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| **Social Enterprise Challenge Fund 2021/22** |
| **Application Guidelines** |

**Aim**

Continuing on from the success of previous West Dunbartonshire Social Enterprise Challenge Funds, West Dunbartonshire Council is launching a new Social Enterprise Challenge Fund 2021/22. This new fund will assist with the Council’s commitment to increasing both the quality and quantity of social enterprises in our area. This year, the Challenge Fund will provide one off competitive awards of up to £5,000 to help social enterprises grow and diversify within West Dunbartonshire.

In delivering the Scottish Government’s range of Social Entrepreneurs Funds, Firstport supports start-up and existing social enterprises that benefit people, communities and the environment. Firstport is working in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council and Working4Business partner organisations to help promote the Challenge Fund and raise awareness of the additional support and resources available to help enterprises that are likely to generate and sustain employment opportunities in West Dunbartonshire.

**Eligibility**

* Applications will be accepted from the following:
	+ Newly established Social Enterprises that are registered and can demonstrate a minimum of 6 months successful trading.
	+ An existing Social Enterprise with clear plans to diversify a product or service.
* The enterprise must be legally constituted and currently trading in West Dunbartonshire.
* It must employ no more than 50 employees worldwide.

**Assessment Criteria**

* The application must demonstrate a viable business model that delivers both economic and social outcomes.
* Funding is being provided for a Social Enterprise with a focus on Enterprise, therefore standalone projects will not be considered.
* The proposal must link with the enterprise’s broader strategy for growth including aspirations to create local employment.
* Costs identified in the application must be clearly evidenced as essential to the growth or diversification of the business.
* The proposal should clearly demonstrate the skills & expertise of the applicant as well as the success of the social enterprise to date. This is a competitive fund and will be assessed on clear demonstration as to how the fund will add growth value to the enterprise.
* If your application is shortlisted, you will be invited to pitch your proposal to an assessment panel who will make a final decision of funding.

**Eligible Costs**

Only costs essential to the growth or diversification of the enterprise are eligible. The award can be used to purchase capital equipment, assist with property improvements, cover marketing costs, or may contribute to the operational costs of the business as long as a clear case is provided.

**Notes**

* The proposal should clearly demonstrate the social impact that can be achieved as well as any activity that relates towards Net Zero ambitions The grant award cannot be used for business purchases made prior to any grant award letter date, or to cover existing ongoing costs.
* The Social Enterprise Challenge Fund will not provide duplicate funding. If any other funding has/is being applied for, it must be declared within the application.
* West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to sharing best practice and promoting examples of service delivery that meet the needs of our communities. The Council reserves the right to use details of funded projects for publicity of the programme and share information with any parties appointed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this funding.
* The funders may be required to make any application or project proposal for this funding available for public scrutiny under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Applicants should make the Council aware of any parts of the application or business proposal which could prejudice its interest if made public.

**Application Deadline is Friday 31st December 2021:**

Applications should be submitted to West Dunbartonshire Council’s Business Support Team at business.support@west-dunbarton.gov.uk (contact: 01389 737777) by no later than **Friday 31st December 2021.**

Applications will be shortlisted with the selected applicants invited to present their business case to a Panel. The Judging Panel will consist of **Working4Business** partner representatives who will decide which applications have been successful and will determine the level of grant to be awarded. Please note this Challenge Fund is competitive and not all applications will receive a grant award.

**Working4Business Partners include:**

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