Swindon Borough Council Coronavirus Business Support Grants: Discretionary Fund – please read in full before applying

Introduction
This second Government-funded cash grant scheme aims to provide additional support to small and micro businesses, which are not eligible under the Retail, Hospitality & Leisure and Small Business Grant Fund schemes. This scheme is aimed at businesses and charities:

- with relatively high ongoing fixed property related costs;
- which can demonstrate they have suffered a significant financial fall in income as a result of COVID-19;
- which occupy property, or part of a property, with a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000

Please note that Swindon Borough Council only has access to a specific amount of funding for all the grant schemes, so the level of local discretion is limited and it is possible that not all eligible applicants will be awarded payments.

Priority types of business:
The Government has asked Local Authorities to prioritise four types of business within the scheme (please read this full document for the specific criteria):

- Businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces without their own business rates assessments.
  - Examples may include industrial park units; incubators; shared offices; shared retail & leisure units and antiques markets, etc.
  - Applicants whose landlords are eligible for the previous grants can also apply.
- Regular market traders:
  - Applicants which operate across multiple Local Authority areas will only be able to claim one grant from one area.
  - Where the trader owns premises which could be covered under the Small Business Grant Fund, these costs are not eligible for this grant.
  - Annual pitch fees and storage costs can be included as property costs, but must .
- Charities and community groups in receipt of mandatory charitable business rate relief.
  - Which would otherwise be eligible for the Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief (details below).
- Bed & breakfasts and guest houses, which pay council tax instead of business rates.
Swindon Borough Council does not anticipate supporting applicants who run a ‘rent-a-room’ type establishment as recommended in government guidance. Unfortunately, care homes or houses of multiple occupation will not be considered eligible under this priority.

Within these four priorities, Swindon Borough Council reserves the right to prioritise applications, and priority considerations will include the level of income lost due to COVID-19.

- Other types of business may be considered in exceptional circumstances and subject to available funds:
  - A panel will consider applications on a case-by-case basis based on the level of income lost due to COVID-19 and the strength of the business case, please see guidance below.

**Level of grants:**

- Swindon Borough Council will allocate the available funds depending on the number of eligible applications; demonstration of loss and fixed property-related costs, particularly within the priority types of business.
- Grants will be capped at the demonstrated level of income loss.
- Please note that these are grants and do not have to be repaid and are subject to tax.
- Grant payments are State Aid and can be given under De Minimis Regulation. Applicants must make a State Aid declaration when applying, for more information please read the Government’s website carefully to ensure that you are accepting the grant under the appropriate State Aid route.
- The Council will carry out stringent checks on each application and any payment made in error will be recovered.
- Please note that it is a criminal offence to deliberately give false information in this application and Local Authorities work across boundaries to share information on fraudulent cases.
- If your business is in financial difficulties, we recommend that you seek additional types of support. Please view [https://growthhub.swlep.co.uk/topics/coronavirus-covid-19](https://growthhub.swlep.co.uk/topics/coronavirus-covid-19) where you can make an appointment to speak to an advisor. During this challenging time we want to make you and your staff aware of the local and national support on offer for wellbeing at [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/hereforswindon](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/hereforswindon)

**General eligibility criteria**

- Applicants can also be eligible for:
  - Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme;
  - Statutory Sick Pay scheme;
  - Loan or VAT deferral schemes;
  - Self Employed Income Support.
- Multiple firms can apply within each individual property.
- Only one application will be accepted per business or charity.
Applications will not be considered if:
- Applicants are eligible for:
  o Dairy Hardship Fund;
  o Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme;
  o Fisheries Response Fund;
  o Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant;
  o Small Business Grant Fund;
  o Zoos Support Fund.
- Applicants are in administration, insolvent or striking-off notices have been initiated.
- Parish or Town Councils cannot apply (unless they operate as a commercial entity or trust).
- They are from national chains or franchises.
- Wages cannot be covered by this scheme and should be addressed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Mandatory criteria and evidence required for all applicants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General mandatory criteria</th>
<th>Evidence required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You must be a director, owner, employee or authorised representative of a company, charity or community group within the Borough of Swindon</td>
<td>If you are not the owner of director of the company, you will be asked for evidence of authorisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must have been trading on the 11th March 2020.</td>
<td>You must also provide a copy of your photo identification for security (driving license or passport).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This must be a small or micro businesses with:</td>
<td>Please also provide your:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o 49 employees or less in the 6 months leading to 11th March 2020. (An employee is every person with a contract of employment, who received remuneration by your payroll system in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o company registration number (or charity number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o business rates account number if you have one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Unique Tax Reference number (10 digits supplied by HMRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o bank / building society details to enable payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General mandatory criteria</td>
<td>Evidence required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| the last 6 months (up to 11th March 2020)).  
- Turnover of not more than £10.2 million and / or balance sheet total (aggregate asset amounts in end year balance sheet) equal to / or less than £5.1 million. | Property-related costs must be evident in your financial evidence  
- You must provide a copy of your lease or mortgage, or a copy of the rental agreement or deed.  
- For applicants working from home, attach photographs and documents defining the work area. |
| • You must demonstrate fixed property-related costs (includes rent; lease; service charges; mortgage; council tax; pitch fees; mooring and marina fees).  
• Your property agreement, lease or deed must be a written document, signed and dated and cover minimum of 6-months (with a minimum 1 month notice period) starting before the 11th March 2020.  
• For applicants working from home, you must demonstrate in your evidence the defined work area and costs associated.  
• You must occupy a property or part of a property that must have either:  
  o a rateable value below £51,000  
  o or annual rent below £51,000 excluding VAT.  
  o or annual mortgage payments below £51,000. | • You must provide evidence as to how your business has detrimentally been impacted by Covid-19. This must include:  
  o A short statement setting out how your business has been detrimentally impacted by COVID-19 to support your grant application (with a 250 word limit). See the table below for further for additional information to include for |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General mandatory criteria</th>
<th>Evidence required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(please see the application process below for acceptable types of upload)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>applications other than the four priority types of business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o You statement and application must be supported by uploading relevant financial evidence, including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ the bank statements used for the business covering the periods from February to April 2019 AND the period from February to April 2020. Bank statements must include the Bank name, your account sort code and number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ If you weren’t trading in February 19 please upload bank statements covering the last 6 months or from the date trading started if later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Please highlight fixed business costs and income if this is unclear on your accounts or statements, particularly if using a personal bank account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Please exclude any loans or grants from the income figures entered in the income and expenditure table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In addition, further supporting information could include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Income and expenditure accounts certified by an accountant or financial advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Any other relevant information that supports your application and evidences the financial loss of the business during the Covid 19 period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Additional Criteria and Evidence Required for Specific Types of Business:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of business</th>
<th>Additional mandatory criteria</th>
<th>Additional evidence required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces  | • You must have exclusive use of a unit within the shared / flexible workspace.  
• Co-work desk rental, rent a hairdressing chair and other similar arrangements will not be considered.  
• Your agreement must cover regular use of the workspace e.g. for most of the week. | • This should be evident in your lease or rental agreement                                                  |
| Regular market traders                                    | • You must have a fixed pitch and your agreement must cover regular use e.g. for most of the week.                                                                                                                                  | • Your street trading license or lease agreement if in a covered market.                                       |
| Charities and community groups in receipt of mandatory charitable business rate relief | • Applicants’ properties must either meet the property criteria of either:  
    Under this scheme applicants must:  
    - Either occupy one property with a rateable value of less than £15,000  
    - Or can occupy a main property with a rateable value of less than £15,000 and other additional properties, providing those additional properties each have | • Please provide your charity number                                                                                                                                       |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of business</th>
<th>Additional mandatory criteria</th>
<th>Additional evidence required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a rateable value of less than £2,900. The total rateable value of all the properties must not exceed £19,999.</td>
<td>(please see the application process below for acceptable types of upload)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>• Rural Rate Relief see full criteria here <a href="https://bit.ly/2UjBYD">https://bit.ly/2UjBYD</a>. Under this scheme applicants must:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Occupy certain types of property in a rural setting, with a population below 3,000. These include:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o The only general store, post office or food shop (with a rateable value of less than £8,500).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o the only public house or petrol station (with a rateable value of less than £12,500).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In addition, relief can be given on other occupied rural property, where the rateable value is less than £16,500.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed &amp; breakfasts and guest houses, which pay council tax instead of business rates</td>
<td>• You must operate the bed &amp; breakfast from your home; have less than 6 bedrooms</td>
<td>• Please provide your:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Council tax reference number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of business</td>
<td>Additional mandatory criteria</td>
<td>Additional evidence required (please see the application process below for acceptable types of upload)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                  | available to guests and serve breakfast | • Food hygiene certificate number  
• Food Safety Registration number |
| Other types of business | • You must demonstrate a strong business case | • Your statement could include the positive impact of your business on the local economy, e.g.:  
• buying from and supplying to other local companies;  
• helping people back to safely;  
• supporting statutory services.  
• creation of innovative products or services; etc. |
Application process:
- Please ensure that you read the guidance fully and have all of the evidence to hand before starting the application process.
- If applicants do not have a Swindon Borough Council online account, please register at https://myaccount.swindon.gov.uk/q/login, you will later need your log-in details to apply and then check on the status of your application.
- You will need to have evidence ready to upload.
- Evidence can be scanned or uploaded, or electronic documents, or you can take photographs of documents.
- Document formats can be PDF; jpeg; Word or Excel documents or PowerPoint.
- Please clearly label each document including your business name and the description of content: e.g. ‘Smiths Guesthouse – 2019 bank statement’.
- Applications which are incomplete or do not provide the required attachments will not be considered. Applicants are recommended to supply as much evidence as possible to make their case.
- Supporting information provided after the application window closes will not be considered.
- For efficiency, the Council has adopted an online application process. If you require particular support in using an online form, please contact economy@swindon.gov.uk outlining the support you need.
- If the online portal is busy, please return later to complete your application. We expect the portal to be busier before midday.

Timeline:
- The application portal will open from Thursday 11\textsuperscript{th} June when a link to the application form will be added to the Council webpage (https://bit.ly/2ABrgRo). The portal will remain open until 9pm on Sunday 21\textsuperscript{st} June.
- In the unlikely event that, once final grant decisions have been made any funding remains unallocated; the process will re-open for a further wave of applications using the same criteria. However, it is recommended that eligible businesses and charities apply during the first wave.
- Thorough checks will be conducted on all eligible applications using the information provided.
- After the last applications have been checked and processed after Sunday 21\textsuperscript{st} June, the panel will then assess all remaining applications and agree if a grant can be awarded, and if so the level of each grant.
- Up to 7 days after this date, all applicants will receive notification either that a grant will be awarded or unfortunately the application was unsuccessful.
- Please do not contact the team as notification will be sent out as soon as a decision has been made.
- The Council will make payments into the nominated bank accounts as quickly as possible after the panel has made its decision. We aim to ensure that the majority of payments will be paid by the end of June.
- There will be no process for appeals or disputes.