

Grant Application Form

Early Years Entitlements Expansion

Reference No:

Procurement Team

The Portal

Ellesmere Port

CH65 0BA

**CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL**

**GRANT FUNDING REQUEST**

**SUMMARY INSTRUCTIONS AND DETAILS OF GRANT**

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| --- | --- |
| **ITEM** | **CONTRACT DETAILS** |
| Grant Description: | Early Years Entitlement Expansion |
| Insurance Requirements: | **Public Liability £10m**  **Employers Liability £10m** |
| Funding Period: | **1 Year** |
| Responsible Officer: | Bo White |
| Submission instructions: | Grant funding applications must be made using this form via [ey.providers@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:ey.providers@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) with  EY Entitlement Expansion Grant Funding Application as the subject.  Supporting documentation to be in one zipped file |
| Date/time for application return: | **10 am 21st June 2024**  Any requests received after this time will be accepted at the discretion of the Council. |
| Last date/time for queries or clarifications | Queries or requests for clarification to be submitted to ey.providers.gov.uk by no later than: see below |

**Grant Allocation Timetable**

This timetable is indicative only. The Council reserves the right to change it at its discretion.

| **Stage** | **Date(s)/time** |
| --- | --- |
| Issue of Grant Application Form | **Wc 20th May 2024** |
| Submission Deadline | **21st June 2024** |
| Last date for clarification questions | **17th June 2024** |
| Evaluation and Governance | **June/July 2024** |
| Clarification meetings (if required) | **TBC** |
| Expected date of Award | **July/August 2024** |
| Contract Start | **September 2024** |

**Summary of documents to be returned**

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| --- | --- |
| Grant Application Form | Bidder to Complete |
| Project Plan and Cashflow forecast | For information only |
| Admissions policy and funded offer for parents for all age groups/early years entitlements including any additional charges and a sample invoice | For information only |
| Evidence of building/site ownership or lease arrangement and approval to undertake alterations. | For information only |
| Quotes | For information only |

**Background**

In the Government’s Spring Budget 2023, the Chancellor announced transformative reforms to childcare, including:

* The introduction of 30 hours of free childcare for children over the age of nine months. This will be introduced in phases with qualifying working parents of 2- year-olds able to access 15 hours a week from April 2024, qualifying working parents of children aged 9-months up to 3-years-olds able to access 15 hours a week from September 2024, and qualifying working parents from 9-months to 3- years-olds able to access 30 hours a week from September 2025.
* Investing £289 million in start-up funding to increase the supply of wraparound care in primary schools – tackling the barriers to working caused by limited availability of wraparound care. This programme will enable providers (including schools) and Councils to test flexible ways of providing childcare and gather evidence of what works.

Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires local Councils, so far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for children up to 14 years old (or older if the child is disabled) available in their area to enable parents to work or train for work. Councils are required to secure free provision for children eligible for the early years’ entitlements. The amendments to the Childcare ((Free of Charge for Working Parents) (England) Regulations 2022 places a duty on local councils to provide free early years entitlements places for children eligible for the extended 30-hours entitlement from the term after they reach the age of 9-months age eligible until the child starts school. The grant funding is intended to support the childcare sector to provide the additional places required as a result of these reforms in recognition that access to capital can limit providers ability to create additional capacity in areas of need.

All projects must support the Council’s statutory duty of sufficiency and evidence how new places will be created and made available to families and also contribute to the delivery of the 6 missions of the Council Plan through achievement of the following outcomes:

* Increased number of early years and childcare places
* Increased take up of early years entitlement places and wraparound childcare provision
* Children have improved educational attainment
* Parents are able to return to work, increase their working ours or study
* Increase sustainability of local childcare businesses.

There is a formal application process to ensure fairness and to support local delivery of the childcare expansion programme.

**Sufficiency of childcare places in Cheshire West**

By September 2025 when 30 hours funded childcare will be available for eligible working families with children aged 9 months until age 4 we estimate that there will be a need for additional places for 2 year olds and under 2 year olds predominantly in the boroughs Ellesmere Port and Winsford localities in order to meet maximum estimated demand. The estimated number of places required is shown in the table below.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Locality | Estimated need for  Under 2-year-old  30 hour places | Estimated need for  2-year-old  30 hour places |
| Ellesmere Port | 210 | 60 |
| Winsford | 130 | 30 |

Please note that the estimated number of additional places required has been modelled using the current operating capacity reported by providers and the current take up rates for the 3- and 4-year-old extended entitlement applied to the eligible population for these age groups, therefore demand is likely to be overestimated.

The Childrens Centre footprints and wards within them that these additional places are likely to be require are provided below, we will therefore be prioritising applications from providers in these areas.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Locality | Children Centre Footprint | Wards |
| Ellesmere Port | Woodlands | Whitby Park, Strawberry, Ledsham & Manor |
| Portside | Westminster, Central & Grange |
| Stanlaw Abbey | Wolverham, Whitby Park, Whitby Groves, Central & Grange |
| Parklands | Ledsham & Manor, Sutton Villages |
| Neston | Neston, Little Neston, Parkgate |
| Winsford | Over | Winsford Over & Verdin, Winsford Dene, Winsford Swanlow |
| Wharton | Winsford Gravel, Winsford Wharton, Davenham Moulton & Kingsmead |
| Greenfields | Winsford Over & Verdin, Tarporley |

Funding will be prioritised for the expansion of places in the areas of need identified above. However, consideration will also be given to applications for funding where providers are able to evidence a need for places in their setting subject to sufficiency in the local area.

**Purpose of the grant**

The purpose of the funding is to ensure that additional early years and childcare places can be created so that families are able to access quality, local provision. This funding is intended to support the expansion of childcare places by enabling providers to expand and adapt their facilities where places are required. The Department for Education is providing £100m of capital funding to support local councils in delivering the expansion of the 30-hours early years entitlement for working families and of wraparound provision in primary schools. Cheshire West and Chester Council has been allocated £676,000 across both programmes in support of this. In accordance with the programme guidance approximately £540,000 (80%) of the capital funding allocation has been allocated to the expansion of the Early Years Entitlements.

The capital funding must be spent on projects that aim to increase the number of places on the providers registration to help ensure sufficient places for children taking up an early years place through the expanded 30-hours entitlement for qualifying working parents (from the term following the child reaching 9-months to the term in which they turn 3-years-old).

This funding is to be spent in ways that best match the needs of the borough, focusing on projects that will increase the physical capacity of early years and wraparound provision in Cheshire West and Chester where demand is likely to exceed existing supply. New places created must be accessible to all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and therefore projects should also include the adaptation or improvement of facilities to ensure places are available to children with a wide range of needs.

All successful applicants will be required to complete grant monitoring in order to ensure that the monies are used in an appropriate manner, as set out in the application guidance and funding agreement. Termly monitoring reports will be required that will include but not limited to a project progress update e.g. how the grant funding was used and how much, the number of additional places created and how many families are accessing these places.

A template funding agreement is annexed to this application detailing standard terms and conditions of funding which will be populated with the details from successful applications.

**What can the funding be used for?**

All projects will need to demonstrate that they aim to increase the number of places (on their Ofsted registration if applicable) and create additional places that are not currently available. Projects generally will include increasing available floor space.

Examples of appropriate early years projects:

* Projects that enable and/or increase access to childcare places for eligible children;
* Projects that adapt, re-model or improve existing childcare places to make them suitable for a wider range of needs;
* Central capital works required to enable delivery of the entitlement.

These could be achieved through:

* Expansion of existing childcare provision, including expanding existing provision to a different or additional site;
* Remodelling of existing provision to create additional capacity;
* Adaptations to ensure facilities are welcoming and inclusive:
* Creation of new childcare places, whether via the creation of new settings, or expanding provision in existing providers.

Applicants are expected to evidence their own commitment, and a detailed project plan with cost estimates and timelines for the project along with all necessary consents and lease agreements having been obtained in advance of submitting an application for funding.

**What this funding can not be used for**

This grant funding is not intended for:

* Routine maintenance or refurbishment of premises;
* Capital works to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate, which should continue to be covered by Devolved Formula Capital funding (DFC)
* the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) or School Condition Allocations (SCA);
* Childcare providers not providing Early Years entitlements or wraparound care.
* Loan repayments
* Works undertaken, goods or services received prior to contract award.

The funding is provided for **capital purposes only** and cannot be used for revenue expenditure of any kind, such as training or staff costs, resources/assets that do not meet the definition of capital expenditure given above (such as toys, books, clothing), etc.

Grants cannot be paid retrospectively therefore any work commenced prior to acceptance of the grant offer will not be eligible for funding.

**Who can apply for the funding?**

The funding is open to providers from the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sector across Cheshire West and Chester, where these are offering the early years entitlements.

New providers can apply however priority will be given to the expansion of existing providers.

Existing early years providers in Cheshire West and Chester must have completed their termly sufficiency surveys to be eligible to apply and must not be in breach of any other contract held with the Council.

Eligible providers must be registered with Ofsted (or, in the case of childminders, with Ofsted or a Childminder Agency), and must be delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS).

This includes, but is not limited to:

* Private, Voluntary and Independent Providers:
* Private group-based providers, registered with Ofsted (e.g., pre-schools and day nurseries);
* Voluntary group-based providers, registered with Ofsted (including community groups, charities, churches, or religious groups);
* Independent providers offering the early years entitlements.
* State-funded schools:
* Local authority maintained primary, infant, and junior schools (including special schools) offering early years entitlements and/or wraparound provision;
* Primary, infant, or junior academies or free schools (including special schools) offering early years entitlements and/or wraparound provision.
* Childminders registered with Ofsted or a Childminder Agency.

Council’s are expected to consider the quality of provision before agreeing to provide capital funding to support expansion and are encouraged to prioritise projects in settings rated **outstanding** or **good** by Ofsted where applicable.

**Funding values**

Each application will be considered on a per place amount of approx. £1,000 per 30-hour place. This amount is not fixed and may vary to cover the costs required by the project e.g. the establishment of places for children with complex needs.

Applications can be a minimum of £5,000 up to a maximum of £50,000.

Given the fixed funding allocation received by the Council and the aim to benefit as many organisations as possible, the Council cannot guarantee to fund the maximum amount applied for; therefore organisations must ensure that they have procedures in place to cover the balance of funding required. The Council will not pay a grant unless the organisation can demonstrate that the balance of funding is available.

**Grant conditions**

All grants will be subject to a grant agreement.

All conditions under which the grant has been awarded, including any Special Conditions, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the organisation being asked to repay the grant monies.

Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding.

Grants are valid for a period set out in the grant agreement and will be paid in advance of completion of the project. (70% on completion of the grant agreement and 30% on receipt of the first monitoring return.)

Organisations must provide monitoring information to evidence how the grant money has been spent in line with the original application for which it was awarded. Termly monitoring reports will be required that will include but not limited to a project progress update e.g. how the grant funding was used and how much, the number of additional places created and how many families are accessing these places.

If the project involves work on land or a building, including refurbishment, the applicant must own the freehold of the land or building, or hold a lease and landlord approval that cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least 5 years.

The Council may ask for confirmation that planning permission is not required, or that it is required and has been granted. If planning permission is required, planning permission must be approved before the grant is paid.

Expenditure must not be incurred on the project prior to the grant decision being given.

Organisations must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used.

The grant must only be used for the purposes stated in the application form, should it be spent in any other way, without the approval of the Council, the organisation may be asked to return some or all of the monies paid.

If the project is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, some or all of the grant may be recovered by the Council.

Any improvements to buildings, including alterations and refurbishments which are totally or partially funded by the Early Years Entitlement Expansion Capital Grant are subject to an Asset Owning Period of 5 years for grants received up to £25,000 rising to 10 years for grants above £25,000. This is the period that the asset is required to remain in use for the purpose for which it is funded and should not be disposed of or removed from the prescribed service without the prior written consent of the Council. If the Council grants consent to the disposal, such consent may be subject to satisfaction of certain conditions, including repayment of part or all of the Funding by the Grant Recipient.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications for grant funding must be made via the Council’s grant application form. Applications must be completed in full along with any requested supporting documentation specified on the application form together in one zipped file.

Please note:

* Application should be made for a single provision/delivery location, separate applications can be submitted for providers operating from different sites.
* Incomplete applications will not be considered.
* Only information from the application form and the required supporting documents requested can be used to make decisions. Applicants may be contacted if there are any queries requiring further information.
* Applications will only be accepted in accordance with the completion date specified above and will not be invited at any other times.

Applications will be score against the below criteria:

* **Pass / Fail -** Unless otherwise noted, ANY negative response, or no response at all, will be deemed as a fail, and the entire grant funding application will be rejected.
* **For Information -** Information given will not be scored.
* **Scored & Weighted (usually shown as a %) -** Section is scored and weighted; this will form the basis on determining which providers are successful. The evaluation panel will apply the scoring principles below and apply the appropriate % weighting. Weighted scores will be calculated by multiplying the score for each quality criteria by its weighting. The weighted scores will be totalled for each application. Scores are given based on the principles in the table below.

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| Score | Standard |
| 4 | Excellent – meets our requirements and the bidder has demonstrated positive outcomes from previous work and provides over and above expectations |
| 3 | Good – meets our requirements and the bidder has demonstrated positive outcomes from previous work |
| 2 | Acceptable – meets our requirements, all the question is answered |
| 1 | Poor, only part of the question is answered and there are gaps, or the response doesn’t fully meet our requirements |
| 0 | Not answered |

During the evaluation period, the Council reserves the right to seek clarification in writing or by means of a clarification meeting from any or all of the bidders, to assist it in its consideration of the grant applications.

There is no obligation on the Council to fund any applications made.

**Scoring Summary**

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| **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| **Section 1 – Organisation Details** | For information |
| **Section 2 - Financial Information** | Potential Pass / Fail |
| **Section 3 - Insurance** | Pass / Fail |
| **Section 4 – Data Protection and ICT Security** | For Information |
| **Section 5 – Safeguarding** | Pass / Fail |
| **Section 6 – The Project** | 100% |
| **Section 7 - Funding** | For Information |
| **Declaration** | Pass / Fail |

**GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

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| **Section 1: Applicant Organisation Details** | |
| Name of provider (as per Ofsted): |  |
| Ofsted registration number: |  |
| Date of last inspection and judgement: |  |
| Setting address: |  |
| Contact name for enquiries about this grant funding application: |  |
| Job Title: |  |
| Company name: |  |
| Company Address:  Post Code: |  |
| Telephone number: |  |
| E-mail address: |  |
| Company Registration number (if this applies): |  |
| Registered address if different from the above: |  |
| VAT Registration number: |  |

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| **Section 2: Financial Information (potential pass/ fail)** | | | | |
| **2.1** | Please Provide your organisations gross profit, net profit, and turnover for the last two financial years | | |  |
| Year: |  |  |
| Gross Profit: |  |  |
| Net Profit: |  |  |
| Turnover: |  |  |
| **2.2** | Where this cannot be provided, a statement of the organisation’s cash flow forecast for the current year and a bank letter outlining the current cash and credit facility position will be required. | | |  |
|  | | |
| **2.3** | **Financial viability may be checked via an independent agency currently Creditsafe.**  **Providers must usually have a risk indicator of 30 or above (Moderate Risk) and a positive net worth to pass this section.**  **Depending on the nature and risk of the funding, potential providers with a risk indicator below 50 or with a minus net worth, may be contacted to explain this rating and provide reasons why they should be taken forward – this may result in bidders being excluded** | | |  |

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| **Section 3: Insurance (Pass / Fail)** | | | |
| **No.** | **Question** | | **Marks Allocated** |
| **3.1** | Please provide confirmation that you have or, if successful, will buy the following minimum levels of insurance: | | Pass/Fail |
| **i)** | Public liability: minimum value £10 million |  |
| **ii)** | Employers’ liability: minimum value £10 million |  |
| **If your Grant Application is successful, you may be required as part of the Cheshire West and Chester Council due diligence process to produce valid insurance certificates for your organisation which must provide the above levels of cover. Any additional costs for these levels of insurance provision MUST be included in your bid costs for the contract duration.** | | | |

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| **Section 4****: Data Protection and ICT Security (Information only)**  **Bidder responses to these ICO links and questions are not pass/fail. They will be reviewed by the Council and used to target any further guidance and help that a winning bidder may require prior to contract start.** | |
| **4.1** | Are you registered with the ICO?  **Yes/No**  What is your ICO Registration of Fee Payers Number? |

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| **Section 5****: Safeguarding (Pass/Fail)**  **If in the opinion of the Council the answers in this section are sufficiently poor as to cast serious doubt on a Bidder’s ability to manage Safeguarding within their organisation, then they may be excluded.** | |
| **5.1** | Does your organisation have a Safeguarding Policy covering the following criteria?   * Continuous Professional development, training (via Cheshire West Safeguarding Childrens Partnership * supervision arrangements * whistleblowing (LADO) * information handling/data protection.   **Yes / No**  **If “no” then please explain how you manage safeguarding within your organisation in relation to the above criteria.**  **Please provide a copy.** |
| **5.2** | Do you hold a single central record relating to safer recruitment processes including but not limited to employment history, qualifications, references, ID confirmation, DBS checks (and that you hold a policy on recruiting people who return an adverse DBS check)?  Yes / No  **If “no” then explain how you ensure staff are recruited safely.**  **Please include relevant recruitment policies** |
| **5.3** | Provide details of your named Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for safeguarding within the organisation?  **If you have not got a responsible Designated Safeguarding Lead, then explain why not** |

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| **Section 6: The Project (Scored and Weighted)**  **Please describe below how your proposed project will meet the evaluation criteria and desired outcomes of the funding** | | |
| **No.** | **Question** | **Weight** |
| **6.1** | **How will you develop a service which meets the requirements of the Early Years Entitlements expansion?**  Please include:   * Total number of childcare places to be registered (total of current and new places) * Breakdown of places available by age. * Number of current and additional **funded** places to be offered. * Number of additional non-funded places to be offered. * How will funded places be offered. (**Please include: copy of admissions policy and funded offer for parents for all age groups/early years entitlements including any additional charges and a sample invoice**) * Evidence of current and plans to enhance inclusive practice supporting vulnerable groups,   **Maximum word count 1000** | 20% |
| Response: | | |
| **6.2** | **Mobilisation – capital project**  Provide a plan (including Gantt chart with key dates) that details how the capital project will be mobilised and the steps undertaken to prepare for this application.  \*Please note that funding must be spent within one year of award  Please include:   * Details of building (for expansion of existing buildings) * Details of site (for new buildings including mobile units) * Building and site ownership/lease arrangements and agreements in place/approval to undertake alterations including those on school sites. * Details of proposed building work * Consideration of inclusive access * Planning requirements * Quotes (**Dated within the last 6 months, preferred contractor**) * Experience of management of building projects and/or expert professional support that will be required. * Risk and mitigation.   **Maximum word count 1000** | 16% |
| Response: | | |
| **6.3** | **Mobilisation – service delivery**  Provide a plan (including Gantt chart with dates) that details how service delivery will be mobilised and the timescales for full delivery including identification of risks and mitigation.  Where applicable, please include:   * Any research that demonstrates demand for places * Service structure * Staff recruitment * Marketing * Installation of equipment and resources * Ofsted registration * Risk and mitigation   **Maximum word count 1000** | 16% |
| Response: | | |
| **6.4** | **Experience of providing childcare**  Provide details of previous experience of delivering Early Years education and/or childcare provision including knowledge of the necessary regulatory requirements.  \*New providers who are unable to evidence previous experience may be offered a visit to provide detailed information about their ability to meet the requirements of the Early Years Entitlements.  Please include:   * Previous experience of delivering quality provision including details of how you will continue to maintain or improve the quality of provision at your setting. **For new providers this may be evaluated through a visit.** * Qualifications and training. * Previous Ofsted outcomes where available. * Experience of delivering the EYFS for children (from birth to 5 years) * Key person system and ratios. * Safeguarding and risk assessment   **Word Count 1000** | 16% |
| Response: | | |
| **6.5** | **Core values**  Please tell us about the core values of your organisation and how you would work with partners within the local community to ensure that the service meets the needs and safety of local children and their families.   * Parental engagement/partnership with parents * Inclusion and Diversity * SEND 0-25 Code of Practice 2014 * Equality Act 2010 * Partnership working * Early Years Pupil Premium * Communication and engagement with relevant stakeholders.   **Word Count 1000** | 16% |
| Response: | | |
| **6.6** | **Workforce**  Please provide your intended staffing structure and detail how you would recruit and retain, induct, and provide ongoing support to your workforce to enable them to provide quality early years education and childcare provision.  Please provide:   * Staffing structure * Ratios * Safer recruitment and DBS * Staff qualifications (incl. appropriate first aid and safeguarding (Cheshire West Childrens Safeguarding Partnership) training) * Induction policies and procedures (including for committee members, owners and trustees as appropriate) * Ongoing staff training and commitment to CPD (including bank staff, volunteers and apprentices as appropriate) * Ongoing staff supervision (including wellbeing, workload, professional development, Key person Group, concerns SEND/safeguarding, practice and assessment)   **Word Count 1000** | 20% |
| Response: | | |

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| **Section 7: Funding** |
| * How much capital funding are you applying for? * What will this be spent on? * Any funding already in place to support the project?   Each application will be considered on a per place amount of approx. £1,000. This amount is not fixed and may vary to cover the costs required by the project e.g. the establishment of places for children with complex needs.  Where applicable costs should correspond to the estimate or quote from your preferred provider. |
| Response: |

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| **Declaration**  **This undertaking is to be signed by a Partner, Director or authorised representative i.e., in their name on behalf of the Organisation.**  **I/We understand and agree to the following:**   * + - 1. The information given in this application and in any other documentation that supports this application is true to the best of my knowledge.       2. If funding is received, that information provided in the application for is material to a funding agreement which I/we will be required to sign to govern the use of the grant.       3. I/We have submitted the Provider Termly Sufficiency Survey as requested by the Early Years Team. (If this has not been returned you will not be eligible to apply at this time)       4. If funding is received it will only be used for the purposes stated in this application, and this organisation will take reasonable precautions to ensure that grant monies received will not be misused or misappropriated in any way.       5. I/We accept that any funding that cannot be evidenced as being spent on items that were agreed as part of the grant application must be returned to Cheshire West and Chester Council       6. If I/we do not spend the grant on this service we will promptly return the unspent amount to the Council when requested, failure to do so will mean access to future grants will be denied.       7. I/we understand that we may not receive all of the funding requested in this application.       8. I/we understand that the Council is not liable or responsible for health and safety of our service or any items purchased with funding awarded.       9. I/we will comply with any relevant legislation affecting the way we carry out our service.       10. I/we acknowledge this grant from Cheshire West and Chester Council in our annual report and accounts which cover the period and in any publicity material we produce about the service.       11. I/we will inform the Council in the case of any changes to that detailed above and ensure clear records are maintained in accordance with the terms and conditions under which the grant may be made. All accounts must be available for inspection by the Council’s Officers or any approved auditor.       12. Records of expenditure and monitoring form will be provided to Cheshire West and Chester Council on request.       13. I/we have kept a copy of this application for out records.       14. I/we confirm other sources of funding have been explored and we have discussed how much we are prepared/able to contribute.       15. There is a valid lease/license agreement for the business (where applicable)       16. I/we confirm that we have either a separate bank account or separate cost centre.   I confirm that I/we have the authority to make this application. | |
| **Signed for and on behalf of the Organisation:** |  |
| **Signed:** |  |
| **Position/Status in the Organisation:** |  |
| **Organisation’s name:** |  |
| **Organisation’s address:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |