2,499 listed in Section 9 provided with your application along with the evidence relevant process in WMGP Procurement guidance notes has been followed. *one item or the sum of many items from one supplier	<p>We need the evidence relevant process has been followed. Different thresholds of project costs have varying requirements. For Full details, refer to the WMGP Procurement guidance notes.</p> <p>A minimum of 3 written quotations are secured for each item* above £2,499.</p> <p>If under £2,499 the one quote for the chosen supplier.</p> <p>*one item or the sum of many items from one supplier</p>
Evidence of existing staff numbers.	<p>Printout of payroll (this is the preferred method) or HR records.</p> <p>The record needs to evidence the figures mention in Section 1, Full time staff are those that work for the applicant company for 36 hours a week or more and meet the criterion below for direct employees, any working below this will be considered as Part time on the WMGP. This document should also include the applicant company details, employee names, FT/PT breakdown (hours worked) and salary details. Some of these details may require annotating a standard system printout, in this case please sign and certify the document.</p> <p>Only include direct employees, excluding any self-employed, sub-contracted, agency staff, casual staff, apprentices, graduate placements, or any zero hour contracted staff.</p>

16. Checklist	
Requirements	Guidance
Current, up to date business bank statement.	A Full current bank statement from the last 3 months showing bank name, business name and address, account name, account number and sort code.

Submission of your Application

When your application form has been completed, before submitting it to BCC, ensure that you have answered all questions fully and have completed all boxes. Print it out, sign it and scan it so that the signed version can be e-mailed along with all documentation requested in Section 16 (Check list).

Submit your signed application and all supporting documentation requested in Section 16 to Birmingham City Council in electronic format only to WMGP@birmingham.gov.uk.

Incomplete applications will not be considered and will be returned.

PROCESSES

G. APPLICATION PROCESS

- i) Once your application has been received by BCC, you will receive an e-mail notifying you of its receipt. It will then be checked to ensure that all documentation required has been submitted with the application form.

If at this stage it is felt that additional information or documents are missing or need to be resubmitted, you will be contacted.

- ii) After which a financial appraisal and project assessment will be undertaken. When both assessments have been passed, the application will be allocated to a Project Officer (PO). You may be contacted at this stage if anything needs clarifying.
- iii) Following the assessments, the project will be considered at an Investment Panel/Board meeting, for a decision.
- iv) Approval is not guaranteed, and the Investment Panel/Board will make one of three decisions:
1. Application recommended for approval.
 2. Application deferred. In this case, you will be contacted for additional information before the decision can be finalised.
 3. Application declined. In this case, you will receive a correspondence outlining the reasons why your application was declined.

Note an application can be declined or withdrawn at any point in the process, if sufficient grounds are identified.

H. APPROVED APPLICATIONS

- i) When your application has been approved, a Funding Agreement stating the amount of grant offered and the terms and conditions will be sent to you.
- ii) Payments will be made against project expenditure defrayed **after** the date the Funding Agreement is signed (Annex 1 of the agreement). Do not commence your project until you have signed and returned the agreement. Note that you have 7 working days from the date of the agreement to complete and return it to BCC.
- iii) Your allocated PO will then arrange a benchmark visit with you to discuss the following programme documentation:

- SME Funding Agreement
- SME claim summary form
- Asset Register (if applicable)
- Jobs Created Form
- Customer satisfaction Survey

Your PO will also take photographs of the front of your building and the reception area, and where applicable, the location for new equipment, the area of the premises to be expanded into or the new premises to be relocated into.

The SME guide to making grant claim will be sent prior to the benchmark visit as it is a longer document than those listed above, about which you may have questions.

I. **MARKETING**

- If your project includes funding to produce marketing materials (such as brochures and pull ups), then you **MUST** acknowledge the source of the grant funding within any items you produce and follow the UK Government Branding Manual guidance. The UKSPF Marketing Compliance Checklist gives an indication of what you need to do to make your marketing collateral UK Government compliant, but this is only an indicative guide, and it is recommended that to ensure compliance, you read the UK Government Branding Manual for full guidance on logo size, colour, positioning, clearance zones etc.,
- Marketing Compliance Checklists are available on the website.
- UK Government Branding Manual: [Gov.Uk Branding Document](#)
- Your BCC PO will provide the logo in either jpg, tif or eps format.
- If it is found that a business has not adhered to the branding requirements, grant funding may be withdrawn or, where grant funding has already been paid, it may be reclaimed. Your PO will supply you with the relevant logos you need to display.
- For press releases, advertisements and articles, BCC needs to approve the content prior to issuing. Copies of these items should be sent to the email address listed in the UKSPF Marketing Compliance Checklist

J. **GRANT PAYMENTS**

- Approved businesses will have to financially complete their projects within 3 months* from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement including spend, defrayal and claiming the grant. Create new jobs within 6 months from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement. (** For high value, more complex projects, project timescales are subject to negotiation.*) Priority will be given to investment-ready projects that can be completed before this time.
- All expenditure undertaken as part of the financial assistance grant project **MUST** be paid for by cheque or bank transfer so that a clear evidence trail can be demonstrated. Any payments made in **cash will not** be reimbursed against.
- BCC will only reimburse against invoices for eligible expenditure dated **after the date when the Funding Agreement was accepted.**
- Grant payments are issued as a **reimbursement of eligible expenditure** (i.e. paid in arrears) incurred by the business and will be paid on production of relevant evidence, i.e. copies of invoices for approved eligible costs and bank statements to evidence the payments. All documents required to make a claim should be sent by e-mail to your PO.
- All documents listed above submitted as part of a grant claim should clearly state 'Certified as a true copy of the original' and be signed and dated. Any documents submitted without this will be returned and reimbursement will be delayed.

- vi) Grants can be claimed either at the completion of your project or by instalments agreed with the project officer.
- vii) Grant claims should not include recoverable VAT.
- viii) Grant payments will be reimbursed at the percentage rate listed on page 1 of your Funding Agreement for eligible expenditure submitted until the approved grant amount has been reached. (Refer to Section 6 Project costs above, ii) Business area location and grant intervention rates.)
- ix) Grant payments will be made directly to your business's bank account using details supplied on the new vendor form. Grant payments will not be made to third parties.

K. MONITORING

- i) A condition of this grant is that the assisted businesses must create new full time equivalent jobs (lasting 1 year or more, minimum of 36 hours a week). For every £10,000 of grant awarded or £1,000 to £10,000 for a Business that will start after the date of the acceptance of the funding agreement. The new jobs will need to be created within 6 months from the date of acceptance of the Funding Agreement at the very latest.
- ii) Businesses will be sent a 'Jobs created' form for completion. The forms should be e-mailed to your PO along with the new employee's contracts and a copy of the HR records or payroll printout.
- iii) Failure to complete this form or create the required number of jobs may result in grant monies paid being reclaimed by Birmingham City Council.
- iv) When you have submitted your last claim, where applicable, your PO will arrange a verification visit to take photographs of the new equipment or area which has been expanded into, where applicable, and discuss the 'Customer Satisfaction Survey'. The Customer Satisfaction Survey also provides details of the jobs created and other impacts that the grant has had on the business in terms of increase in turnover, increase in customers and development of new products/services.

L. FURTHER INFORMATION

- i) It may take up to 6 weeks from a **complete** submission of your application to BCC before you receive a decision.
- ii) Applications will be assessed on a case by case basis and as such, awards will vary depending on evidence provided, viability of your business and the project to be undertaken.
- iii) This is a discretionary fund all decisions are subject to a project, business, financial appraisal and will be assessed on the basis of subject to availability of funds and first come, first served, principle.

