**West Berkshire Council Discretionary Grant Fund (DGF)**

**POLICY**

This fund does not replace the existing Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund Discretionary scheme.

In response to the Coronavirus, Covid–19, the Government announced there would be support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. This support takes the form of two grant funding schemes, the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. In addition to this a discretionary scheme was announced by Government and has been supported by guidance issued on the 13th May 2020.

The Government guidance is clear that:

***“This additional fund is aimed at small businesses who were not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund”***

The Council has reviewed the guidance and has developed the criteria below based on this guidance. Any further updates provided to the scheme from the department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) the Council will incorporate these accordingly into assessments.

**The total funding allocation for the DGF**

The Council is able to utilise 5% of the amount West Berkshire Council was expecting to distribute from Government for the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGR) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) of £29.3m. This means that the total fund for the DGF is **£1.225m**. Based on payments through the existing schemes, this funding would enable the Council to support between 90 and 100 businesses.

The criteria for this scheme are detailed below. Once the Council’s allocation of funding for this scheme has been reached, then this discretionary scheme will close. If there any further changes to the overall amount of funding above that enables a changed amount of funds to be distributed, the basis will be the same; i.e. when the allocation is exhausted then the scheme stops.

**Allocation of grant to businesses**

The existing SBGR and RHLGF provided funds of £25,000 or £10,000. The DGF allows for awards at this level and some less than £10,000. To ensure consistency with the previous scheme the Council is keeping to the grant fund levels of £25,000 and £10,000.

**Criteria for the scheme**

Companies that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made are not eligible for funding under this scheme.

1. **This discretionary scheme is only available to small businesses – all of points 1a to 1e must be met**
	1. Turnover of less than £10.2m
	2. Balance Sheet total of less than £5.1m
	3. Number of employees: Headcount of staff of less than 50
	4. Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the Covid-19 crisis
	5. Businesses that were trading on 11th March and which occupy a property, or part of a property, with a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000.
2. **This scheme is only available to business that are Small businesses (with a Rateable Value below £51k) with ongoing fixed property related costs and are one of the below (or broadly similar in nature to these)**
	* 1. Are in shared offices or flexible working spaces
		2. Regular market traders who do not have a business rates assessment
		3. Are small charities that are in receipt of charitable business rates relief **and** that would meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief
		4. Bed & Breakfasts that pay council Tax

**Grant payments for the scheme:**

* Those properties with a Rateable Value of up to £15,000 will receive £10,000
* Those properties with a Rateable Value of £15,001 and over will receive £25,000

**Application process**

The application process will be only via the Council website, and the claim form has been published alongside this information.

The Council will require information to support the claim and this will include, but is not limited to:

* Bank statements
* Management accounts / sales information
* Lease agreements
* Details on staff numbers

**Discretionary Grant claim form – please e-mail this to** Bratesgrants@westberks.gov.uk

Please complete the details below and certify your evidence that you comply with the grant conditions detailed:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Business Name |  |
| Company Registration number (if known) |  |
| Business Address |  |
| Business Property Reference  |  |
| Business Rates Account Number |  |
| Identify which element of the criteria 2 above that the business meets and provide supporting evidence |  |
| Rateable Value (£) |  |

 **The process of generating the grant payments are going to be made using BACS. In order for us to make your payment we need you to complete / confirm your bank details below.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bank Account Name |  |
| Bank Account Number |  |
| Bank Account Sort Code |  |

**Grant Conditions**

This relief is paid under a discretionary relief scheme as part of the overall Government Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund scheme.

If the information we hold for you and your business is incorrect this may impact on your entitlement to the grant it is your responsibility to inform us of this.

The Government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud - and any business caught falsifying their records to gain additional grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back.

Businesses who have applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are eligible to apply for this scheme.

By accepting this grant, you are certifying that:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  The business receiving this grant has less than 50 employees |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  The business has ongoing fixed building related costs |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  The business receiving has seen a demonstrable drop in income due to Coronavirus restriction measures – please provide supporting  evidence, for example bank statements |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  The business was trading as at 11.3.2020 – please provide supporting  evidence, for example proof of sales, bank statement |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  Turnover of less than £10.2m |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  Balance Sheet total of less than £5.1m |

In signing the below I confirm thatthe Businesses has not received cash grants from any central government COVID-related scheme for example (but not limited to):

* Small Business Grant Fund
* Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant
* The Fisheries Response Fund
* Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS).
* The Zoos Support Fund
* The Dairy Hardship Fund

Businesses who have applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are eligible to apply for this scheme.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature: |  |
| Date: |  |

**DGF State Aid declaration**

Dear Discretionary Grant Fund applicant

**Confirmation of State Aid received under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities scheme**

Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the European Commission has approved schemes to aid businesses affected by the Coronavirus outbreak on the basis of their Temporary Framework, including the COVID-19 Temporary Framework scheme for the UK.

The maximum level of aid that a company may receive is €800 000 (€120 000 per undertaking active in the fishery and aquaculture sector or €100 000 per undertaking active in the primary production of agricultural products). This is across all UK schemes under the terms of the European Commission’s Temporary Framework. The Euro equivalent of the Sterling aid amount is calculated using the Commission exchange rate2applicable on the date the aid is offered.

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en>

Any aid provided under this scheme will be relevant if you wish to apply, or have applied, for any other aid granted on the basis of the European Commission’s Temporary Framework. You will need to declare this amount to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much aid you have received. You must retain this letter for four years after the conclusion of the UK’s transition from the EU and produce it on any request from the UK public authorities or the European Commission.

Aid may be granted to undertakings that were not in difficulty (within the meaning of Article 2(18) of the General Block Exemption Regulation3) on 31 December 2019, but that faced difficulties or entered in difficulty thereafter as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak4.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02014R0651-20170710> If you are an undertaking in difficulty within the meaning of Article 2(18) of the General Block Exemption Regulation you may still be entitled to de Minimis aid if you have received less than €200,000 in de Minimis aid in the last three years. You should contact us if you consider that you may qualify for de Minimis aid on this basis.

This aid is in addition any aid that you may be have received under the De Minimis regulation allowing aid of up to €200,000 to any one organisation over a three fiscal year period (i.e. your current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years), and any other approved aid you have received under other State aid rules, such as aid granted under the General Block Exemption Regulation.

**Confirmation of State aid received under x Scheme, and Undertaking in Difficulty status**

Please sign the attached statement confirming your eligibility, in principle, for aid.

I confirm that I have received the following aid under measures approved within the European Commission’s Temporary Framework between March 2020 and December 2020.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I confirm that my undertaking was not in difficulty (within the meaning of Article 2(18) of the General Block Exemption Regulation) on 31 December 2019.  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Body providing the assistance/ aid** | **Value of assistance (in €)** | **Date of assistance** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Declaration:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Company** |  |
| **Company Representative Name** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |

**For office use only**

**Checks completed on all applications**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Checked?** |
| Completion of the form |  |
| Form signed |  |
| State Aid declaration signed |  |
| Evidence of turnover under £10.2m |  |
| Evidence of Balance sheet under £5.1m |  |
| Evidence of C-19 impact on trading and demonstrable drop in income |  |
| The business has ongoing fixed building related costs |  |
| The business has less than 50 employees |  |
| The business was trading as at 11.3.2020 |  |
| Evidence that not in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made |  |