

# **TOWN CENTRE PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

## **GUIDANCE NOTE FOR APPLICANTS**

### **PURPOSE OF THE GRANT**

The Town Centre Property Improvement Grant, supported by the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme, has been established to support businesses in town centres and city centres to develop and upgrade their properties. We acknowledge that town centre businesses have, and continue to, face an economically challenging time.

The grant is available for independent, small and medium sized business which operate or plan to operate in Town and City Centres in Gwynedd.

Two support options are available:

- Development Grant - Support as a business starts on the work of developing a regeneration plan in a commercial property; or
- Implementation Grant - Support for physical improvements to commercial property.

### **WHO CAN APPLY?**

The grant is available for independent, small and medium sized business and enterprises in the following locations in Gwynedd. Businesses will need to be located within the main commercial centres in these locations.

- 1) Bangor
- 2) Caernarfon
- 3) Porthmadog
- 4) Pwllheli
- 5) Blaenau Ffestiniog
- 6) Dolgellau
- 7) Tywyn
- 8) Aberdyfi
- 9) Bala
- 10) Barmouth
- 11) Harlech
- 12) Penrhyndeudraeth
- 13) Cricieth
- 14) Nefyn
- 15) Abersoch
- 16) Penygroes
- 17) Llanberis
- 18) Bethesda

Businesses who are registered for business rates with Gwynedd Council will be eligible as well as businesses that already possess or have applied for the necessary statutory permissions.

Additionally, the business will need to:

- Have public liability insurance;
- Be below the De Minimis Aid threshold from the EU or 'Small amounts of financial aid' grant (as defined in Article 364, paragraph 4 of the UK-EU Trade and Collaboration Agreement) during the previous three financial years (details below);
- Ensure the receipt of land/property owner permission to do the work.

Chain National and International companies are not eligible for support.

## **HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?**

Development Grant - Subject to your application, the minimum amount that can be awarded is £2,000 and the maximum is £10,000. The contribution can be up to 50% of the value of the work.

**Gwynedd Council will have the right to reclaim the contribution for the Development Grant unless the plan is implemented.**

Implementation Grant - Subject to your application, the minimum amount that can be awarded is £2,500 and the maximum is £25,000. The contribution can be up to 70% of the value of the work.

Original estimates must be attached. Two estimates are needed for work under £4,999. Three estimates are needed if the total of the work is more than £5,000.

The money must have been claimed before 1 March 2022.

## **WHEN CAN YOU APPLY?**

The grant is now open for applications and it is on a first come, first served basis. It will not be possible to apply after all of the money has been committed. It is anticipated that there will be considerable competition for the money and you are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

## **WHAT CAN BE FUNDED?**

As businesses are attempting to develop and reinstate their businesses after such a challenging period, there is an opportunity for businesses to apply for financial aid for developing and delivering developments to their properties through a:

Development Grant - Funding for development work that will give businesses an opportunity to target capital grants to realise their plans. The building must be located within the town's commercial boundary. The following are examples of what would be eligible:

- Architect fees;
- Surveyor fees;
- Structural / condition surveys;
- Options assessment;

Only development work that is associated with the building is eligible. Documents associated with the individual business, such as Business Plans, cannot be funded.

The applicant will be required to share a pdf copy of all documents prepared for Gwynedd Council. **It must be noted that both the applicant and Gwynedd Council holds the copyright for any development documents prepared and funded via this grant. Gwynedd Council will retain the right to share the documents with any future prospective developer or owner of the property in question, should a development opportunity arise.**

*Implementation Grant* - Funding for external capital work that will upgrade commercial property. The building must be located within the town's commercial boundary. The following are examples of what would be eligible:

- Upgrading works to the building;
- New windows and doors;
- New signage \*\*

The labour of individuals on their property will not be considered to be eligible.

**If the property in question is subject to a rental/lease agreement then the tenant should have a lease with 7 years or more remaining at the date of the application and should have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works.**

**\*\* Any signage and promotional work that is funded must be in line with Gwynedd Council's Language Policy**

**<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Dogfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Safonau-r-laith-Gymraeg/Polisilaith2016.Cymraeg.pdf>**

You will need to send us photographs of the building before and after the investment. A designated Council officer will be entitled to visit the site to check the work.

The work must meet health and safety requirements and the applicant will be responsible for obtaining sufficient insurance during, and after the work is completed. The applicant will be responsible for ensuring that the property will be maintained to a high standard.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

You can apply **NOW** provided that you have all permissions.

**Only complete and eligible applications can be processed for the grant. The application will not be complete unless the application form has been filled-in and that original estimates and photos of the property have been uploaded.**

For planning enquiries in Gwynedd (outside Snowdonia National Park), please contact [cynllunio@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:cynllunio@gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

For planning enquiries within Snowdonia National Park, please contact [cynllunio@eryri.llyw.cymru](mailto:cynllunio@eryri.llyw.cymru)

We wish to make this process as straightforward as possible so that decisions can be made quickly and money can be transferred to businesses without delay.

After your application is received, you will receive a confirmation e-mail, stating that we have received your application.

Every application will be checked for completeness and eligibility against the guidelines. Unfortunately, we cannot process incomplete or ineligible applications.

### **THE ASSESSMENT AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Your application will be reviewed by the Business Support Unit, Gwynedd Council. We expect high demand for this grant and unfortunately, we will only be able to support a proportion of the applications received.

### **SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS**

If your application is successful, we will send you a standard funding agreement, along with any specific conditions relating to your award.

You will be able to commence the work after you return a copy of the funding agreement. Gwynedd Council will release payments based on the invoices received for the agreed value.

If you choose to commence any work before you receive the funding agreement, you make that investment at your own risk.

### **MONITORING AND FEEDBACK**

The applicant will be expected to include realistic outputs on the application form. The applicant will be required to complete a monitoring form, including evidence to support this at the end of the plan.

We wish to make the application, assessment and decision-making processes as fair and transparent as possible. We welcome constructive feedback on any of our processes and procedures.

**RETENTION OF APPLICATION MATERIALS**

In order to comply with our audit processes, we will retain copies of application forms and supporting materials for successful applications for a period 10 years, after which time they will be destroyed.

**EVALUATION**

Businesses that are successful in the grant process may be asked to participate in an evaluation process for Gwynedd Council. Therefore, by receiving the grant, you must be willing and able to participate in this process to assist us to understand the impact and legacy of the grant.

## **GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM**

### **Section 1 - Applicant's Details**

Provide detailed information about the name, address and contact details of the existing business. If your home and business addresses are different, please note both.

### **Section 2 - Business Structure**

Here, we need to know the detailed status of your business and the date it was established. Bear in mind that the plan is aimed towards SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises as defined by the Companies Act 2006). We need this information to ensure that you are eligible.

For claiming purposes, the Council also needs to know whether the business is registered / intends to register for VAT.

### **Section 3 - Employment Details**

Note the number of people currently in your employment. There is also a need to note any jobs that will be created or safeguarded as a direct result of a successful grant application and the project going ahead.

### **Section 4 - Regulatory Considerations**

The information you provide in this section will enable officers to determine whether the application includes expenditure / work relating to property, we need to know the property ownership / leasehold details and whether the relevant statutory requirements have been ensured.

As the plan is part-funded by public funding, it is bound by specific obligations. This includes promoting and strengthening business compliance with the highlighted regulations and policies. Ensure that your project complies with all statutory permissions and licenses before you apply for this grant.

### **Managing Grants**

If you are awarded a 'Small amounts of financial aid' grant, you must ensure that this is used in accordance with the relevant agreements in the rules of the World Trade Organisation, the UK-EU Trade and Collaboration Agreement, any Free Trade Agreement involving the UK, the Northern Ireland Protocol and any domestic legislation.

As part of your application, you must state whether you have received any de minimis aid from the EU or 'Small amounts of financial aid' grant (as defined in Article 364, paragraph 4 of the UK-EU Trade and Collaboration Agreement), during the previous three financial years (i.e. the current financial year and the two previous financial years),

as well as the amount received and the details of the awarding body.

Examples may include the Economic Resilience Fund, the Business Start-up Grant, Non-domestic Rate Grants, but not the Job Retention Scheme or Self-employed Income Support Scheme (if you are unsure, note the support on the list).

### **Section 5 - Timetable and Funding**

The information you provide in this section will enable officers to determine for what purposes the grant will be used and whether or not it is eligible. We need to know what grant you are applying for (Development / Implementation). The detailed expenditure details per item are dealt with in **Section 6**.

- Project costs are needed to determine how much grant support will be needed. The Council also needs to know the actual details of other funding sources included in the project's total costs. Such information is needed to ensure that the project is viable and that no other public money is received for that.
- Reclaimable VAT is not eligible for grant aid.
- Estimates are helpful to determine that the grant is paid for assets purchased at a fair price.

### **Section 6 - Project Analysis**

Please note the details of each expenditure item included in the total cost of the whole project. Please continue on a separate page if needed.

*Please note* Original estimates must be attached. At least two estimates are needed for work under £4,999. Three estimates are needed if the total of the work is more than £5,000.

### **Section 7 - The Business' Bank Details**

You will receive a payment via BACS therefore we require bank details.

#### **Information**

This is a completely factual statement relating to data protection.

#### **Documents and Evidence to Include and Statement**

Before completing the application, please ensure that you understand all aspects of the plan in full and ensure that all documents requested have been included.

**Enquiries:**

If you need any further guidance or support, please contact:  
[grantiaubusnes@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:grantiaubusnes@gwynedd.llyw.cymru)