



**Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council**

## **Rural Revitalise Fund**

### **Guidance Notes**

**The Fund is open from Wednesday 3rd February 2021 @ 10:00am  
with a deadline for applications of Wednesday 24th February  
2021 @ 12 Noon after which grants will be allocated according  
the criteria outlined in this document**

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### **1. Introduction**

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many businesses in our local towns having to stop trading and rely on the various Covid-19 emergency support schemes to survive. As we move into the recovery stage, it is anticipated that restrictions will be lifted gradually, enabling many businesses to commence trading. The new operating environment is presenting many challenges for our local business community.

Central Government has made available £100,000 to help with the revitalisation of properties within the rural commercial areas in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough.

This grant is being offered to those **businesses trading in the main retail hub** of the 10 largest rural towns/villages within the Borough.

### 1.1 Purpose of grant programme

Council welcomes applications from local business in the following rural boundary areas (they reflect rural settlements with a population of over 1,000) in the Borough.

- Dungiven
- Kilrea
- Ballykelly
- Greysteel
- Cloughmills
- Bushmills
- Castlerock
- Cushendall
- Garvagh
- Rasharkin

**The grant is aimed at maximising the visual impact of shopfronts to help encourage shoppers back into the areas identified.**

You may find it helpful to discuss your application with project officer before you submit:

Jan O'Neill  
Email. [jan.oneill@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:jan.oneill@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)  
Tel. 07525 906 925

### 1.3 Level of Grant Award

Businesses can apply for a grant of 100% of project costs.

The maximum award will be £2,500. Please note the following points:

- This grant can cover the full cost of proposed works or can be a contribution towards costs that may be incurred by the business
- Only one grant per property can be awarded but applicants are encouraged to work with neighbouring businesses in order to enhance the overall visual impact of the streetscape. However, each business must still submit a separate application for works to their own property,
- Application can be made by the property or business owner (with permission from the property owner)
- Proposed works should only commence after a Letter of Offer has been received and accepted by the successful applicant.
- Grants are released after the proposed works are completed and the requested paperwork has been submitted to Council

The amount of funding available for this grant scheme is limited. Only those applications which demonstrate a need and a clear visual enhancement on the streetscape will be considered and will be prioritised on this basis.

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:** You will be required to provide all evidence requested once the project expenditure is complete. For individual **works costing over £1,000 2 written like-for-like quotes will be required.** You will be asked to submit these quotes along with original receipts, bank statements demonstrating payment, or any other documentation deemed necessary at the time of claiming your grant. If the requested documentation is not supplied, payment will be withheld.

***Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these documents when claiming your grant.***

## **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 which cannot be shown to meet the following basic requirements will not be considered for funding:

- Can deliver outcomes which improve the visual impact of the property and the area
- Can demonstrate a need for the proposed work to be undertaken
- Will be undertaken by a credible 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 that they can meet 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 applicants will have a right of appeal should their application be rejected.

**All works must be completed and invoiced no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**

## **1.5 Who can apply?**

The initial criteria for application are as follows:

- Businesses must be located in the central retail hub of the following areas:
  - Dungiven
  - Kilrea
  - Ballykelly

- Greysteel
- Cloughmills
- Bushmills
- Castlerock
- Cushendall
- Garvagh
- Rasharkin

- All applicants must have a bank (or other financial institution) account for the sole purpose of their business – i.e., separate from personal finances.

**Only businesses that meet the criteria can apply to the Rural Revitalise grant**

**1.6 What can be funded?**

**Business Premises**

- Refurbishment and repairs or replacement of existing frontages – ground floor shop fronts and upper floors – plaster, woodwork, windows, gutters, and downpipes
- Repainting
- Where the side of the building is prominent on the street front, consideration will be given to this also
- Replacement or renewal of shop signage
- Feature lighting
- Installation of awnings
- Removal/internalisation of shutters

**NB. Where statutory permissions are required for the work (such as planning permission, listed building consent, advertising consent, building regulation approval), these must be obtained by you and copies of approvals provided when submitting your grant claim**

**1.7 What cannot be funded?**

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

- Businesses whose address is outside the retail hubs of the town/village outlined above
- Financial institutions
- National charities
- Political Organisations

- Religious Institutions
- Multi-nationals
- Any business where there are ethical considerations – for example, betting shops, money lending, 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 following will not normally be eligible for funding:-

- Retrospective expenditure where services/items have already been obtained and paid.
- Planning or professional fees
- Applications received after the closing date specified in the promotional literature.
- Costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system.
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT.
- Activities which are party-political in intention, use or presentation.

## **2.0 How to answer the questions**

Applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens should be submitted online at <https://causeway.eformz.info/>

Guidance on completing the application online is provided on the web-site link.

Hard copies can be made available. Please contact the Central Funding Unit on email [grants@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:grants@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

## **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 criteria of this fund

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, 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 from the fund, 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.

### 3.3 Assessment and Scoring

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

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	Description of proposed plans for the property		X 4	20
2	The current need for the proposed improvements		X 8	40
3	The visual impact of the proposed improvements to the property and the overall impact of the enhancements on the retail shopping hub in which it is situated		X 8	40
				<b>100</b>

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

**Scores will be based on the following considerations:**

<b>0 Unacceptable</b>	Nil or inadequate response. Fails to address the question or demonstrate an ability to meet the requirements.
<b>1 Very Poor</b>	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.
<b>2 Poor</b>	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 all requirements will be fulfilled. A response with reservations.
<b>3 Adequate</b>	Response is largely relevant but lacks detail of how the requirements can be met in certain areas
<b>4 Good</b>	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.
<b>5 Excellent</b>	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.

Applicants will be ranked according to score obtained and if the fund is over-subscribed, funds will be issued in order of highest application score obtained downwards until all funds have been issued.

Applicants who fail to achieve an overall score of at least 65% will be advised that they have been unsuccessful.

### **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.

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

Businesses are required to submit an annual/ end of funding evaluation report. Officers may arrange post project evaluation visits to discuss the monitoring information with the businesses that were funded.

### **3.6 What happens if an application is unsuccessful?**

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.

### **3.8 Application Process**

All applications should be submitted online via Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's online Funding Hub at: <https://causeway.eformz.info/>

### 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](http://www.ico.gov.uk).