



# TRANSFORMING TOWNS PLACE MAKING GRANT - MID WALES

## APPLICATION GUIDANCE



# KEY FACTS

## 1. What Is It?

A capital grant scheme that covers a number of capital investment regeneration activities in town centres across towns in Mid Wales, i.e. the counties of Powys and Ceredigion. The scheme is funded by Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme and promoted by the Growing Mid Wales Partnership.

## 2. Where Can Investments Take Place?

Under the 2022-2025 funding programme, project proposals can come forward from any town within the region under the Placemaking Grant. Applicants will need to demonstrate how the projects aligns with the town's placemaking plan or wider investments strategies within the town.

## 3. When Is The Scheme Open?

The scheme is open now and all projects will need to complete by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

## 4. How Much Grant Is Available?

The budget for 2022-2025 in Mid Wales is £5M. The minimum level of eligible project costs that can be considered is £30,000 ex VAT. Applications are restricted to a maximum grant of £250,000 ex VAT. (with the exception of the Shop Frontage Enveloping, Digital Towns, Public Realm, Town Centre External Trading Support Schemes).

The amount of grant awarded to a project will depend on a number of factors including Subsidy Control considerations and scheme viability.

Any funding allocated through the Placemaking Grant should be considered as a last resort. In the first instance all other funding avenues need to be explored including private investment and loans. As well as where there is dedicated funding streams are identified such as active travel, Community Facilities Programme.

## 5. Who Can Apply?

The scheme is open to private businesses, including developers, third sector businesses, and the public sector. It is not available to private individuals. Check eligibility of the scheme you are applying for further details – details can be found in the application form in Appendix 1 as part of the scheme guidance.

## 6. How Is the Scheme To Be Administered?

The scheme is being administered by officers in each County, who will be available to advise applicants on how to make a strong application. Successful applicants will receive a funding contract from Powys County Council.

## **7. How Are Applications Assessed?**

Applications are assessed by a county level panel of officers and Cabinet Members who score applications against the scoring criteria contained in the guidance. Recommendations are then sent to a Mid Wales Regional Panel for consideration prior to a formal decision by Powys County Council. This process should take between 3 and 5 weeks.

## **8. How Do I Make An Application?**

Study the scheme Application & Guidance document to look at what sort of schemes are available and consider if this equates to what you want to do. If so, contact your county officer to discuss your scheme. Follow advice received as to which parts of the form to complete and what evidence to provide. Assessment panels will be held regularly to meet demand.

## **9. Is There Claw Back on Grants If Property Is Sold?**

Properties receiving grant aid towards their development would normally be subject to payback if sold within a period of 5 years. However, we would not wish to discourage developer interest in tackling redundant town centre sites / properties in need of development, and it may be possible to consider agreement on a mechanism for allowing disposal post development work without forgoing all of the grant received. Developers interested in exploring this option should contact their local officer as soon as possible. This needs to be agreed prior to any grant approval.

## **10. What information/evidence is required for the Community Benefit**

Transforming Towns Programme is striving to help develop a vibrant Welsh economy capable of delivering strong and sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for everyone in Wales. Projects benefitting from public funding should contribute to social, economic and environmental well-being now and in the future with the aim of building stronger communities, reducing social exclusion and poverty, and supporting the development of the economy.

Applicants must maximise the community benefits delivered through the Funding by providing where applicable:

1. Training and Employment opportunities: contractors being encouraged to recruit and train economically inactive persons as part of the workforce delivering any contract let, directly and/or indirectly through the supply chain. This could include employment; apprenticeships; work experience; work trials; or other relevant training opportunities.
2. Supply Chain opportunities for SMEs based in Wales: Successful contractors in any procurement must consider opportunities for SMEs, including social enterprises.
3. Contributions to the Community & Education – such as work experience placements, careers days etc.

## 11. What should be included in the Business Plan?

The business plan should be of sufficient detail commensurate with the scale of your proposal. We want to see included:

- How you have arrived at your development costs
- How you have arrived at your future operating costs
- What your assumptions and projections are for trading income or your expected receipt on sale
- Profit and loss forecast for 3 years
- Expected pay-back period on investment
- Key risks and mitigations
- An understanding of any competition and your advantage
- Details of experience / expertise of you or your staff to undertake the development

*Note that Business Wales can help you compile your Business Plan if required.*

Additional information specific to the scheme:

### **Residential Town Centre Unit**

- Housing Type and Occupancy Demand - Please confirm the number and type of housing units and their size to be developed. How many of these will be classified as 'affordable housing' and how will this status be ensured for the foreseeable future. Where grant funding is used to support the build of social housing units, schemes are required to comply with "Development Quality Requirements". In terms of value for money, schemes must have regard to Welsh Government "Acceptable Cost Guidelines". Any scheme that does not meet either DQR or has a Scheme Cost Index above 120% should be discussed with Welsh Government officials. Please note that holiday lets count as commercial premises and should be dealt with in that section. Please note that student accommodation, bedsits and studios are not eligible for grant support. Please ensure that plans & drawings of your development are attached to this application. How will parking provision be provided for the units? What evidence do you have for the need of the type of units you are proposing in this location, either as tenancies or outright purchase?
- Funding Need & Market Gap - Please make the case for the need for public money support. Attach a recent independent valuation of the property as it currently stands PLUS an independent valuation of what the property will be worth post works to show the gap between the costs of development verses subsequent value. Explain what borrowing you are able to undertake against the value of the property and what arrangements you have in place with associated evidence attached. If rental income is part of your funding solution - show brief assumptions and payback calculations. Grant Aid is available to help close the market gap and is also dependant on the financial position of the applicant – so please provide a recent bank statement and statement of accounts if available. Give a full breakdown of your intended funding package.

### **Commercial Property Schemes**

- Funding Need and Market Gap - Please make the case for the need for public money support. Attach a recent independent valuation of the property as it currently stands PLUS an independent valuation of what the property will be worth post works to show the gap between the costs of development verses subsequent value. Explain what borrowing you are able to undertake against the value of the property and what arrangements you have in place with associated evidence attached. If rental income is part of your funding solution - show brief assumptions and payback calculations. The Grant Aid is available to help close the market gap and is also dependant on the financial position of the applicant – so please

provide a recent bank statement and statement of accounts if available. Give a full breakdown of your intended funding package.

- Site Occupancy - Please give a brief outline of the history of the site or property:
  - How long as it been empty / underutilised?
  - What has it been used for in the past?
  - Is it in a conservation area and/or a listed building?
  - Why do you think your proposed use going forward will work?

### **Green infrastructure Schemes**

- Climate Change - Please outline how the investment contributes to tackling climate change, improving the quality of the environment in this location and help to engender a sense of well-being to residents / visitors. Describe any innovative design solutions. Does the scheme tackle any known flooding / surface water issues at this location?
- The five core GI principles we will be considering in relation to your application are:
  - Multifunctional
  - Biodiverse
  - Adapted for Climate Change
  - Healthy
  - Smart & Sustainable
- Need For Investment - Please explain why the investment is needed in this particular location (as opposed to any other location in the county). Is there evidence to support this, such as a Master Plan for the town or a green audit?

### **Public Realm**

- Additionality - Please explain how this work is clearly additional to the normal public realm works undertaken by Local Authorities and why this regeneration funding should contribute to the works. How will the works benefit businesses and the local community?
- Need - Please explain why the works are needed in this location as opposed to any other location. Is the proposal part of a wider scheme of investment in the town such as a Master Plan?

### **Site Acquisitions**

- Site Occupancy - Please give a brief outline of the history of the site or property:
  - How long as it been empty / underutilised?
  - What has it been used for in the past?
  - Is it in a conservation area?
  - Why do you think your proposed use going forward will work?
- Need - Show you have considered alternative ways for bringing about regeneration at this location without having to resort to site acquisition. Have planning enforcement measures been explored as a way of driving improvement?

### **Town Centre Markets**

- Need - Please explain how you know there is a proven need and demand for the market enhancement in terms of infrastructure AND end client use. Why have you chosen this town and location above others?

### **Town Centre Meanwhile Uses**

- Need - Please explain how you know there is a proven need and demand for the facility in terms of infrastructure AND end client use. Why have you chosen this town and location above others.
- Align – Explain how the scheme you are proposing aligns to the Welsh Government's Meanwhile Uses Best Practice Guide – the link can be found at the end of this document.

- Business Benefit - Please describe how many businesses will benefit from your investment

### **Town Centre External Trading**

- Design Guidance - Please confirm that your scheme follows any technical design guidance available for your area, stating what that guidance is. Briefly explain how you have arrived at your choice of equipment or street furniture. Explain how the scheme does not adversely affect pedestrian access at the location.
- Business Benefit - Please describe how many businesses will benefit from your investment and how they will benefit directly or indirectly. How have these businesses been chosen to receive assistance? Have all businesses in the town been given an opportunity to benefit? If not – why not?
- Additionality - Please explain how your investment is clearly additional to the sort of investments and works that your organisation would normally undertake with other public money. We need to be convinced that this is a good use of regeneration funding.

### **Shop Front Enveloping Scheme**

- Design Guidance - Please confirm that your scheme follows any technical design guidance available for your area, stating what that guidance is. Briefly explain how you have arrived at your choice of external design.
- Business Benefit - Please describe how many businesses will benefit from your investment and how they will benefit directly or indirectly. How have these businesses been chosen to receive assistance? Have all businesses in town been given an opportunity to benefit? If not – why not?
- Cluster – Please provide a map of the chosen business to benefit to ensure that properties are adjacent or close by in a given town to achieve a critical mass and greater impact

### **Digital Towns**

- Technical Viability - Please give details of the technical equipment to be used to achieve your scheme. Explain why you have chosen this specification. How have you minimised the likelihood of technical redundancy in the near future? What sort of Contractual arrangements do you plan to have in place for siting the equipment. How will you use the data gained from the equipment?
- Maintenance - Please describe what arrangements you will have in place to run, maintain, and upgrade the equipment. How will this be financed?

### **Active Travel**

- Need - Please explain how you know there is a proven need and demand for the scheme you are proposing in terms of infrastructure AND end client use. Why have you chosen this town and location above others.
- Strategic fit – explain how these Active Travel measures fit with wider development schemes, and are integrated with other investment activities in the area to create well-connected spaces and bolster and complement wider active travel provision supported by the Welsh Government Transport Department.
- Provide evidence that it sits alongside but does not duplicate existing plans and routes within the Active Travel Network Maps – which are funded by the Active Travel Fund. Ensure the connection is made with the Active Travel Leads of the relevant Local Authority.

### **Toilet Provision**

- Need - Please explain what provision is currently available within the town and the evidence available to show the clear identified strategic need for the proposed provision.
- Strategic fit – explain how these measures fit with wider development schemes, and are integrated with other investment activities in the area to create well-connected spaces.

- Give details of any partnership with the Local Authority in relation to the provision being proposed. Outline the ongoing maintenance and cleaning commitment.

### **Recreational Facilities**

- Need - Please explain what provision is currently available within the town and the evidence available to show the clear identified strategic need for the proposed provision.
- Strategic fit – explain how these measures fit with wider development schemes, and are integrated with other investment activities in the area to create well-connected spaces.
- Provide evidence that the proposals have been consulted upon locally.
- Give details of any partnership with the Local Authority in relation to the provision being proposed. Outline the ongoing maintenance commitment.

## Useful Links

### Property Improvements

Where grant funding is used to support the provision of housing units, schemes are required to comply with the Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR 21) “Creating Beautiful Homes and Places” published in July 2021, including meeting the “space requirements” as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B

[Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 \(gov.wales\)](#)

In terms of value for money, affordable housing schemes must have regard to Welsh Government “Acceptable Cost Guidelines”. Any scheme that does not meet either WDQR 21 or has a Scheme Cost Index (as defined in the guidelines) above 120% should be discussed with your Project Officer.

[https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf)

### Carbon impact

You are required to clearly demonstrate how you have considered the carbon emissions of your proposals and what action you have taken or will take to reduce or minimise them.

Where the Funding is used to support domestic energy efficiency projects, schemes must follow the Welsh Government’s energy company obligation (ECO) funding criteria.

[Low Carbon & Resource Efficient Construction Procurement | WRAP \(wrapcymru.org.uk\)](#)

[beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<https://www.claw.wales/assets/images/uploads/documents/RoutemaptonetzerocarbonbuildingsWales.pdf>

[Factsheet 1 overview of the Environment \(wales\) bill english \(gov.wales\)](#)

[The Nature Recovery Plan for Wales - Part 1: Our Strategy for Nature \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Local Places for Nature | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

[Local Nature Partnerships Cymru - Home \(lnp.cymru\)](#)

[Local Places for Nature - Keep Wales Tidy](#)

### Well-being of Future Generations Act

[Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

### Community Asset Transfer – Site Acquisitions

[Community Asset Transfer \(CAT\): guidance for applicants | GOV.WALES](#)

### Active Travel

[Home | DataMapWales \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Active Travel Act guidance | GOV.WALES](#)



## Town Centre Markets

<https://www.urbanfoundry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/urban-foundry-markets-guide-short.pdf>

## Meanwhile Uses

<https://www.urbanfoundry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/meanwhile-space-guide-short.pdf>

## Digital Towns

[Home | Trefi Smart Town \(smarttowns.cymru\)](#)

## Recreational Facilities

[Home - Children's Commissioner for Wales \(childcomwales.org.uk\)](#)

[Play Wales | Chwarae Cymru](#)

[Children and young people's plan | GOV.WALES](#)

[Play sufficiency toolkit | GOV.WALES](#)

[Wales: a play friendly country \(gov.wales\)](#)

## Business Plans

<https://businesswales.gov.wales>