Fermanagh & Omagh
Local Economic
Partnership

Fermanagh and Omagh Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Business Space Development Fund - Call for Information Guidance Notes

About the Fund

The **Local Economic Partnership (LEP) - Business Space Development Fund,** is financed by the Department for the Economy (DfE) through the Regional Balance Fund. The initiative has been identified as a priority within the Fermanagh and Omagh LEP Action Plan and aims to support projects that bring vacant, derelict or underused land and buildings into productive economic use or increase the capacity and quality of existing commercial workspace within the district.

In support of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is conducting a scoping exercise to help the Council identify potential projects, understand their stage of development and determine the type of support required to enable successful delivery.

Purpose of this Scoping Exercise

This is **not an application for funding and does not create any entitlement to financial assistance**. The information provided will be used to inform the business case development for the fund.

Aim of the Fund

The Fund aims to increase the supply of suitable, high-quality commercial workspace across the district so that new and existing businesses can establish, grow, improve productivity and create good jobs within the district. Projects supported must respond to evidenced business demand and **deliver an economic benefit beyond the private interests of the applicant**.

Projects should contribute to the priorities in the Department for the Economy's Sub-regional Economic Plan: creating good jobs; increasing productivity; addressing regional balance; and supporting decarbonisation.

The Council will use the information submitted to:

- identify projects capable of creating new business space or improving existing space;
- assess demand, feasibility, viability, deliverability and project status;
- understand whether pre-development support or capital investment is required;
- assess the applicant's capacity to deliver and, where relevant, sustainably operate the workspace; and

- identify projects that can deliver defined outputs **by 31 December 2028**.

Funding Available

Through the LEP Action Plan, a total of up to **£1,125,000** is allocated across the district for Category 1 and Category 2 activity. **The final intervention rate and the required applicant contribution remain subject to confirmation.**

Types of Support

Category 1 – Pre-development and Technical Assistance

Category 1 may support proportionate early-stage work needed to establish whether a project is feasible, viable and deliverable. Eligible activity may include feasibility or market-demand studies, technical design, specialist surveys, environmental assessment and preparation of a business case.

Category 2 – Capital Development

Category 2 may provide capital assistance to refurbish, redevelop or extend existing premises, or to create new commercial workspace. The resulting space must primarily support businesses that trade, or have credible potential to trade, outside Northern Ireland.

Projects must deliver economic benefits beyond the private interests of the applicant. It is not expected that Category 1 support will guarantee progression to Category 2 – to successfully draw down the funding all projects must be completed and by 31 December 2028.

Who Can Submit information?

This scoping exercise is intended for **individuals, businesses, organisations and partnerships, public sector bodies** that are actively considering the development, expansion or improvement of commercial workspace within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area.

The Council is interested in projects that have a realistic prospect of delivery (i.e. applicants will have the legal interest, organisational capability and financial capacity required to progress the project) and align with the objectives of the LEP Action Plan Business Space Development Fund, namely providing modern, fit-for-purpose workspace that enables businesses to expand operations, increase output and collaborate on innovation.

Respondents should have a genuine interest in progressing the proposed project and be able to provide information on its current stage of development, legal and statutory requirements and economic benefits.

Fermanagh & Omagh
Local Economic
Partnership

Proposed Projects must:

- relate to property or land located within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area;
- detail the need for the proposed project;
- explain how the project will support tradeable businesses, business growth, productivity and good jobs;
- set out the economic benefit to the district and show why public support is necessary and proportionate;
- confirm the project can be completed by 31 December 2028;
- provide an initial estimate of costs, the proposed funding package and any funding already secured; and
- confirm the applicant's capacity to deliver and, where applicable, manage the completed workspace.

Additional Category 2 requirements:

- confirm ownership of the property or land or provide details of the arrangements in place to secure access and control of the site. Where the property is leased, state the remaining lease term. The minimum acceptable lease term will be confirmed before the funding call opens
- confirm the status of planning permission and any other required approvals or consents
- describe the condition and current use of the site or building;
- specify the amount of new or improved commercial floorspace to be delivered; and
- confirm that construction can be completed and the property made ready for occupation by 31 December 2028.

How the Council Will Use This Information

The Council will review all submissions to better understand the scale of demand for commercial workspace development, the status of potential projects, and the support required to bring them forward. The information gathered will be used to inform the development of the Business Space Development Fund.

All submissions will be reviewed to consider:

- the strategic fit with the Fund's aim and economic priorities;
- the strength of evidence of business demand and market interest;
- the scale and quality of the expected economic benefits;
- project status, including site control, design, approvals, costs and funding;

Fermanagh & Omagh
Local Economic
Partnership

- what can be completed by 31 December 2028;
- the applicant's capability and capacity; and
- whether public support appears necessary, proportionate and capable of delivering value for money.

Respondents may be contacted to provide further information or clarification where required.

This exercise is not an application for funding and does not create any entitlement to financial assistance. Submission of information does not guarantee that funding will be made available to a project, nor does it provide any preferential access to future funding opportunities. Should a funding programme be established, all interested applicants will be required to participate in the formal application and assessment process in place at that time.

How to Respond

Complete the online form, answering every question and submit **no later than 12 noon, Tuesday 8th December.**

What information is required within the online form:

Section	Information required
1. Applicant details	Provide: • Organisation name • Legal status (e.g. company, sole trader etc) • Main contact person • Email address • Telephone number
2. Project location	Provide the full address, including postcode, of the property or land where the proposed project will take place.
3.Funding Category	**Which type of support would be most relevant to your project?** • Category 1 • Category 2
4. Project Overview	**Tell us about your proposed project.** Please provide a brief overview of the project, including: • The property or site involved

	• What you are proposing to do • Why the project is needed • What stage the project has reached • The type of support that would help move the project forward If applying for **Category 1**, please describe the feasibility, technical, design or development work you wish to undertake. If applying for **Category 2**, please describe the physical development works you intend to deliver and the type of workspace that will be created.
5. Property Ownership or Control	**What is your relationship to the property or site?** Please confirm: • Whether you own the property or site • Whether you hold a lease • If leased, the length of lease remaining • Whether the property owner has agreed to the proposed project (where applicable)
6. Evidence of Need and Demand	**What evidence is there that additional business workspace is needed?** Please tell us about any demand you are aware of for the proposed development. This may include: • Business enquiries • Expressions of interest from potential occupiers • High occupancy levels in existing premises • Lack of suitable workspace in the area • Market research • Business growth or expansion plans
7. Economic benefits	**What benefits could the project deliver if it proceeds?** Please provide an indication of the economic, social or environmental benefits the project could generate. Where possible, include estimated figures. **Category 1** applicants could describe anticipated benefits if the project progresses to delivery.

	Category 2 applicants could describe benefits expected from the completed development.
8. Sustainability and Decarbonisation	**How could the project contribute to sustainability and decarbonisation?** Please outline any environmental or sustainability measures that are being considered or could be incorporated into the project. This may include: • Renewable energy technologies • Energy-efficient building design • Building refurbishment and retrofit measures • Reduced energy consumption • Electric vehicle charging infrastructure • Walking and cycling facilities • Biodiversity enhancements • Environmental certifications or standards Please provide details of any anticipated environmental benefits where known.
9. Project status	**What is the current stage of the project?** Please summarise: • Work completed to date • Key activities currently underway • Outstanding actions required before project completion • Any anticipated challenges or dependencies Please select one: **Planning Permission Status** | • Approved – provide reference number | • Submitted and awaiting a decision (provide reference number) | • Required but not yet submitted • Not required |

	Please select one: **Building Control status** • Approved (provide reference number) • Submitted and awaiting a decision (provide reference number) • Not applicable
10. Project Costs and Funding	**What are the estimated costs of the proposed project and how will it be funded?** Please provide your current best estimate of project costs and funding requirements. Estimates are acceptable at this stage and do not need to be supported by formal quotations. Information provided should relate only to the proposed project described in this form and should not include wider business costs or unrelated investments or activities.

Total cost of your proposed project	£
How was this estimate prepared: (e.g. professional advice, feasibility study, quantity surveyor estimate, supplier or contractor quote, benchmark costs, other reasonable assumptions, please state)	
Other Funding Secured or Being Sought:	£
Please identify the source(s) of funding and status (secured, applied for, or proposed).	
Applicant Contribution / Match Funding:	£
Please explain how the project will be match funded	
Funding Requirement from the Business Space Development Fund:	£

Fermanagh & Omagh
Local Economic
Partnership

11. Delivery capability	**Please provide a brief overview of any relevant experience you or your organisation has in delivering similar projects.** This could include: • Commercial property development or refurbishment • Construction or capital projects • Technical, feasibility or design studies • Management of business, industrial or commercial workspace *This information will help us understand the level of support that may be required by potential applicants.*
12. Risks and dependencies	**What factors could affect the successful delivery of the project?** Please identify any known risks, constraints or dependencies and actions required to deliver the project by 31 December 2028.
13. Declaration	Please confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, the information provided in this submission is accurate at the time of completion and reflects the current understanding of the proposed project. I understand that this exercise is being undertaken to inform the development of a Business Space Development Fund business case and that submission of this information does not constitute an application for funding. I confirm that I am authorised to submit this information on behalf of the organisation, where applicable.