

# Vacant Property Feasibility Grant 2022/23

## Perth and Kinross Council - Application Guidance

### Background

Perth & Kinross Council is keen to encourage empty property to be brought back into use for economic and socially productive purposes. To encourage development, the council is able to provide grant funding towards the costs of undertaking a feasibility study reviewing the potential for conversion or repair of a vacant or underused commercial property for new commercial, community or residential uses.

Grants of up to £3,000 for individual projects and up to £5,000 for larger projects are available. All grants are offered on a 50% match funded basis.

### Who can apply?

Applications can be submitted by property owners and tenants (with at least 5 years unexpired term on their lease). This can include business owners, local or national constituted groups, charities and constituted community or voluntary organisations.

Applications can also be submitted by prospective owners or leaseholders. In this circumstance evidence should be provided of the owner's intent to sell / enter into lease with the applicant.

### What kind of projects are we looking to support?

Priority for support will be given to projects which demonstrate how they will enhance / contribute to:

- Local economy and business,
- Local placemaking and townscape, and
- Deliver wider community benefit.

A place-based review will be undertaken as part of the assessment. This means the need, demand and benefits of the proposed use relative to the project location will be considered as part of the assessment process.

Applicants should have an ability to complete the project within 6 months of grant award.

### How much would the grant be?

- For individual projects, grants of up to £3,000 (or 50% of project costs whichever is the lesser) are available.
- For larger projects, grants of up to £5,000 (or 50% of project costs whichever is the lesser) are available.

Where a larger project could have a significant impact to the fund aims, a larger award (of up to 50% of project costs) may be considered.

At least 50% match funding from the applicant is required. For example, an application for a grant of £3,000 will have an overall total project cost of at least £6,000. The whole project can be of any size and there is no defined maximum project cost.

Eligible costs include fees which are incurred in relation to the provision of the following professional services:

- Architect's design drawings, or options appraisal.
- Quantity surveyor's cost estimate and report.
- Structural engineer's report.
- Chartered surveyor's valuation advice, or development appraisal.
- Business planning for sustainable future use.
- Unrecoverable VAT can also be included in the claim (applicant will be required to provide confirmation that they are unable to recover VAT).

Costs must be based on fee proposals for the works which should be submitted along with the application form.

### **Eligibility**

- Property must be located within Perth and Kinross Geographic boundary.
- Property must be below the necessary standard and be unlikely to be brought back into use without the proposed repair or conversion works being undertaken.
- Property must have been vacant or underused for at least 6 months prior to the date of the application for grant.
- Retrospective applications for works already undertaken or started are not eligible and will not be considered.

### **Requirements**

- The feasibility study must be completed and grant claim invoices received within 6 months of the date of the offer. Perth & Kinross Council reserves the right to withdraw the offer of grant if the feasibility study is not completed within this timescale.
- If asked, applicants must be prepared to participate in publicity initiative with Perth & Kinross Council to promote this grant scheme

### **How to apply**

Applications for this fund will be considered on a rolling basis, this means that whilst the fund is open there are no set rounds or deadlines for application submissions.

Additional information and an application form can be obtained from the Vacant Property Team Planning & Regeneration, Perth & Kinross Council. Tel 01738 476561. Email - [vacantproperty@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:vacantproperty@pkc.gov.uk)

### **What happens to my application?**

During the application process Vacant Property Development staff within the Communities Service may be in touch with the applicant to discuss any additional questions and/or to request additional information or supporting documentation.

Please note, failing to provide the information required in the application process may delay the process or render your application invalid.

### **How will I know if my application has been successful?**

If successful, we shall firstly confirm by email that your application for a grant has been approved.

Will then issue a formal offer of grant setting out the specific terms and conditions on which the grant is being provided and the circumstances in which it may require to be repaid. Acceptance of the grant offer will form a legally binding contract and we strongly recommend that you take your own independent legal advice in connection with this.

If unsuccessful the Council will contact the applicant with reasons for declining the application.

### **Undertaking your project**

Your project can only begin to be implemented (i.e. instructing consultants to proceed) once:

1. You have formally accepted the grant offer
2. Any other pre-payment obligations have been met

The feasibility study must be completed and grant claim invoices received within 6 months of the date of the offer.

### **How do I claim the Vacant Property Feasibility Grant?**

Prior to the grant being released, the Council must be satisfied that the funded work has been completed and applicants have met all of the conditions set out in the formal offer.

The grant can then be claimed by:

1. Completing a claim form invoice (template can be provided)
2. Providing evidence of the works being completed (such as copies of drawings or reports)
3. Providing copies of invoices (with payment based on up to 50% of each invoice, depending on the overall project cost)
4. Providing evidence that these invoices have been paid (such as a copy of the applicant's bank statement).

The Council will aim to transfer the grant funds direct to the bank account provided in the original application within 10 working days.

### **Other Funding**

Other funding may be available for the repair of historic buildings located within the Perth Central and Kinnoull Conservation Areas through Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust. Further information and details of qualifying criteria should be made directly to Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust at [pkht@pkc.cov.uk](mailto:pkht@pkc.cov.uk) or telephone 01738 477082.

Other funding may be available for the repair and conversion of long-term unused properties located within Perth and Kinross through Perth and Kinross Council's Empty Homes

Initiative. Further information and details of grant criteria can be found on our [Empty homes initiative - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\) page](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/empty-homes-initiative).

**Please Note -**

- Each applicant will only be able to apply for one grant per property from the Vacant Property Feasibility Grant.
- Property owners will be required to provide proof of title to the property.
- Tenants will be required to provide a copy of their lease together with their landlord's outline consent to the proposed alterations.
- Prospective owners or leaseholders will be required to provide proof of owner's intent to sell / enter lease.
- Any offer will be made subject to the general conditions set out in this Guidance Document and any other specific conditions included within the letter of offer.
- Applicants shall have to instruct their own solicitor and pay their own legal fees and outlays.
- Applicant will be required to provide confirmation of VAT status if seeking to claim unrecoverable VAT.
- The grant is given on the basis that Perth & Kinross Council shall only be responsible for paying 50% of the fees incurred up to a maximum of £3,000 and on the understanding that they will under no circumstances be responsible for the remainder of the fee in the event of non-payment by the applicant.