



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL



Economic Development Grant Scheme

Tourism

Economic Development Grant Scheme

Full details of the Council's Economic Development Grant Scheme can be found in the Scheme Guidelines, available on request from the Council or via the Council's website.

This flyer provides outline details of the Council's support for Tourism. All prospective applicants are required to discuss their project proposal with a member of staff in the Council's Economic Development Service, before submitting an application.

Please note that the Council's policy is that assistance cannot be given retrospectively. Therefore **you must submit a completed application before you commence work on the project, or commit to any of the costs involved.** Once your application is received, you may start work, although this will be at your own risk as there is no guarantee of assistance until you have a formal written decision from the Council.

Please note

Grants are paid out only on submission of evidence of actual expenditure.

Tourism

Looking after visitors to Orkney is key to encouraging repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations: projects which will help deliver a high level of customer service to visitors will also be eligible for support.

The significant permanent improvement and upgrading of facilities for visitors, including existing accommodation, will be considered eligible for assistance. No assistance will be provided towards the provision of additional bed spaces, except at the sole discretion of the Development and Infrastructure Committee: in such cases applicants would have to clearly demonstrate how their provision would differ significantly from that offered by existing accommodation providers in Orkney.



Available support

Upgrading within the VisitScotland Quality Assurance (QA) System

Assistance may be awarded to projects which will improve existing accommodation to achieve a VisitScotland 3 star grading or above: for example this could be from ungraded to 3 star, or from 3 star to 4 or 5 star. In these instances a grant of up to 30% of eligible costs, up to a maximum grant of £55,000, could be provided. Applicants will need to submit a VisitScotland QA Advisory Visit Report, providing details of the improvements required to achieve the higher grading, along with their application.

Additional conditions of any grant awarded under this strand would include:

- a requirement to maintain the target VisitScotland QA grading for the duration of the grant obligation period;
- to become and remain a member of Orkney Tourism Group;
- to commit to a programme of staff development;
- to demonstrate a commitment to responding to customer feedback; and
- to participate in industry-wide initiatives such as levels of occupancy surveys.

New Facilities at Existing Accommodation

Assistance may be awarded to projects which will provide new facilities (but not bars) at existing accommodation, which is already part of the VisitScotland QA system, but which will not in itself result in an increased VisitScotland QA grading. In this instance a grant of up to 30% of eligible costs, up to a maximum grant of £20,000, could be provided. Applicants will need to demonstrate how the additional facilities will result in increased occupancy levels, particularly in the out-of-season months.

Additional conditions of any grant awarded under this strand would include:

- a requirement to maintain at least the current VisitScotland QA grading for the duration of the grant obligation period;
- to become and remain a member of Orkney Tourism Group;
- to commit to a programme of staff development;
- to demonstrate a commitment to responding to customer feedback; and
- to participate in industry-wide initiatives such as occupancy surveys.

Provision of New or Upgraded Visitor Attractions/ Facilities

Assistance may be awarded to projects which will achieve a Visit Scotland grading of a minimum of 3 stars.

Applications for support towards the development of new or upgraded attractions or other facilities (but not bars or accommodation) primarily aimed at visitors will be considered on their own merits, with reference to the Council's principles and objectives as detailed at sections 2 and 3 in the full Economic Development Grant Scheme Guidelines. In such cases a grant of up to 30 % of eligible costs, up to a maximum grant of £55,000, could be provided.

At the Council's sole discretion, accommodation improvements and/or new visitor attractions on the North Isles or Flotta, Graemsay and Hoy may be considered on their own merits outwith the strands detailed above.

Skills Development

In most instances, support towards an individual business's tourism-related training costs as part of a development plan may be available via an application to the Council's Flexible Business Development Grant Scheme, however such costs could also be included within any of the strands detailed in this leaflet.

A sector-led project to develop customer service skills across the local industry would be likely to attract Council support.

Ineligible Project Costs

Projects which are considered to be repair and maintenance, or a direct replacement of existing assets, will not be considered eligible for grant assistance.



For further information please visit www.orkney.gov.uk

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