

**Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

**COVID-19 Revitalisation Fund for businesses outside of Town Centre**

**Guidance Notes**

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**Section 1 – Introduction**

* 1. **Background**

In response to the challenges that have been brought about by COVID-19, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC), in conjunction with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), are offering businesses the opportunity to apply for financial assistance.

* 1. **Purpose of Revitalisation Fund**

This funding is designed to aid the recovery of businesses across the council area and to help them address the operational challenges faced in order to serve customers safely and to operate within Public Health Authority and other Government guidelines.

* 1. **Levels of Award**

The maximum grant award is £1,000 (exclusive of VAT) at a grant rate of up to 100%. Grant aid will only be paid on the net cost of invoices. This is irrespective of whether or not your business is VAT registered.

At application stage applicants will be required to produce:

* Procurement evidence (as per guidance in Section 2)

At grant claim stage applicants will be required to produce:

* An invoice for the item(s)
* Evidence of necessary statutory consent/s such as Building Control or Planning permission. Approvals must be in place before the works are undertaken and before any grant payment is released.
* Bank statement showing payment/s of invoice(s) and a photograph of the item(s) purchased / works completed.
* Signed claim form detailing the supplier/s and value of the works completed.

**Submission of the evidence detailed above is essential for your grant to be administered and paid to you.**

**There is a set budget to support the Covid-19 Revitalisation Fund for businesses outside of Town Centre and grants will be awarded on a first come first served basis.**

**It is a condition of the grant offer that funding must be spent by the 31st March 2021.**

**Section 2 – Practicalities**

**2.1 Who can apply?**

**Indicative eligibility criteria for applicants:**

* Independent private sector retail businesses\* trading from commercial premises outside the designated town centres of Antrim, Ballyclare, Crumlin, Glengormley and Randalstown will be prioritised under this fund.

\*Retail is defined as the sale of consumer goods via a traditional retail store;

* Independent private coffee shops, bars and restaurants trading from commercial premises outside the designated town centres of Antrim, Ballyclare, Crumlin, Glengormley and Randalstown will be prioritised under this fund.
* Independent hair and beauty sector trading from commercial premises outside the designated town centres of Antrim, Ballyclare, Crumlin, Glengormley and Randalstown will be prioritised under this fund.
* Professional services such as estate agents, financial advisors, mortgage and insurance companies operating in the priority geographic areas noted in the points above may be eligible subject to the availability of funding after all priority sector applications received by the deadline have been considered.
* Was trading on 15th March 2020 and has re-opened or commits to re-opening within a defined timescale (which will be a condition of any offer of funding);
* Please note that only one grant per business address is eligible. Businesses previously receiving Council administered grants in response to Covid-19 are ineligible. Separate rates bills per business are required for properties occupying multiple businesses.
* National chain stores are not eligible for funding however locally owned and/or chains indigenous to Northern Ireland are eligible. The final decision regarding eligibility will rest with the Council.

**The following sectors are ineligible to apply:**

* Banks and financial institutions;
* Charitable / voluntary sector;
* Public buildings and services;
* Health practices, e.g. GP Surgeries, chiropodists and dental surgeries;

**2.2 What can be funded?**

**Eligible Costs**

Please note only expenditure relating to immediate need will be considered, examples include but are not limited to:

* Minor capital works and associated equipment to develop outdoor trading spaces such as seating, tables & electric heaters etc
* Minor works and associated equipment to ensure safe social distancing, health and safety and sanitising measures can be implemented such as signage, sanitising stations, temporary barriers etc
* Technology or other innovative solutions
* Communications

Some building works or items, such as modifications to premises and external signage may require statutory permissions, such as planning permission or building control approval. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure these are obtained before incurring any expenditure. Applicants are reminded that the deadline for spend is 31st March 2021.

The cost of planning and / or building control application fees to Council are not eligible for funding. The lead time to gaining statutory consents such as these should be taken into account before applying for this type of expenditure.

All assets must meet appropriate safety regulations. You are responsible for the upkeep, safety and insurance of all assets.

**2.3 What cannot be funded?**

Businesses previously receiving Council administered grants in response to Covid-19 are ineligible.

**Ineligible Costs**

In general, the following will not be eligible for funding:

* Costs incurred prior to a Letter of Offer from Council (retrospective funding).
* Any costs or projects which are clearly another statutory agency’s responsibility or costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere.
* VAT on all invoices, irrespective of whether or not the applicant is VAT registered.
* Costs towards ongoing running costs/ cash flow (e.g. electricity, rent, rates, insurance, salaries/wages etc.).
* Any repairs to the property or replacements to existing equipment.
* Cleaning products.
* New or replacement awnings/canopies.
* Posters and new name signs. However, Health and Safety/ precautionary signage is permitted and digital signage encouraged.
* Resource costs and consumables such as hand sanitiser and PPE. For information, the capital purchase of a hand sanitiser station is eligible, but the hand sanitiser/PPE itself is not as this is a running cost.
* Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt.
* Costs which are not clearly linked to the project.
* Costs that are assessed as poor value for money, or that are purchased without following Council procurement guidelines.
* Costs that are already covered by other funding or income sources.
* Applications received after the closing date of 4pm on Friday 4th December 2020.
* Activities which are party-political in intention, use or presentation.
* Alcohol, gratuities, gifts and prizes will not be funded.
* Purchase of stock for general trading purposes.
* Costs relating to transportation/vehicles.
* Professional and statutory fees including planning consents, building control and legal fees or any costs incurred in obtaining quotes in preparation of grant application.
* Touch-points eg. Biometric scanners.
* Ventilation / air circulation systems that may risk spreading the virus.
* Heaters that are not energy efficient eg. Gas heaters are ineligible but electric patio heaters are eligible.

**2.4 Procurement**

Applicants must demonstrate value for money has been obtained when purchasing all items to be grant aided.

You must seek quotes for each item that you are applying for funding for, prior to submitting your application and your grant request should be based on the lowest quotation received. You should seek the required number of quotes based on the thresholds below - the threshold is the value of the full item, not just the grant aid applied for. You must ensure that the quotations obtained are ‘like for like’ and they **must be submitted with this application**. Grant funding will not be paid out for items that have been purchased without following this procurement process.

**As part of our local sourcing ambitions, we encourage businesses to seek quotations from suppliers based inside the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council boundary.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Number of Quotations Required** | **Quotation Thresholds (£)**  |
| 1 | Minimum of 2 price checks (written / email quotations or internet quote) | Up to £2,999.99 |
| 2 | Minimum of 3 written/email quotations (internet quotes not permitted) | 3,000.00 – 7,999.99 |
| 3 | Minimum of 4 written/email quotations (internet quotes not permitted) | 8,000.00 – 29,999.99 |

**2.5 Statutory Consents**

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ascertain if any statutory consents are required (i.e. if purchasing outdoor furniture your business must have a café pavement license/and or planning permission), and ensure the relevant applications are made e.g. planning, building control or listed building consent etc. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all approvals are legally complied with. A ‘Certificate of Lawful use or Development’ may be requested to prove that planning consent is not required if there is any uncertainty.

All statutory approvals must be in place before any expenditure on the project is incurred, and copies of these will be requested before a Letter of Offer is issued.

**Professional and statutory fees including planning consents, building control and legal fees or any costs incurred in obtaining quotes in preparation of this grant application are not eligible for funding.**

Please see below contact details for the relevant statutory departments;

Planning

Telephone: 02890 340000 (option 2)

Email Address: planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

Building Control

Telephone: 02890 340000 (option 1)

Email Address: buildingcontrol@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

Environmental Health

Telephone: 02890 340160

Email Address: EnvHealth@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

**2.6 Assessment Process**

**INCOMPLETE AND LATE APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE ASSESSED**

Funding applications will be reviewed and grants awarded on a first come first served basis. It is in the applicant’s best interest to ensure that all required information is supplied with the application form to ensure it is assessed quickly. Letters of Offer will be issued to successful applicants with time bound completion dates. Works should not commence nor any piece of equipment purchased until a Letter of Offer has been received, signed and returned to the Council.

Applications that do not include the necessary information will not be acknowledged as eligible until ALL required information is received.

**2.7 Payment of grants**

* Do not commence work, pay deposits or confirm the purchase of any equipment until an offer letter has been signed and returned to the Council. **Council will not retrospectively fund projects**;
* Payment of grant will be made to the applicant via direct BACS payment. No cash or cheque payments will be made.
* Payment will only be made upon receipt of a completed claim form submitted with the following documentation:
	+ Copy of invoice(s) for works/equipment purchase(s);
	+ Copy of statutory approvals (if applicable);
	+ Copy of relevant bank/credit card statement(s) showing payment clearing your account. Electronic banking printouts will be sufficient for these purposes;
	+ Photograph of the item(s) purchased / works completed;

Payment for equipment and to contractor(s) must be made via Cheque or BACS

**CASH EXPENDITURE WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS FUND.**

**Section 3 – How to Apply**

**3.1 Next steps**

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| **Step 1** | Make sure your proposed expenditure is eligible and that statutory consents can be obtained in time to allow expenditure by 31st March 2021. Refer to sections 2.2 and 2.3. Seek the minimum number of price checks or quotes from contractors/suppliers for items or planned activity and insert details into section 2 of the application form. Price checks may be written quotes, email quotations or internet quotes. The number of quotes will depend on the thresholds for your expenditure. Please refer to Section 2.4 .  |
| **Step 2** | Complete the application form.  |
| **Step 3** | Return your application form, supplier form and your quotations to Council by email investment@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk by no later than 4pm on **Friday 4th December 2020**.  |

This is the first call for applications under this scheme and further calls may be announced in due course subject to budget availability.

All projects must be completed as soon as practically possible after receiving a Letter of Offer, and by the end date stated in your Letter of Offer.