

News release: 8 June 2020

Discretionary business grant fund opens

Lichfield District Council has launched its discretionary business grant scheme, which is the latest government measure to support businesses that have been impacted by Covid-19.

Businesses across Lichfield District that have faced hardship due to Covid-19 can now apply to be considered for a £5,000 discretionary business grant. These grants are for businesses that have not benefitted before and occupy a shared commercial premises, as well as others such as bed & breakfasts.

Since the start of April, Lichfield District Council has been distributing small business grants and retail, hospitality and leisure grants to more than 1,400 businesses across the district. Now businesses that were ineligible for one of these grants, and who meet the criteria, have an opportunity to apply for a non-repayable cash grant to go towards their business costs.

Councillor Iain Eadie, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Investment & Tourism, said: "We're really pleased to be launching the discretionary business grants as they will help many businesses across the district who have not been able to access financial support so far.

"We will aim to distribute the grants fairly and have deliberately taken a decision to pay a fixed grant of £5,000 to help more businesses to cope in these challenging times."

The government has provided local authorities with guidance on which businesses are eligible and the types of businesses that should be helped.

Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Customer Services & Innovation, said: "This grant fund will help eligible businesses that have seen their turnover drop by more than 20%, but are still facing premises related costs, such as rent, utility bills, property insurance, that are more than 50% of their current monthly bills."

Awards will be worked out using a combination of information on the application form and evidence provided. Checks will be carried to prevent fraudulent claims to ensure the money reaches as many businesses as possible.

To be eligible to apply for a grant, businesses must have been trading on 11 March 2020, must not be in administration, insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made, and must be ineligible for other support schemes.

This grant is aimed at small and micro businesses that have relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs, that can demonstrate they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the Covid-19

crisis, and that occupy property, or part of a property, with a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000.

Before applying for a discretionary business grant, businesses should first check their eligibility for a small business or retail, hospitality or leisure grant, which has a greater pot of money available.

To find out more and how to apply, go to www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/dbg.

Ends

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