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| **High Growth Start – Up Challenge Fund 2022/23** |
| **Application Guidelines** |

**Aim**

West Dunbartonshire Council recognises the important role new start businesses play in boosting innovation, creating jobs and generating growth within the local economy. As we move through a challenging economic climate, the Council has chosen to continue supporting the inclusive growth of start-up businesses that show high growth potential in West Dunbartonshire through the introduction of a **High Growth Start-Up Challenge Fund**.

The aim of the **High Growth Start-Up Challenge Fund** is to provide financial support to newly established, potentially high growth Small to Medium Enterprises across West Dunbartonshire to help drive innovation, implement growth plans more efficiently, create jobs and become more sustainable in the long term. The Challenge Fund will provide a one off competitive grant award of up to £5,000 to support high growth start-ups to grow and create employment within West Dunbartonshire.

**Eligibility**

* Applications will be accepted from businesses that will have been trading for less than 24 months as at the 28th October 2022.
* Businesses must be based within West Dunbartonshire.
* Businesses must employ no more than 50 employees worldwide.
* Businesses must have evidence of trading, pre start businesses will not be supported through this Challenge Fund.

**Assessment Criteria**

* The application must demonstrate how the challenge funding would assist the business to deliver clear economic outcomes including number of jobs created and increase in turnover.
* Funding is being provided for a commercially trading business with a focus on sustainable growth, therefore standalone projects will not be considered.
* The proposal must link with the business’s broader strategy for growth including plans 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 trading success of the business 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 business.
* 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.
* Shortlisted applications must not have any debt owed to the Council.

**Eligible Costs**

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

**Notes**

* The proposal should clearly demonstrate the economic 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 High Growth Start –Up Challenge Fund will not provide duplicate funding. If any other funding has/is being applied for to cover the same activity, 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 5pm Friday 28th October 2022:**

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 5pm Friday 28th October 2022.

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 therefore receive a grant award.

Our business support and Business Gateway services are part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, under the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 through the Operation “Business Competitiveness in Dunbartonshire”.  They provide support to help businesses grow.



**Working4Business Partners include:**

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