



Tyfu
Canolbarth Cymru
Growing
Mid Wales

MID WALES
TOWN CENTRE PROPERTY INVESTMENT
FUND
GRANT PROGRAMME

POWYS
BRECON
LLANDRINDOD WELLS
NEWTOWN

CEREDIGION
LLANDYSUL
LAMPETER
TREGARON

GRANT APPLICATION FORM



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Introduction

The Town Centre Property Investment Fund (TCPIF) is available to commercial and residential building occupiers and owners within the target towns within Powys and Ceredigion as identified by the red line boundary below. Its purpose is to enhance building frontages and to bring vacant commercial and residential floor space back into beneficial business use. Where a local need can be identified, the grant would also fund development projects that would create new build commercial/residential floor space.

Maps for each town are included in Annex A showing the boundary area. Please note that these are for guidance and the main principle is that investments need to be sufficiently close to the town centre to have a positive impact on its economy.

No application will automatically qualify for funding.

Grant Eligibility

The TCPIF will be a package of support that will include loan, private investment and an element of grant. Applicants will need to demonstrate that existing private, grant, and loan finance mechanisms have been properly considered and exhausted prior to any top up from TCPIF grant funding being sought.

Each scheme will be assessed by a local panel on a case by case basis.

As a guide the following building uses and building works may attract grant support:

Building Uses

New or upgraded floor space for business or residential use, with each scheme determined on its individual merits, assessed by a local panel and presented to a regional board. Uses such as offices, leisure, retail and food and drink as well as town centre residential accommodation will be considered. The overriding consideration will be for schemes to contribute to revitalising the economy of the town. Residential schemes are more likely to be acceptable where they enable a commercial development to come forward as part of a mixed development. However, a pure residential scheme could be considered where it brings a redundant town centre building into use and contributes to driving demand for / use of town centre services.

Building Works

External works to the building frontages can include work deemed necessary for the structural integrity of the property, including:

- Shopfronts
- Signage
- Windows and doors
- External works
- Roofs and chimneys
- Rainwater goods (guttering and down pipes)
- Rendering, stone cleaning and repairs, re-pointing
- Structural work

Note: External Building works may be subject to the Council's Design Guidance where appropriate.

Internal works are eligible as part of a comprehensive package of external improvements to the building, and which allow for a change in use or bring vacant space back to use, such as:

- Windows & doors
- Improved accessibility
- Walls, ceilings, lighting
- Utilities and services
- Welfare facilities
- Structural works

New build floor space will be eligible for commercial or residential, where a local need for this has been identified.

Professional costs are covered, where they are associated to the capital works such as:

- Professional advice (e.g. architectural, surveying, project management)
- VAT – where the applicant is not able to be VAT registered.
- Statutory fees (Planning applications and Building Regulations)

Ineligible costs

- Solicitor's fees and fees associated with obtaining the loan and grant
- General maintenance
- Items relating directly to the commercial use – fixtures and fittings (counters, bars, tables, chairs etc.)
- Any costs of works incurred prior to a grant approval. Professional fees incurred pre-approval relating directly to approved works can be eligible if incurred after 31st of March 2019.

Potential applicants must contact Local Support Officers in the first instance to discuss any proposals and whether they are potentially eligible for the grant element when discussing the loan application. No application will automatically qualify for funding.

Regeneration Service, Powys County Council – Regeneration@powys.gov.uk

01597 826688

For Ceredigion Residential Schemes contact: Sarah Williams
Sarah.LWilliams@ceredigion.gov.uk Tel: 01545 574136

For Ceredigion Commercial Schemes contact: Gareth Rowlands:
Gareth.rowlands@ceredigion.gov.uk Tel: 01545 572065

Who can apply for grant?

Occupiers and property owners of commercial and residential properties within the designated areas who own the freehold or leasehold of at least 5 years.

Occupiers must hold a lease with a five year minimum period remaining at the planned grant payment date and who have secured their landlord's written consent to the proposed works. Grant aided projects of £50,000 or greater will require a legal charge applied to the grant aided premises.

What is the maximum grant available?

The minimum level of eligible project costs that can be considered is £30,000 ex VAT. Applications are restricted to a maximum grant of £200,000 ex VAT unless the scheme is exceptional in its impact when a grant up to £225,000 ex VAT could be considered. The amount of any grant offered will be assessed on an individual project basis, taking account of the environmental and economic benefits arising and will be set at the minimum level needed for the project to proceed, not exceeding the 70% programme intervention rate. This will be managed by panel approval. Applicants must contribute a minimum of 25% of their own funds and be compliant with State Aid regulations.

Grants are awarded at the discretion of the Regional Partnership Board and only if all existing loan finance has been exhausted.

Any grant offer may also be subject to further conditions, which would be provided alongside any grant offer letter.

The TCPIF project will be covered by the Welsh Local Government Capital Investment Aid & Employment Aid Scheme, State aid reference no: SA.49737, the Welsh Local Government Property Development Grant Scheme State aid reference no: SA.49738, and the Welsh Government Support for Sports, Multifunctional and Local Infrastructure Project Scheme State aid reference no: SA.49739.

If the application is not covered by one of the block exemptions for whatever reason, then the De minimus regulation will apply (EC) number 1407/2013.

Community Benefits

As part of the Region's commitment to community benefits, all grants would be required to generate community benefit. A local officer will discuss the process with the applicant. This might involve offering work experience, shared apprenticeships or work placements for local people. The applicant is also required to work closely with the Council's employability programmes when recruiting staff. Proposals that create jobs where wage levels that are at least at the 'Living Wage' level will be particularly welcomed.

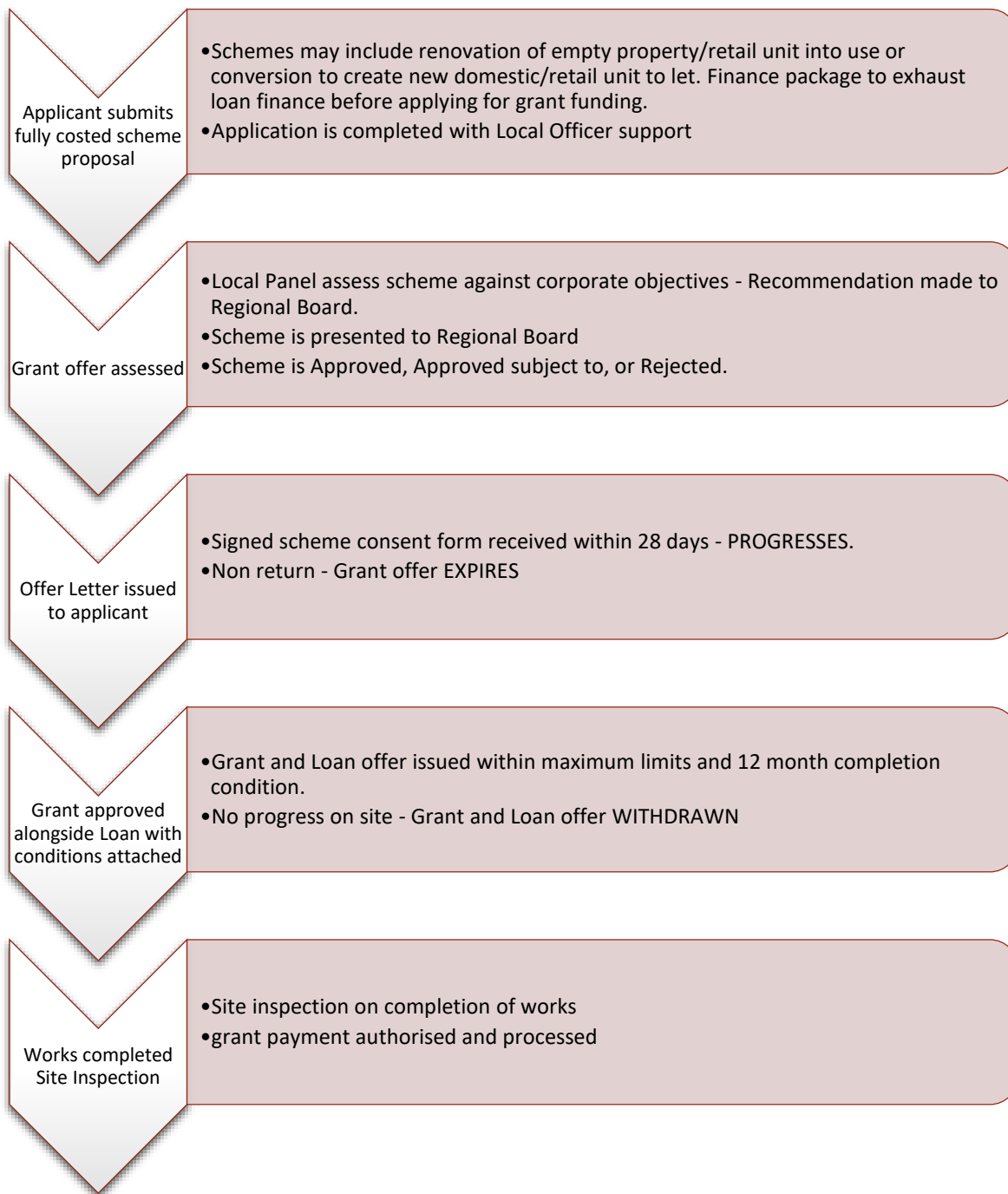
Further consideration will be given to residential developments if there is an affordable housing element to the scheme.

Criteria

- Each case to be considered on its merits
- Eligible works include: refurbishment of existing buildings (not maintenance), extension of an existing building or renovation of redundant buildings. Funding can also contribute to a new build of commercial property on redundant land within the Town Centre.
- The funding has to be match-funded by the applicant's business by at least 25% of the total project cost. The source of the match funding cannot be from other Welsh Government funds.
- The benefits to both the community, town and the economy that can be derived from the Development must be demonstrated.
- Awards can only be made in compliance with the stated State Aid regulations and exemptions. This may include a requirement to disclose any Aid received within the last two financial years preceding your application.

- Applications will be required to demonstrate credible economic survival through the provision of a Business Plan that is proportionate to the size and type of investment. Clear statements must show the assumptions made as to how the property will remain in active use for the foreseeable future. If the property is expected to be sold post renovation works as a commercial development scheme, then clear financial projections are required to demonstrate the market gap and the need for Grant Aid to enable the investment to proceed.
- Any Loan element of the scheme will be subject to the Loan Scheme guidance and requirements.
- Only one application per premises may be considered.

What is involved in securing Town Centre Property Investment Fund support:



The grant application process from Enquiry through to completion of works would be as follows:

Step 1: Making the Initial Enquiry

The prospective grant recipient will make contact with the Local Support Officer with an enquiry for one of the loan schemes, a meeting will then be arranged.

This meeting will discuss what work may be eligible for loan support and whether an invitation to apply for the grant can be considered. The grant application process will be reviewed with the applicant. It is expected that the applicant will have outline designs and costings at this stage.

Step 2: Grant application

The loan/grant application(s) should be completed along with full designs and costings for the project, including, where deemed appropriate in a particular case:

- Recent photographs of the property
- Notification of Planning approval and approved plans/drawings*
- Drawings and schedules of internal and external works
- Relevant statutory consents such as Building Controls
- Mortgage's consent if applicable
- A statement showing fees, such as professional fees which are to be incurred as part of the capital works
- A cash flow forecast for the development showing how the development will be financed together with confirmation that the full cost of the works can be paid prior to submitting a grant claim. Grant Payments can only be made in arrears, quarterly for larger schemes.
- Proposed purchases must be procured in a sustainable way so as to demonstrate that you have achieved best value for money in the use of public funds and avoided conflicts of interest. Proposed purchases must also provide a reasonable representation of the item's value. Your Local Support Officer will be able to advise you further on this. The Project Officer reserves the right to request additional cost quotes or tenders from alternative suppliers if required. Financial information is required for due diligence purposes so that there is confidence that public money is being invested properly and will for part of the loan application to insure that the loan can be repaid.
- A Business Plan that demonstrates credible economic survival for the foreseeable future
- Copy of title deeds or lease document

Applicants are advised to employ a professional architect or similar agent to assist in the design and project management of their proposed project. It is expected that a loan expression of interest form and/or the grant application form will be completed along with designs and costings. The agent will assist in producing quality designs and liaise with the Planning and Building Control sections to achieve the necessary statutory consents, if these are needed. These are vital to a successful project, if planning is required, the grant/loan can be approved subject to planning approval. Financial support can include the cost of professional fees associated with the architect/design team.

* if planning is required, the grant application can be presented to the local panel and be approved subject to planning approval, if approval has not been granted in time for submission to local panel.

Step 3: Local panel assessment

Schemes will be presented to a local panel (made up of representatives of the relevant service areas and portfolio holders), for a decision on the loan scheme and grant application.

Applications are assessed on the basis of its positive benefit to the local area including environment, but the level of grant (subject to state aid rules) may be limited by the size and nature of the project or the company's financial status.

Decisions made will be:

- Approval
- Approval subject to conditions
- Not suitable for Loan scheme but may still go forward for grant intervention
- Rejected

Step 4: Endorsement by Regional Partnership Board

Grant applications will then be presented to the Regional Partnership Board for endorsement based on local panel decision by the local Officers.

Full justification will be provided to any applicant whose application is rejected.

Step 5: Grant Offer and Acceptance

When a grant is approved, an offer letter will be sent to the applicant, in duplicate. If a grant is offered it must be formally accepted, in writing, by the applicant countersigning the grant offer letter and returning one copy of it to the grant officer. This must occur within 14 days of the date of the grant offer letter and before any work commences. If this condition is not met it may be deemed that the applicant has refused the offer of grant. The grant acceptance letter must be signed by the applicant and not by any appointed agent acting on the applicant's behalf.

Offer letters always have Terms and Conditions attached to them and should be read fully by the applicant. They are important because the Council is responsible for public money and is required to maintain safeguards accordingly.

A project end date will also be agreed at this stage.

The Council may agree to pay interim payments of the grant during the course of the works - this should normally be agreed at the outset and can be incorporated in the grant offer letter.

Approval of a grant does not convey or imply any other consent e.g. Planning, Building Regulations or Listed Buildings. Applicants are responsible for seeking the appropriate consent(s) needed to implement the project. Where there is a need for such consent(s) the local authority reserves the right to delay or withdraw payment of a grant until such consent(s) are obtained.

The works shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the relevant Planning Consents, Building Regulations and any other conditions attached to the consent(s). The applicant is wholly responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the project are in compliance. Failure to do so may result in no grant being paid.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all contractors have the appropriate certification to undertake the works. Certification may need to be evidenced e.g. Plumbing-Gas Safe registered, Windows-Fensa etc.

Step 6: Starting work on site

As part of the terms and conditions of the grant, two key dates will be given – one by which time the grant recipient must start work on site, and one by which time work must be completed on site. The grant officer will work with the grant recipient to make sure adequate time is given for completion and that the programme is realistic.

There will be a pre-start meeting with the grant officer to ensure that the grant recipient is happy with all the terms and conditions and to discuss any further issues with the project. A Planning officer or other relevant officer may also attend this meeting if any planning matters need to be clarified.

The grant officer will ask the grant recipient or the contractor to erect a grant sign in a prominent location. This advertises the availability of grant and promotes the funding bodies.

All work must be undertaken in line with Statutory Obligations such as Planning, Building Control and the requirements of The Health and Safety Executive. The officer is not responsible for these obligations, but a grant offer may be revoked if the work does not comply with the statutory legislation.

Step 7: Monitoring Work

It is the applicant's responsibility to monitor work. However, the local grant officer will also attend site meetings and should be advised of any deviation from the agreed plan. If advice is not sought an approved grant may not be paid in respect of these items. Any changes to specifications of materials, building details or designs should be reported to the grant officer and where relevant the planning officer to ensure that changes are in line with planning requirements. Any changes to the cost or timescale of the project should also be reported to the grant officer as soon as they are realised. Note that the outputs put in your grant application form will form part of the legal contract for you to deliver, and monitoring is therefore an important mechanism in achieving these.

Step 8: Claiming Grant Money

Once the project is complete a site visit will be held to inspect the work.

A final account, detailing all the work undertaken should be produced. This will be done by the contractor, agent or architect. All invoices from the contractor and the professional fees must be presented to the grant officer. These should be accompanied with bank statements showing the payment of the invoices.

A valid original invoice from a reputable trading company must be provided and conform to the following:

- i. Official documentation, indicating suppliers name, address and registered office.
- ii. Show a date of quotation/estimate.
- iii. Indicate a unique reference.
- iv. Show a supplier's VAT registration number and the VAT amount (if applicable)
- v. Indicate net cost and total cost

The monitoring of suppliers may take place in order to confirm payment of the eligible items.

An assessment will be made on the final account, invoices and bank statements. A report will then be written and approved by relevant officers. Once approved, payment will be made to the applicants account via a BACS transfer. All invoices must have been paid from the named bank account of the applicant.

An interim payment can be requested during the project subject to the above procedure. It would be made subject to sufficient justification to do so, and on the basis that the level of the claim is proportionate with the works undertaken.

Grant payment shall be withheld and / or recovered either in whole or part in the event that:

- i. A project in receipt of a grant is not carried out in accordance with these terms and conditions.
- ii. Any expenditure has been incurred prior to the date of grant approval.
- iii. There is evidence of cash payment for items submitted as part of a grant claim.
- iv. There has been an overpayment of the grant.
- v. The grant is not used for the purposes of the project.
- vi. Any information provided in the grant application or in subsequent or supporting correspondence is found to be incorrect or incomplete.
- vii. The property is sold in part or whole.
- viii. The applicant is in arrears with their local authority in respect of the funded property.

Scoring Criteria

Applicants will be assessed against the following assessment criteria:

Scoring Criteria	Marks Available
Financial: Capacity of organisation to handle public funding in a regeneration project. A series of questions to judge track record and financial standing of the organisation	Pass / Fail
Eligibility: Does proposed activity comply with the aims of the TCPIF funding?	Pass / Fail
Strategic fit / visual impact: How well the proposal delivers against the regeneration Themes and Criteria outlined above & proposal viability	20
Deliverability: end occupier demand, status of statutory and legal consents, absence of significant potential development barriers (for eg compliance with planning policy, property ownership guaranteed, listed buildings constraints etc)	20
Value for money in terms of potential to deliver against those Outputs detailed on Annex B compared with amount of public money required i.e. jobs accommodated, vacant units brought back into use	20
Risk and serviceability: i.e. security of finance; value ratio for investment package; amount and credibility of match funding.	20
Investment induced: Community Benefits i.e. private sector investment levered, higher value jobs created:	20

Grant Application Appeal Process

1. If a Grant applicant wishes to appeal a decision of the TCPIF, they need to submit a letter of appeal and send this to: Lisa Griffiths: Senior Manager - Economic Development and Regeneration, lisa.griffiths@powys.gov.uk within 10 working days of receiving their notification letter from Powys County Council.
2. The letter of appeal needs to contain the nature of the appeal and refer to the reasons why the grant was turned down, or not funded fully.
3. On receipt of this letter of appeal the Project Officer will inform the TCPIF Regional Partnership Board that an appeal has been received and will send the letter of appeal, the application and original comments on the application to the Board members who must provide a response within 10 working days of the date of the appeal letter.
4. The response will be forwarded to the Applicant within 10 working days of the receipt of the letter of appeal.
5. This decision will be final and there will be no further appeal.

For further assistance or to discuss your appeal please contact Grants Manager.