



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

Enterprise Fund

Grant Guidance Notes

Deadline for Submission of Applications

12 noon on Friday 5th May 2023

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1. Introduction

The Enterprise Fund is about developing those young businesses that need assistance in taking the next step in their growth plan. This may be funding towards a new piece of equipment, developing I.T. infrastructure, implementing a significant marketing campaign, product and design development and so forth.

This fund is aimed at supporting businesses, with a track record of two years or less, to address barriers to growth using innovative approaches.

You may find it helpful to discuss your project with a member of staff within Council's Prosperity and Place Unit before submitting your application:

Una Bailey
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1.1 Purpose of grant programme

Council recognises the incredible entrepreneurial spirit of many people across the Borough who have established businesses which contribute towards the economic prosperity of the area. In order to support a new generation of entrepreneurs, Council has established an annual fund – the total of which is variable, and dependent on available budget - to support young businesses that have been trading less than two years.

1.2 Strategic Fit

The fund links to Council's Corporate and Community Plans under the following themes:

Council Strategic Theme: Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity

Council will work with its partners to maximise business start-up opportunities and encourage existing enterprises to grow and prosper.

Community Planning Outcomes: Population Outcome

All people of Causeway Coast and Glens will contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy built on a culture of growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and learning.

Outcome

The Causeway Coast & Glens area provides opportunities for all to contribute to and engage in a more prosperous and fair economy.

If your application is successful, you will be contractually obliged to provide information to Council's Economic Development Officers. This will include monitoring progress and expenditure incurred, discussing challenges or obstacles and fulfilling the reporting requirements stipulated in the Letter of Offer.

Please do not apply if you cannot fulfil these requirements.

1.3 Level of Grant Award

The Enterprise Fund can provide funding of up to 100% costs up to a maximum of £5,000. The total cost of the project must not exceed £10,000. Match funding is not a requirement. Applicant businesses must be in a position to pay for items and claim the money from Council retrospectively.

This is a competitive process and all grant awards will be determined on the basis of merit. Applicants are advised that organisations that have been successful in securing Council funding in the past will not automatically be guaranteed funding in the future. Council reserves the right to reduce the amount of funding awarded if we do not consider that the amount applied for represents value for money or if there are insufficient funds available to meet the request.

Please Note: Successful applicants will have to provide all evidence requested once the project expenditure is complete. This will include original receipts, business bank statements, or any other documentation deemed necessary. This list is not exhaustive. If requested documentation is not supplied, payment will be withheld. Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these items.

1.4 General principles

In line with Council's Grant Funding Policy, the overarching principle for all Council grant funding is that of meeting local needs which have been identified and prioritised by Council or by others and acknowledged by Council. Any activity that cannot be shown to meet the following basic requirements will not be provided with funding:

- Have a clearly identified need i.e., the application addresses barriers to growth which the business faces.
- Can deliver outcomes which meet this need.
- In the case of this funding, deliver improved profits, increased employment, entry into new markets, cost effective and quality service provision, fitting with the purpose and remit of the funding.
- Be undertaken by a credible, viable business with the capacity to deliver the project as stated.
- Reflect the statutory remit of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan, the relevant Service Plan and meets the specific criteria of the fund.
- Applicants must demonstrate their commitment to promoting Good Relations and Equality of Opportunity.
- In the interests of transparency, equality and accountability, all eligible applicants will have a right of appeal should their application be rejected.
- While all applications are treated on the basis of merit, Council would particularly welcome applications from young people, women and under-represented groups from Section 75 groupings.

All projects must be completed, paid in full, cleared the business bank account and claimed before Friday 16th February 2024. There is no provision for extending this deadline.

1.5 Who can apply?

The initial criteria for application are as follows:

- All applicant businesses and social enterprises must be within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area and actively trading commercially. The Enterprise Fund is open to all sectors but Council particularly welcome applications from the following priority sectors:
 - Advanced Manufacturing, Materials and Engineering
 - Construction
 - Financial Business and Professional Services
 - Retail
 - Tourism and Hospitality
 - Agri-food
 - Sustainable Energy
- All applicants must have completed the Business Start Programme – available through Enterprise Causeway and Roe Valley Enterprises – within the last two years – or have a fit for purpose business plan from other sources completed within the last two years.
- All applicants must have a business bank (or other financial institution) account for the sole purpose of their business – i.e., separate from personal finances.

Only businesses that meet these criteria can apply to the Enterprise Fund. Please note, a business plan within the last two years and recent business bank statement dated within the last three months must be supplied at application stage. This is mandatory and an application will not proceed without them.

1.6 What can be funded?

Examples of expenditure that can be funded through this grant include:

- New equipment linked to creating new jobs or introducing innovative approaches leading to increased profitability
- Developing I.T systems which can demonstrably lead to increased profitability
- Implementing a significant marketing campaign which will lead to increased sales
- Development of a marketing support programme or sales research which will led to the business entering new markets.

1.7 Who cannot be funded?

This funding programme will not award grants to the following:-

- Businesses whose address is outside the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area
- Businesses with charitable fundraising as their main focus
- Political Organisations
- Businesses previously in receipt of an Enterprise Fund award from Council
- Businesses yet to commence trading
- Any business where there are ethical or reputational considerations – e.g. gambling, money lending, adult entertainment, tobacco products or cannabis products not authorised as medicines, debt factoring, hire purchase financing; pyramid schemes; projects which have as their object the promotion of political or religious views; illegal or immoral activities
- Any other business that the Council may from time to time deem to be ineligible.

1.8 Exclusions

The purpose of this funding is to support innovation. In general, the following will not be eligible for funding:-

- Retrospective expenditure where services/items have already been obtained and paid
- Applications received after the closing date as specified
- Costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system
- Costs towards ongoing running costs (e.g. electricity, rent, rates, insurance etc.).
- Building costs, Capital Improvements or refurbishments of any property
- On-going Licence Fees
- Loan Repayments
- Mobile Assets e.g. bicycles, cars, vans, lorries, boats, trailers, horse-boxes, diggers
- Second hand equipment including refurbished equipment
- General maintenance or refurbishment works
- Servicing of existing equipment
- Training Costs
- Information Websites with no online purchasing capabilities
- Consumable items that are used by the business and replaced regularly because they wear out or are used up e.g. printer ink, high-vis vests for staff, hand sanitiser
- Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT
- Activities which are party-political in intention, use or presentation
- Salary costs
- Alcohol, gratuities, gifts and prizes
- Purchase of stock for general trading purposes

2.0 How to answer the questions

Applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens for Enterprise Fund 2023 should be submitted online at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/grantsandfunding
Guidance on completing the application online is provided via the web-site link.

All sections must be completed as fully and concisely as possible. Please note maximum word limits per question.

Applicants should not presume that information contained within a business plan will be taken into account. If information is relevant to a specific question within the application, make sure it is included in the answer to that question.

3.0 How we assess and score your application

Every application that is received will be assessed for the following:

- To ensure that the business is eligible to apply to this particular grant programme
- For reassurance of each applicant's capability to deliver the proposal, and
- How well the proposal meets the business's needs and tackles barriers to growth.

An acknowledgement receipt will be electronically issued to you once your submission has been received. The Funding Unit will assess your application for eligibility. If your application is eligible to apply for grant aid from the Enterprise Fund, it will be forwarded to the relevant service area for a full assessment and scoring against the stated criteria.

3.1 Eligibility Assessment

The assessments in respect of Part 1 of the application form are awarded a pass or fail eligibility rating.

If the business, based on the information supplied, is able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility to draw down the grant, they will progress to the next part of the process.

If the business, based on the information supplied, is not able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility to draw down the grant, they will be advised of specific omissions / shortcomings and how these can be addressed to help prepare them for any future funding requests.

3.2 What if an application is not eligible?

If your application is not eligible, you will be notified immediately and the reasons will be outlined to you. Your application will not proceed to assessment and scoring.

If a business is not eligible for funding through the Enterprise Fund, businesses may wish to contact Council's Business Support Team who can help signpost to other sources of support.

3.3 Assessment and Scoring

If the business, based on the information supplied, is able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility for the Enterprise Fund they will be scored according to established assessment criteria shown in the table below.

0 Unacceptable	Nil or inadequate response. Fails to address the question or demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.
1 Very Poor	Response is partially relevant but generally very poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled. An unacceptable response with serious reservations.
2 Poor	Response is partially relevant but generally poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled. A response with reservations.
3 Average	Response is relevant and average. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.
4 Good	Response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled. Good supporting evidence supplied.
5 Excellent	Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

All questions will be scored out of 5 and weighting will be applied as detailed below

	Criteria	Score out of a possible 5	Weighting	Possible Score
1	Clear and concise evidence of the need for the project within the scope of the fund		X3	15
2	Clear and realistic outcomes set for the project e.g. increase in profit, employment, new markets entered, new products or services introduced		X3	15
3	Project demonstrates innovation in the marketplace or in business practices		X2	10
4	Ability, skills and experience of the business which enables them to deliver the project		X2	10

Applications must score at least 65% in order to avail of funding.

Applicants will be ranked according to score obtained and available funding allocated to highest ranking applications. Applicants who fail to achieve a score of at least 65% will be advised that they have been unsuccessful.

3.4 How decisions are made

When the scores are finalised, the applications will be presented to the Leisure and Development Committee for consideration and recommendation to full Council for approval.

It will be at this point, that the successful/unsuccessful applicants will be notified.

3.5 What happens if an application is successful?

If an application is successful, Council will issue a Letter of Offer which is a legal agreement with the business to deliver on the proposals outlined in their application form.

Signed Letters of Offer must be returned within 14 days of receipt.

If successful, businesses can avail of support that will explain the processes and procedures that relate to programme monitoring, submitting a financial claim, requesting a change to programme, promoting Council's support for the programme, monitoring and evaluation requirements and the process of verification.

Council funding is normally paid retrospectively. Grants can be released in two instalments – 50% of the grant will be awarded upfront if the business can demonstrate that it does not have sufficient reserves, followed by remaining 50% once evaluation/financial claim is verified satisfactorily.

Businesses are required to submit an end of project evaluation report. Council Officers may also arrange post-project site visits.

3.6 What happens if an application is unsuccessful?

If an application is not successful, officers from the Council will be available to go through the application with the business and provide practical developmental support to address areas of concern.

An Appeals Process / Review Procedure is also available if an application is unsuccessful. The purpose of this is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed for individual applications are applied fairly and consistently.

The Review will provide an independent process through which an applicant will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the Review Panel that either:

- the outcome was unreasonable or
- that the proper procedures were not followed

Appeals on any other grounds will not be considered.

3.7 Grant Application Assessment Schedule

Enterprise Fund will be open for applications according to the table below:

<p>Opening Date:</p> <p>Monday 3rd April 2023</p>	<p>Closing Date:</p> <p>Friday 5th May 2023 at 12 noon</p> <p>No late applications will be accepted under any circumstances and all required supporting documentation must be supplied at time of submission or the application will not be considered.</p>
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The Enterprise Fund will follow this seven step administrative process:

Step 1	Open call for applications is made
Step 2	Applications are submitted online
Step 3	Applications are assessed
Step 4	Results of the assessment process are ratified by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Step 5	Notification of funding is issued to applicants
Step 6	Letters of Offer are issued and are accepted
Step 7	Staged payments granted retrospectively to successful applicants on submission of all required documentation to verify expenditure and outcomes.

3.8 Application Process

All applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for Enterprise Fund 2023 should be submitted online via Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's online Funding Hub at: www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/grantsandfunding

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that their application is submitted prior to the advertised time and date of closing. Applications received after the closing time/date will not be considered for funding. No exceptions will be made and there is no recourse to appeal.

The deadline for submissions to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Enterprise Fund 2023 is 12 noon on Friday 5th May 2023

Data Protection Act

- We will use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- We may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- We may also share information with other government departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- We might use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request any information that we hold, subject to certain exemption that may apply. This includes information received from third parties, such as, although not limited to, grant applicants, grant holders and contractors. If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act we will release it, subject to exemptions; although we may consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release if requested, you should let us know when you apply. For further information please visit the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk.