MG Broadband Grants – Guidance Notes

This portal has been designed by Fastershire, Connecting Shropshire and Superfast Telford to help SMEs access capital funding to bring high speed connectivity to their premises. It aims to match suppliers with those businesses and provide a fair and transparent market place to reach the best price and service that meets the SMEs needs.

The portal enables businesses to submit a standardised request for quotation which includes enough relevant information to enable suppliers to respond with a standardised quotation. SMEs should then be in a position to make an informed choice between suppliers after a reasonable amount of time has lapsed.

Step 1

SMEs that wish to participate need to register and be approved before having full access to the portal.

If you are having any issues registering or feel that approval has either taken too long or been unreasonably denied, please contact info@mgbroadbandgrants.com. You may not be eligible, but if you think you should be please contact us. Our data could be incorrect or there may be another funding based reason.

Step 2

Once approved, SMEs are free to move to step 2 and complete a request for quotation form. SMEs should ensure all fields are completed with sufficient detail. When published, this form remains live, usually for somewhere between 21 and 35 days, so that suppliers can respond.

Suppliers can respond at any time during that period but should formally decline if not intending to quote.

During this period, SMEs will get notifications that suppliers have either responded. However, SMEs will not be able to view the content of the quotes until the expiry date.

Step 3

Once the time has lapsed, SMEs will be able to view their quotes and select their preferred supplier from the quotes received.

SMEs should then use their preferred quote as the basis of their step three funding application. When completing the application, SMEs should note in particular that a funding decision will be appraised by a review panel. All appraisals will be based on the most economically advantageous offer and any anticipated benefit will be identified as such.

Applications will be reviewed and either approved, declined or if the quote has been identified as subject to survey, approved with conditions.

Step 4

Upon the receipt of an offer letter of conditional approval, SMEs can instruct suppliers to undertake the survey at the supplier's risk. When costs have been finalised, formal approval should be sought by amending the original application with any new costs as appropriate.

Upon the notification of approval, SMEs are free to instruct their preferred supplier to begin work and claim the approved amount retrospectively from the scheme. Suppliers are required to follow the code of conduct at all time.

Frequently asked questions

Are the broadband suppliers council approved?

No. Suppliers are not restricted when registering and only go through a minor verification process to check their company set up. This is in no way an endorsement of any supplier by the Council or any of the broadband programmes associated with this scheme. Applicants are expected to do their due diligence on suppliers before they engage with them.

When do I pay my supplier?

Usually on completion. That said, payment terms are to be decided between applicants and suppliers and is solely a commercial agreement between the two parties. However, it would make sense for applicants to be asking suppliers about their payment terms and taking this into consideration when selecting a supplier.

How do I know which supplier to select?

It can be a difficult decision to take. You will undoubtedly receive multiple applications from multiple suppliers with a wide range of technologies to meet your bespoke solutions and we fully understand that it can be confusing. The team are available to you to run through pros and cons of various technologies and help you identify what is important to you. Common considerations are:

- How much upload speed do I need for sending files?
- How much speed do I need for the business to operate?
- How important is it that I have a dedicated Service Level Agreement?
- How important is it if my speed fluctuates?
- Is my decision sensitive to the monthly cost of the service?
- How important is it for the service to be installed quickly?

Thinking about these questions may help you identify the type of solution you require.

What are my lead times likely to be?

This is something that very much depends on the type of service being delivered. However, it is worth bearing in mind that many of the solutions still rely on Openreach to install the infrastructure for the bespoke solutions so at some point there could be delays that are out of the hands of your selected supplier. If your lead times are critical, please check with the suppliers about realistic lead times.

What if I can't afford the quotes?

Our project is 100% funded, but it does work on a rebate basis. We are committed to a 10 working day payback from project completion pending that we are in receipt of all relevant paperwork. However, we do recognise that as bespoke solutions, some of the upfront costs can be substantial and that there will be a cash flow gap, no matter how short our process.

We would suggest to afford the project that you either have a temporary solution in place with your bank or talk to brokers about a variety of 3rd party lending if this is not possible (anything from personal loans to invoice discounting). If all else isn't possible, speak to the suppliers to see if they will offer staggered invoices upon completion.