

# SHROPSHIRE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM BUSINESS GRANTS

## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR BUSINESSES

### What is the Scheme?

The objective of this grant scheme is to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry in Shropshire by raising the quality of facilities and improving the performance of tourism businesses. The aim is to encourage visitors to stay longer and return more often and thereby support the local economy and environment.

The scheme offers capital grants of up to £10,000 (or 35% of project costs whichever is the lesser) and revenue grants of up to £2,000 to tourism businesses located in the Rural Regeneration Zone in Shropshire (see map at the end of this guidance to check whether your business is in the Zone).

Capital grants will be available to eligible businesses to provide fixed tangible assets to improve the quality of their facilities and performance of the business.

Revenue grants will be available to eligible businesses for projects that will lead to a positive and long-lasting benefit to the business, for example consultancy support for marketing, or accreditation from a recognised quality scheme.

### Can I apply?

We will consider applications from businesses within the eligible area, which employ fewer than 250 staff. The applicant must be the person who runs the business - owner, director or partner.

Your business must be in the tourism sector (some examples are shown below), and should have been trading for more than a year. Start-up businesses will also be considered, but only if they will fill gaps in the range of visitor facilities available in the area.

**Eligible businesses** include –

- Accommodation businesses, including pubs
- Visitor attractions
- Conference and meetings businesses that attract visitors to stay
- Tourism activity providers (e.g. cycle hire, equestrian, walking)
- Food and drink producers – where grant is to increase tourism potential
- Craft/artisan businesses – where grant is to increase tourism potential

Stand-alone restaurant and retail businesses are not eligible, but for example a café at a visitor attraction could be considered for a grant. Businesses based on farms are only eligible if they are completely separate from the farm business.

If you need further guidance on eligibility then please contact one of the project officers whose details are given at the end of this guidance.

Examples of **eligible projects**

- Disabled access and facilities for visitors with special needs (but not statutory improvements)
- En-suite facilities for serviced accommodation
- Laundry facilities/drying rooms for self-catering properties
- Wet weather and catering facilities and interpretive displays for visitor attractions
- Building work on new buildings, or conversion of existing buildings
- Upgrading accommodation to achieve a higher rating
- Caravan/campsite upgrades
- Equine tourism facilities
- Conference and meetings venues
- Consultancy support for marketing or promotion

#### Examples of **non-eligible** items

- Purchase of land/buildings
- General repairs and on-going maintenance
- Purchase of basic equipment such as furniture, replacement of fittings etc
- Purchase of vehicles
- Statutory improvements
- Funding for contingencies

#### **How much grant can I apply for?**

The maximum capital grant per project is £10,000, or 35% of eligible project costs whichever is the lesser. The maximum revenue grant per business is £2,000. The amount of grant awarded (if any) is discretionary. You can apply for a capital grant and a revenue grant, but you cannot receive more than one grant in each category.

**Your application for grant must be approved prior to starting work. No grant money will be available for works carried out prior to written approval being issued.**

#### **What do I do next?**

Contact one of the Project Officers to discuss your proposals.

For businesses in the former Districts of South Shropshire, Bridgnorth or an eligible ward in the former Borough of Shrewsbury and Atcham

Tim King  
Shropshire Council  
01743 252257  
tim.king@shropshire.gov.uk

For businesses in the former Borough of Oswestry, or an eligible ward of the former District of North Shropshire

Peter Wilson  
Shropshire Council  
01743 252259  
peter.wilson@shropshire.gov.uk

You will need to demonstrate sound business planning to create a profitable and sustainable business. For capital grants, the application process includes a free of charge review of your business by a professional Business Adviser from Business Link West Midlands: we will set up the meeting for you. The review will include a discussion of the development plans or activities for which you hope to apply for grant.

We will send you an application form, and give you advice on how to fill it in. With the application you will also have to submit other information, which varies according to the type of grant you are seeking, and the amount.

Type of grant	What you need to submit with your application form
Revenue grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified accounts for the previous year's trading</li> <li>• Cash flow forecast for the next 12 months</li> <li>• A copy of your equal opportunities policy</li> </ul>
Capital grant up to £3,500 (total project costs up to £10,000)  Up to 35% of total eligible costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified accounts for the previous year's trading</li> <li>• Cash flow forecast for the next 12 months</li> <li>• Copies of necessary planning or other consents</li> <li>• A copy of your equal opportunities policy</li> <li>• Estimates for the works to be undertaken</li> </ul>
Capital grant from £3,500 up to £10,000 (total project costs of £10,000 and above)  Up to 35% of total eligible costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified accounts for the two previous years</li> <li>• Cash flow forecasts for this year and next year</li> <li>• Estimates or tenders works to be undertaken</li> <li>• Copies of necessary planning or other consents</li> <li>• A copy of your equal opportunities policy</li> </ul>

If you can't supply any of the required items, contact the relevant project officer for advice.

You must be able to show best value for the cost of your project, so you will need to be able to show how you reached your decision about who to employ or where to buy from. Normally you should follow the guidelines for tendering in the table below, but please contact us if you have any difficulty complying with them.

Estimated Value	Tender Action Required
Up to £500	Single quote
£501 up to £2,500	Minimum of three quotes
£2,501 up to £15,000	Minimum of three written quotes, based on a clear written specification of requirement
£15,001 up to £50,000	Normally minimum of 3 formal competitive tenders invited.
£50,001 and over	Normally 4 to 6 formal competitive tenders invited.

### **What happens once I have submitted my application?**

After you submit your application form, one of the project officers will contact you. They will ask for any further information we need, clarify any outstanding matters,

and let you know when the outcome of your application is likely to be decided: this will normally be within 3 weeks.

Your application will be considered by a team of appraisers who will make a recommendation to the scheme's Project Management Group for a decision. You will receive written notice of that decision. This grant scheme is discretionary, and the Group's decision is final. There is no appeals process, although applicants may resubmit an application.

If your application is successful, you will receive an offer letter from us. The letter will detail conditions to which the grant is subject. As well as matters covered in this guidance and on the application form, standard conditions will set out the requirements for acknowledging the grant in publicity for your business, and what monitoring information you will be required to provide once your project has finished. A list of standard conditions can be obtained from the Project Officers.

### **How will my grant be paid?**

All approved work must be completed before the grant can be claimed. Interim payments may be available if requested.

Grant should be claimed using the claim form sent with your offer letter. Claim forms must be accompanied by proof of expenditure, which will normally be original invoices, and a copy of your bank statement showing that the invoice has been paid. We will photocopy any original documents and return them to you.

The offer letter will tell you the latest date by which you must claim the grant. This will normally be within 6 months from the date of the letter.

### **And what about.....?**

If you have questions about any aspect of the scheme, please contact one of the project officers, whose details are given on page 2 of this guidance.

