

# Staffordshire Moorlands 'To Thrive'

## Business Development Grants

### Application Guidance

### 2024 - 2025

## Purpose of the Grant Scheme

The Staffordshire Moorlands 'To Thrive' Business Development Grants supports the growth of existing small and medium sized enterprises (businesses) in the Staffordshire Moorlands area. The Fund is financed by UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund. It provides grants to businesses for the implementation of plans to achieve business growth and innovation. The objective of this grant is to support the creation, diversification and expansion of businesses in Staffordshire Moorlands.

It provides **capital grants** to businesses for a specific project or investment. The following are examples of eligible project costs and are not exhaustive:

- Construction and fittings associated within the conversion or refurbishment of business premises.
- The purchase of capital equipment where it supports business expansion, (excluding road vehicles or related items like trailers)
- Funding may be used for projects looking to: undertake innovation, adopt new technologies, improve carbon footprint, diversify into new markets, develop and promote the visitor economy, develop local tourist attractions and/or enhance local visitor experiences

**It does not cover:**

- Training
- Computers / Laptops
- Mobile phones.
- Monthly / annual subscription charges.
- Marketing / advertising costs
- General business stock items or tools of the trade.
- General repairs & Maintenance
- Costs associated with statutory obligations
- Websites
- Rent/utility fees
- Delivery and Installation costs

**These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.**

All items purchased with the aid of the grant must be located within the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area:

## How Much Funding is Available?

For businesses who have been trading for at least 12 months and can provide a full set of recent certified trading accounts or latest management information. Grants are available for 80% of the costs up to a **maximum grant of £10,000** and a **minimum grant of £2,000**.

**Outputs for the Staffordshire Moorlands 'To Thrive' Business Development Grants are:**

- Supporting growing businesses that are adopting new or improved products or services
- Supporting growing businesses that are adopting new to the firm technologies or processes

The grant will be prioritised to those companies who can demonstrate the greatest value of benefits from the grant such as, new products or services developed, new to the firm technologies and / or increased turnover.

## Eligibility Criteria

To apply businesses must:

- Must be an SME and trading in the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area
- Have been trading and for at least 12 months
- Be profit seeking
- Anticipating an increase in turnover
- Delivers against the grant schemes outputs
- Have obtained all legal requirements necessary to run the business legitimately and accommodate planned changes e.g. planning permissions, insurances or accreditations. Evidence may be requested.
- Priority will be given to those businesses who haven't been in receipt of a UKSPF or REPF grant.

## Further Conditions and Requirements

The funding for this scheme will be available on a first come first served basis and applications will be assessed in order of time and date received.

1. Only one Business Grant will be awarded per business - any previous grant awards will be taken into consideration when assessing your application.
2. Businesses must have received less than £315,000 in the current and preceding two financial years (financial year being 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March).
3. Grants **will not** be awarded to businesses who can be identified as 'ailing or insolvent' at the time of application – financial checks will be carried out.

4. Grants will never exceed a company's half yearly turnover. (Average of the last two years)
5. As the total available funding is limited, grants will be awarded competitively with all applications appraised in order of date and time of receipt and scored against assessment criteria
6. The Fund runs until March 2026, with the final deadline for applications being **31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. Applications will only be accepted from businesses that can guarantee all spend will occur before the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**
7. You should ensure that you are fully aware of and comply with legal and statutory requirements that apply to all businesses, e.g. Environmental Health, Planning, etc.
8. All project contract purchases must be in line with UK Shared Prosperity Fund procurement (8). Where the contract value is £2,499 or less you will need to provide 1 quotation. Where the contract value is £2,500 or more you will need to provide 3 quotations. **Delivery, installation, and single items costing less than £100 will not be considered under this grant scheme.**
9. Where possible, quotations should be obtained from companies based within the scheme's geographical area. In cases where funding is sought for everyday equipment, quotations can be taken from price catalogues, online retail outlets or similar. Quotes must be provided in written form – formal quote, screenshot etc... **Do not send web links.**
10. The **maximum number of invoices that will be accepted with a claim is 5.** Therefore, if a number of items are being purchased, please order as many as possible from the same supplier. **A chosen supplier must not have any connection to the grant applicant in terms of shared ownership/directorship, joint shareholders, personal relationships or employment. If so, this is deemed to be a conflict of interest and makes the project ineligible for a grant.**



11. Staffordshire County Council and / or Staffordshire Moorlands District Council may wish to publicise any grants offered, including using the name of the recipient business. The Council will contact you should we wish to use your details.
12. The Grant is subject to the availability of funds and is awarded at the complete discretion of Staffordshire County Council.
13. Grants are only payable for costs incurred **after** the Grant Funding Agreement is approved and signed. Staffordshire County Council will only process one grant claim unless there are special circumstances, in which case we will process a maximum of two. The business must be able to evidence **FULL** payment of items when submitting a claim. **Claims submitted for items purchased before a grant funding agreement has been issued, will not be paid.**
14. The decision of Staffordshire County Council is final. The Council reserves the right to withdraw funding where the conditions attached to the award have not been adhered to or to alter the criteria of the scheme at its absolute discretion.
15. **Grants not claimed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 will be lost.**

# Application and Approval Process

## ***STAGE 1—Eligibility Check***

1. **An application will not be accepted if an EOI hasn't been submitted.**

## ***STAGE 2—Application Form***

1. The application form and supporting documentation should be completed and sent to [tothrive@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tothrive@staffordshire.gov.uk)
2. The supporting documents required are:
  - a. Latest set of filed financial accounts
  - b. If accounts are more than 6 months old, management information will be required for the period not in accounts up to present day
  - c. All project contract purchases must be in line with UK Shared Prosperity Fund procurement (8). Where the contract value is £2499 or less you will need to provide 1 quotation. Where the contract value is £2500 or more you will need to provide 3 quotations.
3. The 'To Thrive' Team will check the application and supporting documentation to ensure that they are complete and that the proposals are eligible under the either the UKSPF or REPF Fund. If an application is unclear or incomplete the applicant will be requested to submit additional information as required.
4. The 'To Thrive' Team will appraise all applications against set criteria and recommend those that are eligible receive a grant.
5. If a recommendation is made to award the grant, it will be assessed by a senior appraiser who will make the final decision, based on the business satisfying all the required criteria.

## ***STAGE 3—Approval***

- 1 If the application is approved a formal decision letter, grant offer letter and grant funding agreement will be issued, with conditions as appropriate. You should sign and return a copy of the grant funding agreement and retain a copy for yourself.
- 2 If the application is rejected, you will be informed in writing. All decisions will be final – **there will be no chance to appeal.**

## ***STAGE 4—Claim***

You must submit a claim within 3 months of your application being approved.

A completed claim will consist of:

- **Claim form (issued by the Team)**
- **Supplier Invoices**
- **Bank Statements evidencing payment to suppliers.**

You must purchase from the supplier that you provided a quote from with your application. If when you come to purchase your item(s) your chosen supplier can no longer supply, you must notify the team **before** purchasing from elsewhere.

If purchasing multiple items, please buy as many items as possible from the same supplier. **A maximum of 5 invoices will be accepted with your claim.**

We aim to process claims submitted for payment of grant within 15 working days of receipt. However, this could take longer if claim is incomplete or completed incorrectly.