



Theme	Supporting Local Business
Programme Name	Business Support (Revenue)
Budget	£1,325,000
Purpose	To support the creation and development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises through enhanced business advice, entrepreneurship and grants programmes.
Investment Plan Priority(ies)	S15: SME development grants and support, aligned with local and regional sectoral priorities and growth potential. This could include, providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.
	S19: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
	S20: Support for expert business advice and support programmes at the local and regional level, including support for decarbonisation, climate adaptation and circular economy advice. This could include funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, ‘incubators’, ‘accelerators’ and other forms of developmental environments for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups/high growth potential firms through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including: e.g. account management, advice, resources, training, mentorship, coaching and access to workspace.
	S29: Support for new and existing businesses and start-ups aligned with local, regional and Scottish policy.
Council Priority(ies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Growth
Programme Priority(ies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SME advisory services over and above core Business Gateway provision • Business support programmes which provide targeted grants to SMEs to help them grow, develop, build resilience and adapt to the economic environment. • Entrepreneurship and innovation programmes, hubs and facilities in towns and rural communities throughout Aberdeenshire.

Eligibility Criteria	Eligible	Ineligible
Applicants	Public sector organisations	Businesses*
	Business support providers	Sole Traders*
	Non-profit-distributing organisations	Individuals*
Geographical Area	Aberdeenshire	
Costs	Consultancy	Costs formally committed to or spent prior to the project start date
	Equipment	Costs incurred or invoiced after the project end date
	Marketing	Costs involved in winding up a company or organisation
	Overheads (max 15% of total direct staff costs)	Bad debts, fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation
	Staff Costs (Direct project delivery)	Payments not supported by invoices and/or documents proving expenditure
	Travel Expenses	Recoverable VAT
	Grants to end beneficiaries	Costs not procured in line with UK Shared Prosperity Fund requirements
		Alcohol
	Minimum	Maximum
Grant (£)	£50,000	£500,000
Grant (%)	10%	100%

**Cannot apply directly but can receive support through projects delivered by eligible organisations*

Indicator	Definition	Target
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants (numerical value)	<p>Number of enterprises having received financial support other than grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity. - Non-grant financial support means loans, risk finance, financial investment from the project that is repayable or confers equity in the enterprise. 	0
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support (numerical value)	<p>Number of enterprises that have received non-financial support with the intention of improving performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity - Non-financial support means business advice, guidance, mentoring and training. This must involve some form of direct interaction with members of the enterprises, in other words it cannot be broadcasted advice. - Improved performance means reductions in costs or increases in turnover/profit. - Support may be ongoing. 	650
Number of businesses receiving grants (numerical value)	<p>Number of enterprises that have received grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity. - Grant means a cash payment by the project that is not repaid. 	50
Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready (numerical value)	<p>Number of entrepreneurs having been assisted to be enterprise ready.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurs mean individuals aged 16 and over currently in employment, 	600

Indicator	Definition	Target
	<p>unemployed or economically inactive with an interest in exploring creating their own business.</p> <p>- Assistance means business advice, guidance, mentoring and training. This must involve some form of direct interaction with members of the entrepreneurs, in other words it cannot be broadcasted advice.</p>	
<p>Number of commercial buildings developed or improved (numerical value)</p>	<p>The total number of new commercial buildings completed or improved. Commercial buildings include, but are not limited to: retail, hospitality, office and industrial buildings.</p> <p>- A retail building means a fixed location for the display or retail sale of goods or services. Examples include, but are not limited to: supermarkets, shops selling clothing, electronics, furniture, books, etc.</p> <p>- A hospitality building means a space whose primary purpose is for accommodation or food service. Examples include, but are not limited to: restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars, catering, hotels, campsites and other accommodation.</p> <p>- Office building means a fixed location where the primary activities are concerned with financial services, professional services (other than health or medical services), or any other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality.</p> <p>- Industrial building means space used for industrial processes, storage or distribution.</p> <p>- Other commercial buildings mean non-public or community spaces that do not fall into the categories above.</p> <p>- Completed means physical completion of the facilities and space is ready for occupancy immediately. A building should be classified as complete once it is on the non-domestic rating list.</p> <p>- Improvement means adding, renovating or repairing facilities with the aim of creating a</p>	<p>0</p>

Indicator	Definition	Target
	better space. It does not include maintenance of existing facilities.	
Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved (m2)	<p>The total square meterage of new commercial floorspace completed or improved. Commercial space includes, but is not limited to: retail, hospitality, office and industrial space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A retail space means a fixed location for the display or retail sale of goods or services. Examples include, but are not limited to: supermarkets, shops selling clothing, electronics, furniture, books, etc. - A hospitality space means a space whose primary purpose is for accommodation or food service. Examples include, but are not limited to: restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars, catering, hotels, campsites and other accommodation. - Office space means a fixed location where the primary activities are concerned with financial services, professional services (other than health or medical services), or any other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality. - Industrial space means space used for industrial processes, storage or distribution. - Other commercial space means non-public or community spaces that do not fall into the categories above. - Completed means physical completion of the facilities and space is ready for occupancy immediately. A building should be classified as complete once it is on the non-domestic rating list. - Improvement means adding, renovating or repairing facilities with the aim of creating a better space. It does not include maintenance of existing facilities. 	0
Number of people attending training sessions (numerical value)	<p>Number of people attending training sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Training sessions include, but are not limited to: training focusing on digital, management, 	0

Indicator	Definition	Target
Jobs created (numerical value)	<p>leadership, collaboration, networking and lower-carbon alternatives skills.</p> <p>The number of new, permanent, paid, full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created following support. This includes both part-time and full-time jobs, which should be recorded relative to full-time equivalent (FTE). FTE should be based on the standard full-time hours of the employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New means it should not have existed with that employer before the intervention. - Created jobs exclude those created solely to deliver the intervention (e.g. construction). - Permanent means it should have an intended life expectancy of at least 12 months from the point at which it is created. - Only count each individual FTE or job once through the lifetime of a project (i.e. it should not be counted every year) - FTE is a measure of an employees scheduled hours in relation to an employers hours for a full time workweek 	446
Jobs safeguarded (numerical value)	<p>A safeguarded job is a permanent and paid job that was at risk prior to support being provided, and which the support helped the business to retain. This includes sole traders and business owners.</p> <p>Safeguarded jobs exclude those created solely to deliver the intervention (e.g., construction).</p> <p>This includes both part-time and full-time jobs, which should be recorded relative to full-time equivalent (FTE).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FTE should be based on the standard full-time hours of the employer. - At risk is defined as being forecast to be lost within 6 months. - Only count each individual FTE or job once through the lifetime of a project (i.e. it should not be counted every year) 	5

Indicator	Definition	Target
	<p>- FTE is a measure of an employees scheduled hours in relation to an employers hours for a full time workweek</p>	
<p>Number of new businesses created (numerical value)</p>	<p>A new enterprise is one which has been registered at Companies House or HMRC as a result of the support provided.</p> <p>- Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity.</p>	<p>465</p>
<p>Increased business sustainability (% increase)</p>	<p>The increase in number of enterprises with improved sustainability. Business sustainability refers to doing business without negatively impacting the environment, community, or society as a whole. Reporting will also facilitate the option to report a decrease metric.</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Increased number of businesses supported (% increase)</p>	<p>The increase in number of enterprises supported.</p> <p>- Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity.</p> <p>Reporting will also facilitate the option to report a decrease metric.</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Increased amount of investment (£)</p>	<p>The increase in amount of tangible investment made by the private sector within a specified area over the reporting period.</p> <p>- Tangible means something physical, for example, buildings, machinery, fixtures and fittings, etc. It excludes financial investments such as stocks or bonds.</p> <p>- Investments should only be included in the measurement once there is a contractual commitment. Investments that have only been announced should not be included.</p> <p>- The area of measurement needs to be specified prior to the first measurement being taken, and this area should remain consistent over the lifetime of the programme.</p>	<p>£1,325,000</p>

Indicator	Definition	Target
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity (numerical value)	<p>This focuses on collaborations which are about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between the knowledge base and businesses to enable innovative new products and services to be developed and includes but is not exclusively limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research collaborations and free dissemination of research. • Joint and long-term development of new business or services. • Formation of joint ventures and spin-out companies. 	39
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes (numerical value)	<p>The number of enterprises introducing a new to the firm technology or process (through external sources e.g., procurement).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity. - A technology or process is new to the firm if it did not use a technology or process with the same functionality before, or the production technology or process is fundamentally different from those already used. This may be tangible or intangible. - If an enterprise introduces multiple new technologies or processes, it is still counted as one enterprise. 	69
Number of businesses with improved productivity (numerical value)	<p>Number of enterprises with improved productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity. - Productivity refers to the gross value added per hour worked or gross value added per worker. 	20
Number of R&D active businesses (numerical value)	<p>Increase in number of enterprises engaged in scientific and technological development to improve their competitive performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, 	39

Indicator	Definition	Target
	<p>or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity</p> <p>- R&D stands for Research and Development, it is a narrower definition than innovation active and should be used for enterprises actively working to develop new products or services, either internally or externally through research and development activities.</p> <p>- It may be measured by a declaration from the enterprise that they are investing in internal R&D activity, and/or claiming R&D tax-credits from government.</p>	
<p>Increased number of innovation active SMEs (numerical value)</p>	<p>The increase in number of innovation active SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises) supported, compared with a baseline measurement prior to the intervention. SMEs are usually defined as having fewer than 250 workers.</p> <p>The UK definition of innovation active is based on an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition. This definition includes any of the following activities, if they occurred as a result of the intervention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The introduction of a new or significantly improved product (good or service) or process; 2. Engagement in innovation projects not yet complete, scaled back, or abandoned; 3. New and significantly improved forms of organisation, business structures or practices, and marketing concepts or strategies. <p>- Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity.</p>	<p>39</p>
<p>Number of businesses engaged in new markets (numerical value)</p>	<p>Number of enterprises engaged in new markets following support.</p> <p>- Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social</p>	<p>0</p>

Indicator	Definition	Target
	<p>enterprises where these engage in economic activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaged means they have launched a product or service into a new domestic or overseas market, or have undertaken research or attended conferences or events to prepare a launch into a new market. - New market refers to a market the business has not previously engaged with. 	
<p>Number of early stage firms which generate or increase their revenue (numerical value)</p>	<p>Number of early stage enterprises which increase their revenue following support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early stage firm means a start-up or new enterprise. - Revenue means income generated by the firm. - Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity 	<p>106</p>

Decision-Making		
Award Process	Open Challenge Fund	
Assessment Panel/Partnership	1) Call for expressions of interest issued 2) Eligible projects invited to submit full application by Investments & Projects Team 3) Bids scored/prioritised/ranked by Business Stakeholder Group 4) Award recommendations made by Local Partnership Group 5) Formal sign-off by Chief Officer or Full Council if above £250k	
Scoring Criteria	1) Strategic Fit –To what extent does the project align with the priorities, outputs and outcomes of the framework, Aberdeenshire Council, Locality Plans and Community Action Plans?	20%
	2) Cross-Cutting Themes – Can the project demonstrate a neutral or positive contribution to the following themes?: a. Equalities b. Fairer Scotland Duty c. Town Centre First Principle d. Sustainability e. Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing	15%
	3) Legacy and Sustainability – Will the project deliver a lasting legacy beyond its lifetime and be sustainable once grant funding has ended?	15%
	4) Project Need and Demand – Is there sufficient evidence that the project will meet an unmet demand?	20%
	5) Value for money – Does the project represent good value for the funding requested and deliver programme outcomes and objectives?	20%
	6) Capacity to Deliver – Does the delivery organisation have sufficient capacity (financial and people) to complete the project as set out and on time?	10%

Claims, Monitoring & Reporting	
Frequency	At least quarterly
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project sponsor completes provided template • Project sponsor submits completed template and supporting evidence to externalfunding@aberdeenshire.gov.uk • Investments & Projects Officer acknowledges receipt and processes claim • Any costs which are ineligible or not supported by evidence are removed from the claim • Investments & Projects Executive checks claim • Team Manager approves payment (or refers to Chief Officer if above authorisation limit) • Claim is paid and applicant notified
Evidence required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices • Payroll records (for funded staff) • BACS records • Bank statements • Timesheets for staff working part-time on projects • Activity report including progress against target indicators • Breakdown of data making up indicator report • Quantity surveyor reports /permissions/completion certificates for capital projects
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project report to be produced • 100% checks on financial information • Minimum 20% checks on activity/indicator records