

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
People and Skills Fund – Round 2
Guidance Notes
March 2025



Funded by
UK Government



PLEASE READ THESE GUIDANCE NOTES BEFORE COMMENCING THE APPLICATION FORM. AN INCOMPLETE SUBMISSION WILL CAUSE UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN DECIDING YOUR APPLICATION.

1. Introduction

The purpose of these guidance notes is to help steer you through the complete process – from the initial contact stage with the Council, through to completion of the works and final payment of the grant.

This round is funded through both the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and a Section 106 Agreement relating to the Panattoni Park Aylesford development. A total allocation of £60,000 (£35,000 UKSPF and £25,000 s.106) has been given towards local employment training and business promotion to support the borough economy.

2. What is the scheme?

Whilst the local economy is comparatively high-performing and resilient within the Kent context, there are clear signs that when compared to areas at a similar distance from Central London, the economy is relatively average. In addition, the borough has several neighbourhoods where residents have fewer life opportunities - these include parts of East Malling, Aylesford, Snodland and Trench in Tonbridge (our 'priority areas').

This scheme aims to support innovative projects that meet at least one of the following four aims:

- Helping unemployed people to access local job opportunities including through basic skills courses.
- Supporting people furthest from the workplace with volunteering and enrichment activities.
- Tackling digital exclusion to help improve quality of life and access to services.
- Enabling SEN students to gain experience of the workplace.

Whilst the fund can be used to support residents from across the borough, applications that aim to support residents in our 'priority areas' in the north of the borough (East Malling, Snodland and Aylesford) will be particularly welcomed, given the proximity to the Panattoni Park Aylesford site.

3. Who can apply?

This fund is open to applications from the following organisations:

- Public Sector Organisations
- Charitable Organisations
- Housing Associations
- Training Providers and Local Colleges

Whilst organisations based outside of Tonbridge & Malling borough are eligible to apply to this fund, the delivery, and therefore the benefit of the project must take place within the borough **and** support local residents.

Applications from groups of organisations seeking to deliver a project are welcomed. However, a single applicant must be nominated who will bear overall responsibility for the grant, and act as the point of contact.

Please note that the grants are discretionary and subject to the availability of funds – once all the funding has been allocated, this programme will close.

The scheme does not support projects that have already been undertaken or any projects which have started prior to a formal offer of grant funding being made.

If you are unsure of whether your project is eligible for this grant scheme, contact the Economic Regeneration Team via economic.regeneration@tmbc.gov.uk.

4. How much is the grant for?

Organisations can apply for a grant of up to £8,000 (up to 75% of total eligible expenditure) towards their project.

5. How do I apply?

To apply for the scheme, make sure you have read the guidance notes and checked the application form in order to understand the information required. Please contact the Economic Regeneration Team via economic.regeneration@tmbc.gov.uk if you have any queries. Having gathered the required information, apply via the online application form ahead of the **XX** May 2025 deadline.

6. What will the scheme fund?

The fund contributes towards the following types of revenue expenditure where they help to meet at least one of the four aims set out in Section 2:

- Running skills-related events and activities.
- Delivery of training and development courses.

- Meeting the cost of new staffing resources.
- Travel costs for individuals.
- Purchase of small equipment.

However, this is not an exhaustive list, and consideration will be given to any innovative project that requires revenue support to help address at least one of the four aims.

7. What should your application aim to achieve?

Due to the limited funding available, applications are assessed by a Grants Panel who considers whether the application:

- Addresses at least one of the four aims set out in Section 2.
- Makes a positive impact on the lives of local residents, especially residents with limited life opportunities.
- Is innovative or offers added value to an existing initiative that meets the criteria.
- Offers value for money.
- Guarantees that the project will be delivered to a high standard.
- Supports at least one of our 'priority areas', but if not, puts forward a strong case.
- Can be delivered in a timely manner.

8. What do I have to supply with my application?

To consider your application, we require the following:

- Completed application form – this contains basic information about your organisation and the project proposal.
- A brief portfolio of organisational experience and delivery of projects.
- Recent bank statement.

9. How long will it take to make a decision on my application?

We aim to make a decision on your application within four weeks of receiving a fully complete application. If your application is submitted without all the necessary information, then this will delay a decision being reached.

10. Who will decide whether my application is approved?

Applications are initially assessed by the Economic Regeneration Team, in liaison with other teams across the council. Once assessed, a recommendation is made to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property.

The grant scheme is administered by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

11. What conditions will apply to the grant?

All grant offers are made in writing which set out project conditions, including a timeframe of a **maximum of 9 months** to deliver the project. Full details of the conditions that apply to the grant are set out in the Grant Offer Letter.

12. When will the grant be paid?

Grant contribution payments are made in stage payments to help with cash flow. 30% of the grant is provided on receipt of the signed Grant Offer Letter, with the remaining 70% provided on completion of the project.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Submit your grant application along with the required information set out in the checklist.
2. If successful, you will be issued a formal Grant Offer Letter giving you 9 months to complete your project.
3. Sign and return the Grant Offer Letter to economic.regeneration@tmbc.gov.uk.
4. The Council pays 30% of the grant contribution on receipt of the signed Grant Offer Letter.
5. Deliver your project within 9 months.
6. When work is complete, submit your evidence including project summary, photographs, receipted invoices, and bank details.
7. Checks are made by the Council to confirm all evidence has been provided.
8. The remaining 70% of the grant is paid.

Summary of Scheme	
To meet at least one of the four aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping unemployed people to access local job opportunities including through basic skills courses. • Supporting people furthest from the workplace with volunteering and enrichment activities. • Tackling digital exclusion to help improve quality of life and access to services. • Enabling SEN students to gain experience of the workplace.
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Sector Organisations • Charitable Organisations • Housing Associations • Training Providers and Local Colleges
Location	Priority areas in East Malling, Aylesford, Snodland, and Tonbridge (Trench) BUT projects in other areas of the borough are eligible.
Eligible Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running skills-related events and activities. • Delivery of training and development courses. • Meeting the cost of new staffing resources. • Travel costs for individuals. • Purchase of small equipment. <p>However, this is not an exhaustive list, and consideration will be given to any innovative project that requires revenue support to help address at least one of the four aims.</p>
Grant Value	Up to 75% of eligible costs, with a maximum grant of £8,000.
Timeframe to Deliver Project	If an applicant is successful in accessing a grant, they have a maximum of 9 months (from the date of the Grant Offer Letter) in which to deliver their project.
Payments	Are made in stages – 30% on receipt of a signed Grant Offer Letter and the remaining 70% paid on project completion.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Businesses/organisations accepting grant offers from this Scheme will be required to abide by and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. The approval or refusal of a grant is at the absolute discretion of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council ('the Council') and there will be no right to an appeal process.
2. Grants will not be given for expenditure incurred prior to the grant offer being made and the Grant Offer Letter signed.
3. The grant is not payable to an un-discharged bankrupt.
4. The grant must be used for the purpose intended as outlined in the Grant Offer Letter.
5. If the business/organisation ceases trading/operating within 12 months of the payment of the grant, the applicant must notify the Council within 14 days and in such circumstances the Council may require the applicant(s) to repay, in whole or part of, the grant paid.
6. If the applicant is registered for VAT this must be declared on the application form. If at any point the business/organisation becomes VAT registered, the applicant must inform the Council and discuss repayment of VAT expenses claimed.
7. The Council's written approval must be obtained in advance of any amendments to the approved project. Failure to comply with this condition may invalidate the grant offer.
8. There is no obligation on the Council to increase the grant if the costs of the project increases.
9. A proportional reduction will be made in the grant if the actual cost of the project proves to be less than estimated. 30% of the grant will be paid on receipt of a signed Grant Offer Letter, with the remaining grant being made in arrears upon the production of the grant claim form along with supporting documentation.
10. The applicant must inform the Council of any changes to the business/organisation or changes of address and/or telephone number.
11. Any grant must be taken up within the period stated in the Grant Offer Letter.
12. Payments of grants to successful applicants will be made in stages, 30% on receipt of the signed Grant Offer Letter and the remaining 70% on completion of the project and the receipt by the Council of evidence that the applicant has incurred the expenditure.
13. Expenditure must be incurred using a debit/credit card or cheque and evidenced through a bank statement. Payments of grants will not be made towards expenditure incurred using the payment method of cash.
14. Grants are dependent on applicants being required to complete a short questionnaire evaluation 6 months after the receipt of the grant.
15. The Council reserves the right to publish illustrations, photographs or other details of your project in promotional literature and other documents associated with Council grant schemes.
16. Applicants will need to sign the contract within 28 days from the date offered otherwise the offer will be withdrawn.
17. If the applicant undertakes any work that, in the opinion of the Council, significantly alters or removes any elements of the grant aided work, the Council shall have the right to recover such proportion of the grant as it sees fit.