

## Epping Forest District Council –Essex Business Adaptation Funding Grants Policy

### 1 Essex Business Adaptation Funding (EBAF)

- 1.1 As a direct response to the existing challenges facing Essex businesses and the new measures introduced by Government, a fund has been created to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to adapt their premises and/or operations in order to continue to operate in a COVID-secure environment and generate income whilst legislation permits them to remain open and/or when restrictions are removed and they are able to reopen.
- 1.2 **Essex County Council (ECC)** is providing the Grant to **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)** to allow the EFDC to distribute payments from the EBAF to Eligible Businesses. EBAF Grants do not need to be paid back unless the claim was subsequently found to be fraudulent or was not used for the EBAF Grant purpose.
- 1.3 The EBAF is a £2,200,000 fund, enabling local authorities to provide EBAF Grants of either £500, £1,000 or £1,500 per business as set out in this Schedule 1. No Eligible Business may receive more than £1,500 in each round of funding. EFDC will distribute a portion of the EBAF as EBAF Grants to enable Eligible Businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their premises in order to assist them to continue to operate, keep staff in employment, improve their business, and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and customers in response to the current impact of COVID-19. EBAF Grants may also be used by Eligible Businesses to develop new operating practices and diversify businesses in order to capitalise on new opportunities such as new click & collect, takeaway or delivery services.
- 1.4 It is recognised that there is **insufficient funding** available to cover **all eligible businesses** at the full grant value. **Applications will therefore be processed in order of receipt with grants awarded until the funding available has been exhausted.**

### 2.0 Eligible Businesses

To qualify as an Eligible Business that may receive an EBAF Grant, the business must self-certify that **each** of the criteria set out below is met:

- 2.1 the business has
- (a) fixed property related costs; and
  - (b) was open and trading to **visiting members of the public** on 4 November; and
  - (c) either:
    - (i) been required to close OR
    - (ii) been severely impacted by the restrictions imposed;
- 1.2 the business has a place of business within the Council's administrative area;

- 2.3 the business qualifies as one of the following:
- (a) “Micro” as defined by s384A (and not excluded by s384B) of the Companies Act 2006; or
  - (b) “Small” as defined by s382 and 383 (and not excluded by s384) of the Companies Act 2006; or
  - (c) “Medium-Sized” as defined s465 and 466 (and not excluded by s467) of the Companies Act 2006;
- 2.4 the business has all up-to-date and relevant certificate(s) to show compliance with laws and regulations relevant to its trade (for example a food hygiene certificate, a licence to sell alcohol, permission to operate a pavement seating area, trading authority);
- 2.5 the business is ensuring, and will continue to ensure, adherence to all COVID regulations;
- 2.6 the EBAF Grant will not constitute Unlawful State Aid.

### **3 Businesses that are not eligible**

- 3.1 EBAF Grants shall not be made available to businesses that were in administration, insolvent, or where a strike-off notice had been made on or before the date that the business applied to receive an EBAF Grant.

### **4 Eligible expenditure**

- 4.1 EBAF funding is intended to defray costs incurred by Eligible Businesses as a direct result of making adaptations to their premises or diversifying their operations in response to the introduction of COVID restrictions in Essex.
- 4.2 The total of all EBAF Grants to an eligible business shall not be more than £1500 in each round of funding.
- 4.3 EFDC shall make EBAF Grants of £500 for items which are to:
- a) Promote that the business is operating and COVID-secure such as signage, stencils, leaflets, advertising, web / mobile technology.
  - b) Train, upskill, or reskill staff in courses directly connected to or associated with the adaptations or changes being made for businesses.
- 4.4 EFDC shall make EBAF Grants of £1000 for items which can include the items set out in 1.3 and also include:
- c) Improvements, adjustments, or expanding business premises to assist them in continuing to operate in response to COVID-secure practices and social distancing guidelines in response to the current impact of COVID-19 (i.e. sanitiser stations/units, protective screens, barriers, adaptations for serving food and drink etc)
- 4.5 EFDC shall make EBAF Grants of £1500 for items which can include the items set out in 1.3 and also include:

- d) Costs associated with establishing and running an online presence where the business **does not currently have an online presence** (ie digital technology platforms / licensing)
- e) Enabling the business to diversify operations in order to generate new or enhance existing income streams including the purchase of equipment to enable this. Examples of eligible items included but are not limited to:
  - Vehicles and personal transportation connected with providing delivery services such as cycles.
  - Access improvements/ amendments (i.e. motion sensor doors, queuing adaptations, one-way set-ups, improvised waiting areas etc)
  - Internal adaptations (i.e. relocation of existing fixtures / fittings / services etc. potentially to support revised utilisation of space to ensure social distancing or diversified uses of premises)
  - Exterior furniture, shelter, heating, lighting (i.e. tables, seating, benches, awning, canopy, patio-heaters, interventions to support appropriately spaced outdoor service etc).

## **5 Spend Exclusions:**

5.1 **ECC and EFDC** reserve the rights on the measures that will receive EBAF Grants, subject to available budget, demand and complexity.

5.2 The following costs are excluded from the scheme and the Recipient shall not make EBAF Grants, and the Eligible Business shall not use EBAF Grants, for:

- a) Equipment / adaptations which are not COVID-secure and do not follow the guidance and legislation set out by Her Majesty's Government.
- b) Acquisition of land / buildings either directly or indirectly connected to making businesses COVID-secure.
- c) Direct subsidy of customers purchases for example offering 50% off meals.
- d) Consultancy, design and statutory application fees.
- e) Professional fees (e.g. solicitor / surveyor / architect)
- f) Personal Protective Equipment, consumable items such as masks/gloves/sanitiser refill etc.
- g) Retrospective expenditure where works/items were already been obtained prior to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 when additional restrictions were introduced.
- h) Expenditure incurred 28 days after the Eligible Business receives notification that it has been successful in its application for an EBAF Grant.

