

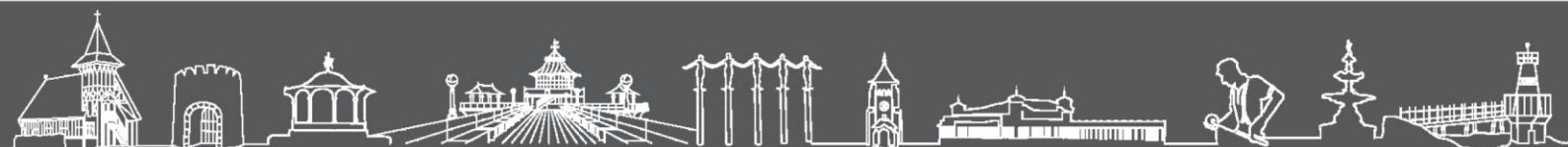
Portishead Economic Development Fund - Grant Guidance Document

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- This document is aimed at: Businesses and organisations in Portishead and Portbury.
- Delivery Board: North Somerset Council, Portishead Town Council, and Together Portishead.

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1. Introduction

This guidance explains how to apply for a grant from the Portishead Economic Development Fund – a rolling grant scheme. The Fund is managed by North Somerset Council and overseen by a Delivery Board including Portishead Town Council and Together Portishead via the Portishead Town Council Community Matters and Town Assets Committee. The fund is designed to support business growth, job creation, and economic development in Portishead and Portbury, using funding secured through a Section 106 agreement.

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Please read this document carefully before applying. It sets out who can apply, what can and cannot be funded, how applications are assessed, and what is required if you are successful.

2. Background and Purpose

The Portishead Economic Development Fund was established through a Section 106 agreement linked to the redevelopment of the former Severn Paper Mill site. A contribution of **£152,942** was secured to mitigate the loss of employment land and support economic growth in Portishead and Portbury. The fund is managed by North Somerset Council, with oversight from a Delivery Board including local partners.

A Portishead Business Survey was undertaken, which highlighted:

- 73% of respondents plan to grow or expand their business

Top challenges included:

- Access to finance
- Rising costs
- Lack of suitable premises
- Recruitment of skilled staff

Most requested uses for grant funding:

- Training and skills development
- Marketing and digital campaigns
- Technology and equipment investment
- Premises improvements

The Fund aims to:

- Stimulate job creation and safeguard existing jobs
- Support business growth and competitiveness
- Encourage enterprise, innovation, and aspiration
- Provide employment and skills support for businesses
- Enhance the local business environment and the high street

3. Who Can Apply (Eligibility)

To be eligible for a grant, you must:

- Be a business, start-up, sole trader, social enterprise, or not-for-profit organisation based in Portishead or Portbury
- Employ fewer than 50 full-time equivalent staff
- Not be in financial difficulty or subject to insolvency proceedings
- Not have exceeded the maximum permitted subsidy (see Section 10: Subsidy Control)

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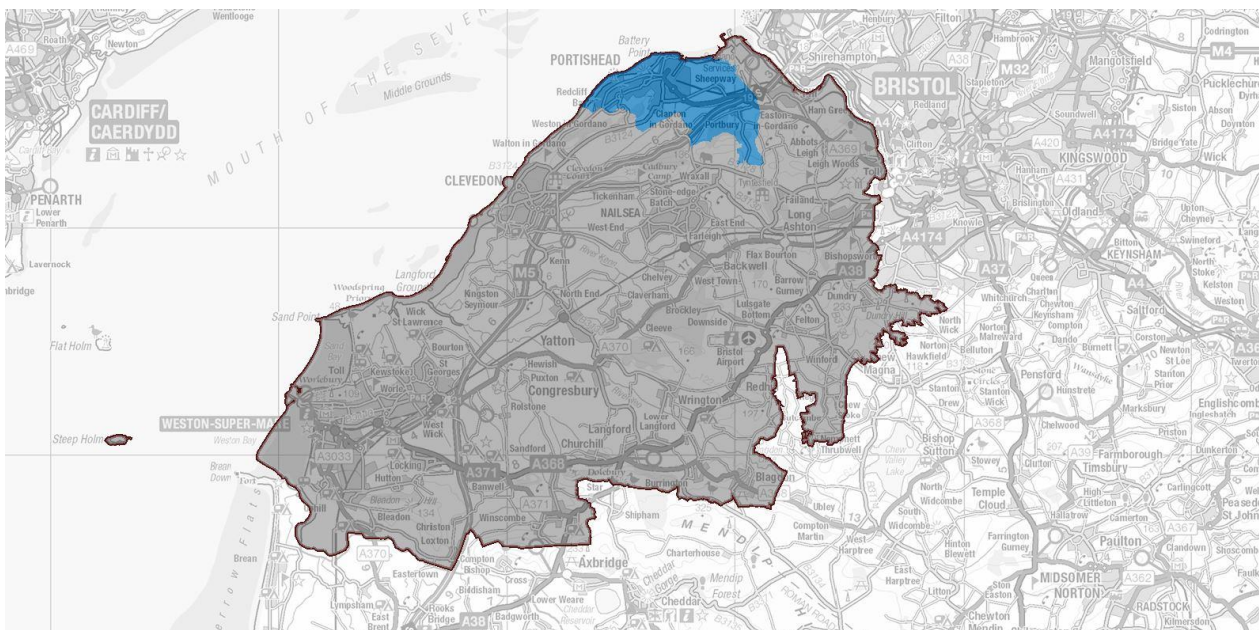
Your legal status must be one of the following:

- Partnership
- Private Limited Company
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Unlimited Company
- Community Interest Company
- Sole Trader registered with HMRC
- Public Limited Company
- Limited Liability Partnership
- Co-operative Society

Start-ups (within 2 years of trading) and micro businesses are encouraged to apply.

Charities, public sector bodies, and organisations outside Portishead/Portbury are not eligible.

Eligibility Map



4. What Can Be Funded

The Fund can support projects and activities that deliver economic benefit to Portishead and Portbury, for example:

- Digital marketing and online presence (e.g., website, e-commerce, digital campaigns)
- Equipment and technology upgrades
- Shopfront and premises improvements
- Business planning, mentoring, and consultancy (where not covered by other public funds) *
- Staff training and development (where not covered by other public funds) *
- Innovation and new product/service development
- Activities that create or safeguard jobs

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All expenditure must be directly linked to business growth, job creation, or economic resilience.

* Please check with the Economic Development team if you are unsure if your proposal is already covered by other public funds – business@n-somerset.gov.uk.

5. What Cannot Be Funded

The following are not eligible for funding:

- General running costs (e.g., rent, utilities, insurance, salaries, stock, working capital)
- Retrospective costs (anything committed or paid before grant approval)
- Repayment of debts or loans
- Gifts, donations, or hospitality
- Legal or statutory costs (e.g., planning fees, licenses)
- Land or property purchase
- Development or premises improvements at domestic properties
- Activities already funded by other public grants (e.g., UKSPF, Business Support Unlocked)
- VAT (if recoverable by your business)

6. Grant Amounts, Match Funding and Timescales

You can apply once per business for a grant of between £500 and £10,000.

There are two levels of grant you can apply for:

Small Grants: £500 - £5,000

Standard Grants: £5,000 - £10,000

If there are numerous applications for similar products/projects, these may be restricted to ensure variety in the distribution of the fund.

Applicants are encouraged to contribute match funding (for example, 10%), but this is not mandatory. The Delivery Board and Portishead Town Council Community Matters and Town Assets Committee may prioritise applications that provide match funding, and for standard grants, it will benefit your application to demonstrate wider impacts, e.g., positive community, sustainability, or health and well-being impacts.

Rolling Grant Programme - Timescales

Overview

The fund follows a rolling application process and is open initially until 24 June 2026. Funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so early applications are encouraged, as once the pot is used up, the programme will close.

The grant process will be administered through the Portishead Town Council Community Matters & Town Assets Committee. Fund governance is overseen by the delivery board comprising North Somerset Council, Portishead Town Council, and Together Portishead.

Applications are reviewed every month in line with the Community Matters & Town Assets Committee meeting timescales.

Process Timeline

Stage	Details
Applications Open	Rolling basis from 29 October 2025.
Support Available	Ongoing support via business@n-somerset.gov.uk .
Submission Cut-off for Each Round	Applications must be submitted by midday on the first Monday of each calendar month to be considered at the committee meeting later that month.
Assessment & Due Diligence	Conducted by the Delivery Board.
Decision & Offer Letters	Decisions ratified at the Community Matters & Town Assets Committee. Grant offer letter sent to successful applicants.
Project Delivery Window	Projects must be delivered within 6 months of grant offer acceptance.

Stage	Details
Monitoring & Claims	Claims submitted with evidence; monitoring ongoing throughout delivery.
Unallocated Funds	If funds remain, additional rounds continue until full allocation is achieved. In line with the future committee schedule.

Upcoming Committee Dates – Community Matters & Town Assets (2025–2026)

All meetings are hybrid (Folk Hall / Online) and start at 19:30.

1. Wednesday, 17 December 2025 (Deadline – 16th November)
2. Wednesday, 28 January 2026 (Deadline – Midday, Monday, 5 January 2026)
3. Wednesday, 25 February 2026 (Deadline - Midday, Monday, 2 February 2026)
4. Wednesday, 25 March 2026 (Deadline - Midday, Monday, 2 March 2026)
5. Wednesday, 22 April 2026 (Deadline - Midday, Monday, 6 April 2026)
6. Wednesday, 27 May 2026 (Deadline - Midday, Monday, 4 May 2026)
7. Wednesday, 24 June 2026 (Deadline - Midday, Monday, 1 June 2026)

Applications must be submitted by midday on the first Monday of each calendar month to be considered at the committee meeting later that month; late submissions will be deferred to future meetings.

7. Application Process

1. Read this guidance document in full.
2. Complete the Grant Application Form, including a project summary, budget, and supporting documents (see Section 8).
3. Submit your application.
4. Applications will be checked for eligibility and completeness.
5. Eligible applications will be assessed by the Delivery Board using the published scoring matrix via the Portishead Town Council, Community Matters and Town Assets Committee.
6. You may be asked for further information or clarification.
7. If successful, you will receive a Grant Offer Letter with terms and conditions.
8. You must not start or commit to any expenditure until you have received written grant approval.

8. Supporting Documents Required

You must submit the following with your application (Please email to business@n-somerset.gov.uk):

- Evidence of business registration (e.g., Companies House, HMRC, or similar)
- Evidence of match funding (if applicable)
- Any relevant permissions (e.g., landlord, planning, leaseholder consent)

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We may request further financial evidence or a business plan as part of due diligence checks.

9. Procurement and Value for Money

You must follow the procurement rules below to ensure value for money:

- For all items, obtain at least two written quotes from different suppliers unless the service/product is unique.
- If you select a supplier who is not the cheapest, you must justify your choice.
- All purchases must be from legitimate, independent suppliers.
- You must not commit to any expenditure before receiving a Grant Offer Letter.

10. Subsidy Control

The Fund is subject to UK Subsidy Control rules. Most applicants will fall under the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) threshold, which allows up to £315,000 of public support over a rolling 3-year period. You must declare any public funding received in the last 3 years and ensure you do not exceed the limit. Please be aware that all applicants are expected to complete a subsidy declaration within the application form.

11. Assessment and Decision Process

Applications will be assessed by the Delivery Board using the scoring matrix below.

Criteria	Weighting Percentage		Total Weighted Score Available	
	Small Grant	Standard Grant	Small Grant	Standard Grant
1. Strategic Fit – Alignment with fund priorities and local needs	30%	30%	150	150
2. Benefit to Business /Employees and Need for Funding	30%	30%	150	150
3. Value for Money – Cost effectiveness, match funding	20%	10%	100	50
4. Deliverability – Project readiness, procurement, permissions.	20%	10%	100	50
5. Outcomes , e.g., jobs, growth.	0%	10%	0	50
6. Wider Impact , e.g., community benefit, sustainability benefits, etc.	0%	10%	0	50

Outcomes and wider Impact will not be scored for small grant applications, but will be scored for standard grant applications.

You will be notified of the outcome in writing. The Board's decision via the Portishead Town Council Community Matters and Town Assets Committee is final. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback.

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12. Grant Offer, Claims, and Payment

If successful, you will receive a Grant Offer Letter setting out the terms and conditions. You must sign and return this before starting your project. Grants are paid in arrears on submission of a Grant Claim Form with evidence of expenditure (invoices, supplier form, proof of delivery). All payments will be made to a business bank account.

You must complete your project and submit your claim within the agreed timescale (usually 6 months). Extensions may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Audit

You will be required to participate in monitoring and evaluation, including providing evidence of outcomes (for standard grants). North Somerset Council and its partners may visit your business or request further information to verify grant use. You must retain all records relating to the grant for at least 7 years for audit purposes.

14. Clawback and Appeals

The Council reserves the right to recover grant payments if you breach the terms, provide false information, fail to deliver the project, or dispose of funded assets without permission. If your application is unsuccessful, you may request feedback.

15. Data Protection and Privacy

Your data will be processed in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal and business information will be used only for the administration, monitoring, and evaluation of the Fund. For more information, see the Council's privacy notice at [Privacy notice – Portishead Economic Development Fund | North Somerset Council](#).

16. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Who can apply for the grant?

A: Businesses, sole traders, social enterprises, and not-for-profit organisations based in Portishead or Portbury.

Q: What types of activities are eligible for funding?

A: Digital marketing, equipment and technology upgrades, shopfront improvements, business planning, mentoring, staff training, and activities that create or safeguard jobs.

Q: Is match funding required?

A: It is encouraged but not mandatory. Applications with match funding may be prioritised.

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Q: How much funding can I apply for?

A: Minimum of £500, up to a maximum of £10,000 per application.

Q: What documents do I need to submit?

A: Application form, evidence of business registration, evidence of match funding if applicable, and permissions if relevant.

Q: What does a “rolling application process” mean for this fund?

A: The Portishead Economic Development Fund operates on a rolling basis, meaning applications are accepted continuously until the fund is fully allocated or the programme closes (currently scheduled for 24 June 2026, but this could be extended). Applications are reviewed every month in line with the Community Matters & Town Assets Committee meeting schedule. To be considered in the next round, applications must be submitted by midday on the first Monday of each calendar month to be considered at the committee meeting later that month; late submissions will be deferred to future meetings.

Q: What does a “rolling application process” mean for businesses?

A: This approach allows businesses to apply when they are ready, rather than waiting for a fixed deadline. However, early applications are encouraged as funding is limited and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Q: How will applications be assessed?

A: Using a scoring matrix based on Strategic Fit, Benefit to Business, Value for Money, Deliverability, Outcomes, and Wider Impact.

Q: What happens after I receive the grant?

A: You must submit a claim form with evidence of spending and participate in monitoring to track outcomes.

For small grants, a simple end-of-project report is required, for example, including photos, feedback, and a short narrative about the project.

For standard grants, you will need to indicate which outcome/s (long-term project benefits) your project will deliver and provide targets. You will be required to evidence these as part of monitoring. Choose any of the outcomes below (or suggest your own); a minimum of one outcome is required:

- Jobs created (Full-time Equivalent)

- Jobs safeguarded (Full-time Equivalent)
Permanent and paid job that was at risk of being lost within six months before support was provided and has been retained.
- New products/services/training/technologies introduced
- Business growth (turnover, productivity)
- Premises improved
- Other (please specify)

For each outcome selected, you will need to state your target and how you will evidence achievement.

Q: Can I apply for more than one grant?

A: You may submit one successful application per business; total funding per business is capped at £10,000.

Q: Can I claim for costs already incurred?

A: No. Retrospective costs are not eligible. Only costs incurred after written grant approval can be claimed.

Q: What if I need to change my project after approval?

A: Contact the Economic Development team at North Somerset Council immediately (business@n-somerset.gov.uk). Significant changes may require approval from the Delivery Board and Portishead Town Council Community Matters and Town Assets Committee.

Q: What if I am VAT registered?

A: You can only claim a grant against net costs (excluding VAT). If you are not VAT registered, you may claim the gross cost.

Q: How long do I have to complete my project?

A: Usually 6 months from the grant offer. Extensions may be considered in exceptional cases.

Q: Who do I contact for help?

A: Email business@n-somerset.gov.uk or visit <https://innorthsomerset.co.uk/> for guidance and support.

17. Contact Details

For all enquiries, support, or to submit your application, contact:

North Somerset Council Economic Development Team

Email: business@n-somerset.gov.uk

Web: <https://innorthsomerset.co.uk/>