



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Guidance Document January 2022

Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme



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COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil 
Local Enterprise Office

The Local Enterprise Office Clare is the first point of contact for anyone in business or thinking about starting a business in Clare. The Local Enterprise Office provides a range of services including business advice, training and management development programmes, sector initiatives, access to Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), mentoring, and grant-aid to eligible projects employing up to 10 persons. To contact: call (065) 6821616 or log on to www.localenterprise.ie/Clare

Introduction

Clare County Council operates a Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme in order to encourage the use of vacant commercial premises in towns and villages in Clare.

This scheme is designed to assist new commercial businesses to set up in the traditional social and commercial heart of each town and village.

It is hoped that this scheme will reduce the number of vacant premises, stimulate commercial activity, promote retail diversity, and reinvigorate town and village centres.

By encouraging the use of vacant properties, the scheme will support town and village regeneration, improve streetscapes, and lead to increased footfall for existing businesses.

The Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme compliments other regeneration and business-support initiatives promoted by the Council as part of its ongoing work in these areas, including Local Enterprise Office services, Town & Village Renewal, Tourism promotion & development, and major economic and social infrastructure projects.

The Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme is separate to the other Commercial Rates support schemes. Businesses availing of this scheme cannot avail of other schemes until the term of this scheme has expired.

Objectives of the Scheme

- To bring vacant property back into productive use.
- To regenerate and revitalise town and village centres.
- To increase footfall for existing businesses in towns and villages.
- To provide a financial incentive for new businesses setting up in towns and villages.
- To promote job creation and retention.
- To improve the commercial and retail mix in towns and villages.
- To increase the attractiveness of towns and villages and to improve streetscapes.

Summary of the Grant Available

The Grant is available to new business setting up and also businesses expanding in vacant premises in towns and villages in Clare, subject to certain conditions. The premises must have been vacant for two years or more and the annual rates liability be less than €20,000. Occupation of less than one year will not qualify for the grant aid under this scheme.

The Grant

Eligible businesses can avail of a grant that is equivalent to:

Year 1: 75% of Commercial Rates Liability (subject to a maximum of €3,750 for the 1st commercial rates calendar year or part thereof).

Year 2: 50% of Commercial Rates Liability (subject to a maximum of €2,500 for the 2nd commercial rates calendar year).

Year 3: 25% of Commercial Rates Liability (subject to a maximum of €1,250 for the 3rd commercial rates calendar year).

Year 4: partial grant may apply where there was part occupation in year 1, then a grant equivalent to year 1 criteria may apply.

Grant assistance will cease at the end of Year 3 or 4, with the Commercial Rates liability being payable in full from that time. The maximum period for which a business may be eligible is 36 months.

Note: Grants must be applied for within the first calendar year of occupation i.e. by 31st December and will be applied to the account retrospectively in the subsequent years once approved based on a retrospective assessment of the qualifying status of the business for the calendar year just passed.

Example

The following example demonstrates the potential grant payable to an eligible business with an annual Commercial Rates liability of €1,000 in business from 1st January 2022.

Year	Commercial Rates Bill	Grant Payable	Net Commercial Rates Payable
1	€1,000	€750	€250
2	€1,000	€500	€500
3	€1,000	€250	€750
Totals	€3,000	€1,500	€1,500

In each case, payment of the grant will be subject to the ratepayer having discharged their full Commercial Rates liability for the year in question. The Grant will then be applied retrospectively to the accounts of eligible ratepayers.

Effective Period of the Scheme

The scheme is currently in operation and it may be subject to review and amendment at any time by Clare County Council.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions

Qualifying Conditions of the Property

1. The property must be an existing rateable property in a town or village that has been vacant for a continuous period of two years or longer.
2. The annual rates liability must be less than €20,000.
3. Occupation of less than one year will not qualify for the grant aid under this scheme.
4. The property must be owned by the applicant or subject to a minimum 36-month lease.
5. The property must have the appropriate permissions and consents for the proposed use (including planning permission).
6. The property must have all Commercial Rates, contributions and local authority charges paid in full at the time of the application.

Qualifying Conditions of the Applicant

1. The Grant is available to new businesses only. However, if an applicant is expanding their current business by more than 50% i.e. Their annual rates increase by 50%+ then they may qualify for the grant. The grant will be paid on the difference between the old and new commercial rates valuation.
2. The Grant is not available to existing businesses that are relocating to new premises.
3. Applicants can only avail of the scheme once.(be it as an individual, partnership or company).
4. Successful applicants will be required to sign up for payment of Rates by Direct Debit.
5. Applicants availing of the Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme cannot avail of other Commercial Rates Support Schemes until after the Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme has been discharged in full.
6. Successful applicants must be in possession of a current Tax Clearance Certificate. An up to date Tax Clearance Certificate may be required.
7. The applicant must have discharged any outstanding local authority charges payable by them.
8. The initial application for this scheme is to be submitted to Clare County Council within the first calendar year of occupation i.e. by 31st December.
9. Successful applicants must discharge their full Commercial Rates liability before year-end (i.e.. 31st December each year).

Application Process

The initial application for the scheme is to be submitted to Clare County Council within the first calendar year of occupation i.e. by 31st December. Applications can be submitted electronically or by post.

The application form can be downloaded from Clare County Council's website: www.clarecoco.ie

Applications may be submitted electronically to: rates@clarecoco.ie

Details to Accompany the Application

The Council may request any such information which it deems necessary in order to make a decision on eligibility to avail of the Scheme. At a minimum, the following should be submitted:

1. Fully completed and signed application form.
2. Evidence that the property has been vacant for a period exceeding two years.
3. A Current Tax Clearance Certificate may be required.
4. Confirmation of ownership of the property or formal entitlement to occupy the property for a period no less than 36 months.

Assessment of Application

Clare County Council will assess each application in accordance with the scheme guidelines and in accordance with the Council's discretion to interpret the guidelines in the spirit of the Scheme and the purposes for which it has been introduced. Additional information may be requested if deemed necessary. The Council reserves the right to exclude any premises or business type from the scheme on the basis that it does not satisfy, or is contrary to, the stated objectives of the Scheme.

The final decision on eligibility to qualify for the scheme rests with Clare County Council in each case. The decision of the Council is final.

Further Information

Rates Department

Clare County Council
Áras Contae an Chláir
New Road

Ennis

Co. Clare

V95 DXP2

Phone: (065) 6821616

rates@clarecoco.ie

www.clarecoco.ie



Local Enterprise Office,

Clare County Council
Áras Contae an Chláir
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CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Clare County Council
Commercial Rates Incentive Scheme Application Form

Applicant Details

Name of applicant/
Company Name (if applicable):

Contact Person:

Address:

Eircode:

Contact Telephone Number:

Contact Email Address:

List any other commercial
properties currently or previously
occupied by the applicant in
County Clare

Property Details

Address of property:

Date property became vacant:

Is the property owned or leased
by the applicant?

If leased, state length of lease?*

**Please provide evidence of
occupation/lease.**

*Lease must be for a period no less than
36 months

Name and address of owner of
property (if not owned by
applicant):

Valuation Office ID (if known):
(i.e Valuation No. on Rate Bill)

Proposed Use of the Property – Provide Details

What is the proposed use for the property?

Note: a **full** description of the type of business must be provided; stating 'Retail Outlet/Shop' would not be sufficient. You should describe your business activities clearly and accurately.

Are all consents/permissions in place for the proposed use?

(Please provide planning reference numbers where known)

Date trading commenced:

Financial Details

Does the applicant have any outstanding local authority charges relating to any properties previously occupied by the applicant in County Clare?

Are there any outstanding local authority charges relating to the current property?	
State PPSN/VAT Registration Number of Applicant: Please also confirm your Tax Clearance Access (TCAN) number* *Successful applicants must be fully tax compliant	

Change of Ownership/Occupation (Section 32 Obligations)

Have Section 32 obligations been satisfied? Please provide copy of form notifying change of occupier/owner (if applicable) Note: The Owner of a commercial property has a legal obligation to notify Clare County Council if their property is being vacated, sold, or otherwise transferred. The Section 32 form is available to download on our website. www.clarecoco.ie Please contact the Council for further details if you require further details in relation to the legal obligations.	
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Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare



Have you made contact with the Clare Local Enterprise Office?

Are you aware that the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is the first point of contact for anyone in business or thinking about starting a business in Clare? The Local Enterprise Office provides a range of services including business advice, training and management development programmes, sector initiatives, access to Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), mentoring, and grant-aid to eligible projects employing up to 10 persons.

The contact details for Clare Local Enterprise Office are as follows:

Phone: (065) 6821616
Email: localenterprise@leo.clarecoco.ie

Address: Clare Local Enterprise Office
Clare County Council
Áras Contae an Chláir
New Road
Ennis
Co. Clare
V95 DXP2

Your Local Enterprise Office can advise you on grant/financial assistance, business advice, and development programmes, amongst other things. Please indicate if you consent to being contacted by your Local Enterprise Office?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Declarations

I/We declare that:

I/We have read and understood the Guidance Document “Clare County Council, Commercial Rates Incentive Scheme” and confirm that I/We comply with the eligibility criteria and conditions therein.

The information provided in this application is truthful and accurate and this property has not been open for trade in the two years preceding this application.

Signed (by Applicant(s): _____

Date: _____

Clare County Council reserves the right to seek any other further information in support of this application. This form should be completed in

advance of commencing a business in County Clare and submitted with all required backup documentation to:

Rates Department
Clare County Council
Áras Contae an Chláir
New Road
Ennis
Co. Clare
V95 DXP2

Fully completed and signed applications may also be scanned and emailed to rates@clarecoco.ie

All personal data collected is in compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2003.

For Office Use Only

Property/Account No: _____

Total Amount of Annual Rates due: € _____

Rateable Valuation: _____

Checklist:

Copy of Lease/Rental Agreement ☐

TCAN Details confirmed ☐

Copy of Section 32 Form (if applicable) ☐

Year	Total Rates Due €	Grant %
Year 1		75%
Year 2		50%
Year 3		25%

Date application received: _____

Further Information sought: _____

Further Information received: _____

Approval Date: _____

Grant Amount Year 1 € _____

Grant Amount Year 2 € _____

Grant Amount Year 3 € _____