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**Strengthening Communities Grant Scheme - 2022/23**

**Guide for Applicants**

# Introduction

## Community and voluntary organisations have a key role to play in improving the lives of residents of the borough and in building stronger communities.

## Grant funding is an important way to support the resilience of the sector so that local community and voluntary organisations can continue to deliver services that respond to local needs and achieve positive outcomes for our communities.

The Strengthening Communities Grant Scheme aims to enable local community and voluntary sector organisations to access funding to support them with building capacity and sustainability.

Applications to the scheme will need to:

* demonstrate clearly how the funding will help organisations address council plan priorities
* evidence there is a real community need for what the funding is being sought for
* have clear measurable outcomes

This guide for applicants provides more detail on eligibility, the application process and what information and documents are required.

The scheme is funded by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and operated and managed by Basingstoke Voluntary Action (BVA).

The application form and can be found on Basingstoke Voluntary Action’s website’s at [https://www.bvaction.org.uk/scgs/](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/rQKuCOMrrIpmPPxtEdOjz?domain=bvaction.org.uk/)

**Timetable:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Date** |
| Scheme opens for application | Thursday 23 June 2022 |
| Deadline for application | Sunday 24 July 2022  |
| Completion of evaluation and assessment of applications | Tuesday 2 August 2022 |
| Notification of outcome to applicants | w/c 8 August 2022 |
| Deadline for return of grant agreements | Friday 19 August 2022 |
| Payments of 1st grant instalment | w/c 22 August 2022 |
| First progress report due | 12 December 2022 |
| End of activities and funding | 31 March 2023 |
| Final progress report due | 21 April 2023 |

# Who can apply?

The Strengthening Communities Grant Scheme is open to any not-for-profit community and voluntary sector organisation that is operating and delivering services in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. Organisations must be formally-constituted and have a bank account.

Two or more community or voluntary organisations can submit a joint application to the scheme as long as there is one lead organisation applying on behalf of the others and acting as the accountable body.

Organisations that have previously received programme grant funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council can apply.

Organisations that are in receipt of strategic grant funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in 2022/23 cannot apply under this scheme. However, they can be part of a consortium of organisations submitting a joint application as long as they do not benefit from any funding allocated as part of the Strengthening Communities Grant Scheme.

Organisations can only submit one application to this round of the scheme. This also applies to joint applications whereby any organisation involved in the partnership cannot apply individually or as a delivery partner in another consortium application.

Schools are eligible under this scheme as long as they can demonstrate that the funding will benefit the wider community and not just their pupils/students and that the funding is not being used to support normal service delivery and activities.

Parish and town councils can also apply to this scheme as long as the funding is not being used to support statutory or normal service delivery or activities. They will need to demonstrate that the funding will be used to support activities that are not part of their normal day-to-day services and that benefit the wider community.

Please note that the scheme is **unable** to fund:

* Individuals and for-profit organisations
* Organisations that exclusively promote political or religious activities
* Groups that have uncommitted/unrestricted funds that could be used to fund the activity

# Priorities for funding

Any application submitted to the Strengthening Communities Grant Scheme will need to demonstrate that it will support the resilience of the organisation, that the funding will help the organisation enhance its activities and services to better respond to clearly identified community needs, and that the funding will achieve some measurable outcomes. All applications must demonstrate value for money and additionality. They also need to evidence strong engagement with residents and other organisations and agencies in identifying needs and objectives.

Applications will also need to clearly show how the funding will help address current council priorities as identified in the council plan:

* Strengthening communities
* Protecting and enhancing our environment
* Improving Safety
* Planning for the future

For more information, see the [Council Plan 2020 to 2024](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/councilplan)

Applications that foster collaborative working between community and voluntary sector organisations are particularly welcome.

# How much funding is available?

The total budget allocated to the community grant scheme for 2022/23 is £210,000.

Organisations can apply for a grant of up to £10,000.

Applications that bring together a consortium of two or more organisations can apply for grants of up to £15,000. Please note that joint applications will need to be submitted by one lead organisation acting on behalf of partner organisations and that the funding will need to benefit all organisations involved. However, should an organisation in receipt of a council strategic grant be part of a consortium, they will not be able to benefit from funding under this scheme.

Organisations can only submit one application. This also applies to joint applications whereby any organisation involved in the partnership cannot apply individually.

# What can the funding be used for?

Strengthening Communities Grants are targeted to support organisations with building resilience and capacity so that they enhance their sustainability and service provision to better meet local needs. As such, the funding is not aimed at delivering specific projects or programmes but at enabling community and voluntary sector organisations to improve the way they operate. This includes, for example, improving their operating and business model, enhancing their income generation and commercialisation strategies, developing marketing plans or increasing and/or diversifying their volunteer or client base. Funding can be sought to develop the skill base of the organisation and its volunteers through training or accessing and maximising benefit from new technologies and communication platforms.

The funding cannot be used to simply fund the continuation of existing programmes or projects or to cover normal operating costs of the organisation including overheads, existing staffing, premises, etc.

However, for example, should an organisation need to recruit a new member of staff or increase existing working hours on a temporary basis to support with developing a fundraising strategy, these costs would be eligible under the scheme.

Likewise, should an organisation decide to start the delivery of new services aimed at increasing income generation while addressing community needs, funding can be applied for to kick start delivery.

In cases where an organisation needs external funding to enhance existing activities with the aim of ensuring their sustainability, applications may be considered. However, the application will need to strongly demonstrate that the funding will assist with increasing income and resilience.

In any case, grants can only be used to fund additional costs and this will need to be supported by clear evidence in any application.

In their applications, organisations will need to explain in detail what they intend to use the funding for and how the funding will help them become more resilient and better respond to and serve community needs.

Any funding applied for can only be for the benefit of residents of Basingstoke and Deane.

# How much can be applied for?

Organisations can apply for grants of up to £10,000. There is no minimum.

Joint applications bringing together a consortium of two or more organisations can be for up to £15,000 as long as the funding benefits all partners involved. Joint applications will need to be submitted by a lead applicant acting on behalf of the group of partners.

Organisations can only submit one application.

Organisations in receipt of strategic grant funding in 2022/23 from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council cannot apply to the Strengthening Communities Grant Scheme. However, they can be part of a consortium of organisations as long as they do not receive any direct funding from the grant.

# Evidencing the need for the funding

As part of their applications, organisations will need to clearly demonstrate the need for the funding and provide detailed evidence of how the funding will help meet a specific community need as well as addressing the council plan priority. This can for example be through providing data, feedback from surveys, etc. Applications should show how residents have been involved in identifying the need funding is being sought for.

Applicants will also be required to explain why without the funding they wouldn’t be able to achieve what they intend to do. Added value will be essential to any successful application.

# How can the funding be applied for?

Organisations will need to complete an application form which asks for detailed information on the organisation’s remit, what the funding is for and how it will support community needs. Organisations will also need to submit the following documents:

* Constitution
* Latest audited accounts and a copy of the organisation’s latest bank statement. Please note that for new organisations, if audited accounts are not available, applicants will be requested to provide a copy of their bank mandate and last three bank statements.
* Business plan or strategy

Further information on the application form and how to complete it can be found below.

The application form can be found at [https://www.bvaction.org.uk/scgs/](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/rQKuCOMrrIpmPPxtEdOjz?domain=bvaction.org.uk/)

# How will the applications be processed and assessed?

Applications received within the deadline will first be checked for eligibility. This includes checking that the organisation is eligible under the scheme and that all sections of the application form have been completed in full and that all relevant documents have been supplied.

Applicants may be contacted in order to clarify information given in the application. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to ensure that the information provided is easy to understand, answers the questions asked and explains clearly what the funding is for.

Following eligibility checks, applications will be reviewed and assessed by a grants panel that brings together representatives of BVA, the council and other local grant-making organisations. Applications will be assessed and scored by individual members of the evaluation panel and will be moderated collectively to reach a final decision.

Scoring will be weighted with some questions carrying a higher value. The weighting will also ensure that all applications are scored out of 100.

The scoring assessment is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessment criteria** | **Score** |
| Deficient – response to the question significantly deficient or no response received | 0 |
| Limited – limited information provided, or a response that is inadequate or only partially addresses the question | 1 |
| Acceptable – an acceptable response submitted in terms of the level of detail, accuracy and relevance | 2 |
| Comprehensive – a comprehensive response submitted in terms of detail and relevance | 3 |
| Outstanding – as comprehensive but to a significantly better degree, or likely to result in increased quality, including improvement through innovation and strong likelihood of achieving great outcomes | 4 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Maximum score available** | **Question weighting** | **Total maximum value of score** |
| **2.1** | **4** | **4** | **16** |
| **2.2** | **4** | **4** | **16** |
| **3.1** | **4** | **4** | **16** |
| **3.2** | **4** | **3** | **12** |
| **3.3** | **4** | **3** | **12** |
| **4.1** | **4** | **5** | **20** |
| **6.1** | **4** | **2** | **8** |
|  | **100** |

For more information on how to make an application and how to complete the form, see section 13 below.

# When can I apply for funding?

The scheme is open for applications between Thursday 23 June and Sunday 24 July 2022. Applications must be sent via email to grants@bvaction.org.uk by 23:59 on Sunday 24 July 2022. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Applicants will be informed of whether they have been successful or not week commencing 08 August 2022.

# How long is the funding for and how will progress be monitored?

Funding awarded under this scheme will need to be spent by the 31 March 2023 and successful applicants will need to demonstrate that they have achieved what they intended to use the funding for.

Funding will be released in two tranches:

* 50% upon signature of a grant agreement
* 50% upon receipt of a progress report and monitoring form showing what the funding is being used for and what it is achieving through demonstrable outcomes. The progress report will need to be sent to grants@bvaction.org.uk by 12 December 2022.

After the end of the period of grant funding (31 March 2022), organisations will be required to send a final evaluation report and monitoring form providing a full description of what the funding was used for and what outcomes were achieved. The final report must be sent to grants@bvaction.org.uk by 17:00 on Friday 21 April 2023.

Applicants will also be required to complete an evaluation survey to provide feedback on the scheme and process.

The report will be reviewed by BVA and should there be any issues with the way the funds were used, if the planned activities were not completed or if the expected outcomes were not achieved, organisations may be required to repay part or all of the grant awarded.

Should applicants encounter any challenges or difficulties while implementing the activities the funding has been awarded for, they must contact BVA as soon as possible via email at grants@bvaction.org.uk or by calling 01256 423816.

# How to make an application?

Applicants will need to complete an application form and provide supporting documents such as the organisation’s constitution and business or strategic plan. The application form can be found at [https://www.bvaction.org.uk/scgs/](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/rQKuCOMrrIpmPPxtEdOjz?domain=bvaction.org.uk/). All application forms and supporting documents must be sent via email to grants@bvaction.org.uk by 23:59 on Sunday 24 July 2022. Please note that late applications will not be considered.

Applicants must ensure they complete all sections of the form and that they provide answers to all questions. The information provided will help assessors evaluate the application and make decisions on awarding funding so applicants should make sure that they give clear responses and that the information provided specifically answers the questions asked.

The application form is divided into sections so that applicants can provide the information required to evaluate the proposal.

Some of the answers will be scored as part of the evaluation process and the scoring questions have been clearly identified on the application form. Other answers will help the assessors to fully understand the proposal and the way the organisation operates. These answers will not be scored but may be used by the evaluation panel as part of the assessment process where programmes with similar characteristics are being compared.

Some questions also have a wordcount limit. Please make sure to keep to these word limits as any text that exceeds these limits will not be considered by the evaluation panel.

Section one: about your organisation

The section asks for contact details, and status and purpose of the organisation. Please note that question 1.3 has a wordcount limit of 150 words.

This information is required to ensure that your organisation is eligible for funding and that it can enter into a funding agreement with BVA. Organisations are expected to have at least a formally adopted constitution and a bank account with two signatories. Please complete all sections that are relevant to your organisation.

If the application is on behalf of a group of organisations, lead applicants will need to provide details of partner organisations in section seven of the form.

Section two: what do you want to do with the funding and why do you need it?

This section is an important part of the application process as it will help the assessors understand what the funding is for and why the organisation needs the funding.

**Question 2.1**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 4 and a wordcount limit of 500 words

This question focuses on what the funding is for. In this section, applicants will need to provide detail of how the funding will be used and what the organisation will do with it. Applicants will need to describe the activities they will deliver with the funding and how this will help the organisation to build capacity and resilience. In this section, applicants are not expected to provide cost breakdown or financial details. These details are required in section five of the application form.

Please remember that this scheme is not intended to support the delivery of projects, programmes, normal service provision or the organisation’s operating costs.

**Question 2.2**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 4 and a wordcount limit of 500 words.

This focuses on the organisational need for the funding. In this section, applicants will need to explain and evidence why they need the funding. This is not about the community need the organisation is looking to address. It is about why the organisation requires additional funding to support its resilience and capacity.

Section three: What community needs and priorities will the funding help you address?

In this section, applicants are required to provide detail and evidence on how building the resilience and capacity of the organisation will help support and meet community needs. It also considers how the funding will help organisations meet council priorities.

**Question 3.1**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 4 and a wordcount limit of 400 words.

The funding is aimed at building an organisation’s capacity and resilience to better serve local communities and it will be important for the assessors to understand what these needs are and how they have been identified. In this section, applicants are requested to provide detailed information on the community needs the funding will help address and what evidence has been used to identify these needs.

**Question 3.2**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 3 and a wordcount limit of 250 words.

This question focuses on the client base and/or target groups the funding will help the organisation support. Applicants are required to provide information on how building the resilience and capacity of the organisation will help users of the organisation’s services and activities.

**Question 3.3**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 3 and a wordcount limit of 350 words.

This question focuses on council plan priorities. The funding is provided by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and it will be important to understand how the organisation will use the funding to help meet these priorities. In this section, applicants will need to select the council plan priority(ies) the grant will help support and how building capacity and resilience of the organisation will help addressing these priorities.

Section four: What outcomes and added value will the funding help you achieve?

This section is about what impact and change the funding will make. Applicants are requested to explain clearly and in detail the difference the grant will make to the organisation and the communities it serves. This is an important part of the application process as organisations will need to demonstrate that the funding will have some tangible outcomes and that it will add value to the organisation. It will also be an important part of the progress and performance monitoring of the grants.

This section also covers diversity, inclusion and equality, and environmental sustainability considerations.

**Question 4.1**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 5 and a wordcount limit of 500 words.

This question focuses on the impact the funding will have. Applicants will need to provide detailed information on what positive change the funding will make to the organisation’s capacity and resilience and the outcomes it will help the organisation achieve. Applicants are also requested to provide information on when they expect to achieve these outcomes and how they will measure success and monitor performance. As part of funding agreements, successful applicants will be expected to provide progress and performance updates. So, having a clear plan at the outset of how the impact of the funding will be measured and setting some performance indicators will be essential.

**Question 4.2**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 250 words.

In this section, applicants are requested to give information on their approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and to provide a copy of their strategy or plan. If applicants do not have a formal equality, diversity and inclusion strategy or plan, they are requested to provide information on how the organisation addresses these considerations in their practices and service delivery.

**Question 4.3**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 250 words.

This question focuses on how applicants will take into consideration equality, diversity and inclusion. Applicants are requested to give information on how the funding, and building capacity and resilience, will contribute to the organisation’s activities being inclusive and accessible to all.

**Question 4.4**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 250 words.

In this section, applicants are requested to give information on their approach to environmental sustainability and to provide a copy of their strategy or plan. If applicants do not have a formal environmental sustainability strategy or plan, they are requested to provide information on how the organisation addresses these considerations in their practices and service delivery.

**Question 4.5**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 250 words.

This question focuses on how applicants will take into consideration environmental sustainability. Applicants are requested to give information on they will endeavour to minimise the impact on the environment of the activities they are seeking funding for.

Section five: How much funding do you need and what will you spend it on?

This section focuses on the financial aspects of the application and the activities organisations are seeking funding for. Applicants will need to explain clearly and in detail how the money will be spent and to provide a breakdown of costs and a budget. This will need to include expenditure, other sources of funding, match-funding and any income. Pease make sure that budgets are correct and that they balance. Please also make sure that you describe clearly each item/line of the budget. This will be important to help assessors understand what the money will be spent on and costs.

**Question 5.1**

For this question, please state the amount of grant funding you are requesting. Please remember that single applicants can access up to £10,000 of grant funding and joint applications, up to £15,000. Make sure you only apply for the amount of funding you need.

**Question 5.2**

For this question, applicants are requested to indicate whether their organisation is VAT registered and therefore can recover VAT. Tick as appropriate.

**Question 5.3**

This section focuses on the budget for the activities applicants are seeking funding. Please complete the budget table indicating expected/secured income or other sources of funding and detailing every item of expenditure the funding and other income will be spent on. Please make you describe what each budget line/item is.

Please also make sure that your budget balances.

Please also consider VAT implications. If your organisation is able to recover VAT, all expenditure and income subject to VAT should be entered without the VAT.

**Question 5.4**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 200 words.

For this question, applicants are being asked to explain how they have worked out their budget. Applicants are required to explain how they have calculated the costs given in the budget. They may be based on quotes, research, apportionment or estimates. Applicants will need to explain any assumption they have made to ensure that the costs are as accurate as possible. This section can also be used to explain any items in the budget that may require further clarification.

**Question 5.5**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 250 words.

This question focuses on the delivery of the activities organisations are seeking funding for. In this section, applicants are requested to describe the delivery timeline of their activities, to indicate key milestones and when expected outcomes are due to be achieved. Applicants are also requested to complete a work plan table identifying key milestones, delivery timescales and outcomes.

**Question 5.6**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 150 words.

In this section, applicants are requested to provide information on any grant funding received from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in the last three financial years. Applicants will need to indicate the grant scheme funding was received from, the period of the grant award and the activities that were funded by the grant.

Section six: How will you work with others?

**Question 6.1**

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 2 and a wordcount limit of 300 words.

This section focuses on partnership working and how the applicant will work with others to help build the resilience and capacity of their organisation. Please note that this section is not about delivery partners in the case of a joint application. Information on the role of delivery partners will need to be included in all sections of the application form. This section is about collaboration and engagement and how the applicant intends to ensure that they don’t work in isolation but are actively engaging other organisations to ensure awareness, to reduce duplication and ultimately to better serve communities. Applicants will need to provide information on who they work with, why they work with these organisations and how collaboration takes place.

Section 7: Delivery partners

This section only needs to be completed when applications are submitted by a lead applicant of behalf of a consortium of organisations.

In this section, lead applicants will need to provide information on their delivery partners including who they are, their contact information, their status and their purpose.

**Questions 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3**

For these questions, lead applicants will need to provide the name and contact details of their delivery partners, indicate the status of partner organisations and outline their purpose.

If you are working with more than one delivery partner, please copy and paste the tables available in the application form as required.

**Question 7.4**

This is not a scoring question but there is a wordcount limit of 250 words.

In this section, applicants are required to explain the rationale for working with the delivery partner, how its participation will enhance the activities and support the capacity and resilience of all delivery organisations. Applicants will also need to explain what the role and responsibilities of the delivery partner will be and whether the delivery partner will receive some grant funding. Make sure that if any delivery partner is receiving funding from the scheme, this is clearly indicated in the budget table in section 5.3.

Section eight: Checklist

This section is aimed at helping applicants to ensure they have included all the required supporting documents with the application form. Please note that if supporting documents are not included, applications will be rejected unless the applicant can provide a valid explanation as to why they are not able to supply theses documents.

# Where can I get help?

If prospective applicants have questions on the scheme or require support and advice on eligibility and how to apply, they should contact Basingstoke Voluntary Action by emailing grants@bvaction.org.uk or by calling 01256 423816.

Please note that BVA will not be able to assist prospective applicants with developing or completing an application.

However, there are resources available to help prospective applicants with developing a strong application for funding. The websites listed below provide useful advice and tips on how to write a bid for funding and the various elements applicants should consider when developing their application:

* <https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/writing-a-funding-application/>
* [https://www.cafonline.org/charities/adaptability/grants/writing-grant-applications](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/GiyTCROxxHvZ970CqhIWp?domain=cafonline.org)
* [https://www.charity-fundraising.org.uk/grant-fundraising-top-bid-writing-tips](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/IWLzCVABBFxQrOkFkACky?domain=charity-fundraising.org.uk)
* [https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/funding-income/all-about-grants/getting-ready-apply/](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/HzZFCWLDDt5o7lXt1rWID?domain=beta.ncvo.org.uk/)