

## Guidance for Capital Community Grants

### 1. Aims of Community Grant

- 1.1 The Capital Grant for Community Infrastructure awards discretionary capital grants to support a range of voluntary and community organisations to carry out projects to improve community facilities to directly benefit local people.
- 1.2 Part of the funding this year comes from the Rural England Prosperity Fund, part of The UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This aims to support the government's Levelling Up White Paper and Future Farming Programme. It funds capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. This will help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. The application process incorporates the requirements and eligibility criteria of this scheme. In addition, funding is also provided by New Forest District Council. The grants are intended to support the Council's priorities and objectives in our Corporate Plan, see [newforest.gov.uk/corporateplan](https://newforest.gov.uk/corporateplan) and directly benefit the people of the New Forest
- 1.3 Key information:
  - The application window closes on 31 October 2023. The scheme will close to new applications after this date unless sufficient budget remains unallocated.
  - The fund provides capital grants only to support the purchase of lasting assets such as improvements to buildings or equipment only. Revenue costs, for example running costs and administration, are not funded.
  - Work on the project must not start until the Grant Offer Letter has been completed.
  - This grant programme is for projects located within the New Forest District Council area only

### 2. What types of projects can be funded?

- 2.1 The following are examples of the types of capital expenditure we could support; if you would like to discuss your project idea before starting the application process, please contact [Ryan.Stevens@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:Ryan.Stevens@nfdc.gov.uk) or call 02380 285693.
  - Projects such as the construction of a new play area or renovating a community hall
  - Investment in infrastructure to support the move to 'net zero' for rural communities and to support rural tourism activity. This could include investment in measures to improve energy efficiency and cut emissions in community buildings (for example: LED lighting, insulation, energy efficient heating systems etc) or for the installation of EV charging points.
  - Investment in community hubs which are capable of supporting wider community and economic development, this could include community kitchens to provide cookery skills training to the community as well as for food and drink entrepreneurs.

- Investment in resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions that protect local businesses and community areas from natural hazards including flooding and coastal erosion. For example, divert high water flows and create areas to store water or create leaky barriers to slow water flow in streams and ditches. You can find more information, including the permissions you will need to have in place before applying, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-nature-based-solutions-to-reduce-flooding-in-your-area>

### **3. Who can apply?**

3.1 The following groups are eligible to apply:

- Community, voluntary and registered charitable organisations
- Not-for-profit groups that are properly constituted
- Public sector organisations

### **4. What is not funded?**

4.1 Community grants will not fund the following:

- Individuals or an item or project that mainly benefits an individual
- Projects from private companies, profit-making or trading organisations, or business enterprises
- Party political activities
- Religious worship or observance; or works to buildings or grounds that are used solely by a religious organisation
- Projects from educational establishments that do not benefit the wider community
- Any activity or project that takes place or is started before the grant has been confirmed by the Council
- Any organisation that is in poor financial health and may be unable to deliver the service
- Projects located outside of the New Forest District Council area
- Projects that have received funding from other Defra Schemes, this includes: [The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund](#)
- Projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them
- Any costs incurred when putting together the application or before confirmation of grant
- Construction projects where the necessary ownership or leasing arrangements are not already in place
- Any project where any necessary formal consents, including any planning permissions, have not been obtained

4.2 Organisations delivering services aimed at children, young people or vulnerable adults will need to demonstrate to the Council that they have suitable safeguarding policies and appropriate checks in place.

### **5. Applications**

5.1 Applications will be made online, and applicants can provide additional information to support their application.

5.2 In general, the Council will award a grant of up to 50% of the total cost of the project and the maximum grant that the Council will pay for a capital project is £100,000. Applicants should already have secured 50% of the funding for any project before making an application and can demonstrate that other applications for funding have been fully explored and made.

5.3 Applications may be able to apply for more than 50% of the project costs or be awarded a grant of more than £100,000 in exceptional circumstances, and depending on the relevant funding, and should contact the Council for further advice and information.

- 5.4 All buildings, land and equipment that are subject to a grant must be fully insured on the basis of full replacement cost. Evidence will need to be provided that suitable policies of insurance are in place before any payment is made.
- 5.5 No part of the balance of the cost of construction projects can be raised by means of a mortgage secured on the facility without the previous written consent of the Council having been obtained.
- 5.6 Applications will not be awarded where grants have been received which exceed the UK Government Subsidy Control Act 2022, see appendix 2 for further details.

## **6. The Process**

- 6.1 Applications will be considered for either a Community Grant, funded by the Council, or the Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- 6.2 The information provided in the application must be up-to-date and complete at the time of submission. Where the financial context of the application changes, for example by a decision on a grant for the same project from another organisation, the Council must be told as soon as possible. The Council will not accept any other material changes once an application form has been submitted, unless the circumstances are exceptional, and the application still meets the eligibility criteria and the Council's priorities.
- 6.3 Once the application deadline has passed the Council's officers will assess each application to make sure that it meets the eligibility criteria and that it will provide positive benefits to local people. Only those applications which pass this initial assessment will progress to the next stage.
- 6.4 The next stage is that applicants are invited to attend a meeting of the Community Grants Task and Finish Group to give a short presentation, up to 15 minutes, about their application and to allow the group to ask questions about the application. These interviews take place in the autumn. If any organisation does not attend this interview process their application will not be considered further and will be declined.
- 6.5 When all presentations have been made the Task and Finish Group will consider the applications and present their recommendations to the Community, Partnership and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel. There is discretion to award a greater grant than the amount applied for where it can be demonstrated that there is additional benefit to residents and communities. In making their recommendations the Task and Finish Group will consider various factors, including, but not limited to:
- how well the application supports the Council's priorities and our services
  - evidence that the application is required and the extent to which it meets a community need without duplicating services
  - the efforts to secure alternative funding
  - the long-term benefits of the application
  - value for money
- 6.6 The Community, Partnerships and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the recommendation and advises the Portfolio Holder for People and Places on their recommendations on grant awards. The Portfolio Holder presents the recommendations to the Cabinet, who will determine final awards at their meeting in February. Applicants will be notified of the decision on their grant following this meeting.

## **7. Payment of grants**

7.1 Grant claims will be paid in arrears, on submission of a fully completed grant claim form and supporting evidence of expenditure and relevant documentation, for example evidence of planning sign-off or building regulation approval. Requests for staged payments must be agreed in advance.

## **8. After the grant has been awarded**

8.1 All successful applicants are required to sign a formal Grant Offer Letter for the delivery of the project or service, as described in their application form. **The project must not be started until this Grant Offer Letter has been completed.** Applicants must:

- only use the grant for that purpose, and for no other purpose whatsoever. Successful applicants will need to prove that the grant is being used for the purpose that has been agreed and provide evidence of expenditure, such as invoices and receipts.
- acknowledge the funding in any marketing or promotional materials for the project. The details of the funding partners and the logos to use will be provided in the Grant Offer Letter.
- notify the council of the date on which the project will commence and the estimated completion date.
- notify the Council of any delay which may result in the project being completed later than that given date. An extension of the completion date is not guaranteed and will depend on the availability of funding.
- allow the council to inspect the project and your organisation's records, with notice
- some applicants will be requested to submit monitoring reports and/or give updates on progress against outputs and outcomes, during the scheme.

## **9. Monitoring and reporting**

9.1 In your application you will be asked to describe how your project will help us to meet our targets for outputs from the project (services or physical items that are delivered) and outcomes (these describe the difference that the outputs will make; the change in people's lives as a result of what you've delivered).

9.2 Appendix 1 provides further details of the monitoring and reporting that is required from applicants.

## **10. After the completion of capital grant projects**

10.1 After completing the project the applicant will inform the Council of the completion, ensure the Council is referenced in any promotional materials and that Council officials are invited to any celebratory events.

10.2 The applicant will send the Council an appraisal of whether the key objectives have been met.

10.3 If the grant is not used for the specified purpose, for whatever reason, it must be returned to the Council within 2 years of the decision to award the grant. If the project has been delayed as a result of matters outside of the applicant's control, they may apply again under the Community Grants process.

10.4 Applicants must not sell or otherwise dispose of the facility, equipment or items purchased through the grant within 3 years of the date on which the grant is paid other than at full market value. In the event of such disposal an appropriate proportion of the proceeds, equal to the

proportion of the original cost met by the Council's grant, must be surrendered to the Council. The equipment or items shall not be returned to the Council for disposal.

## Appendix 1 – Monitoring and reporting

The outputs we will ask you to report on are as follows: (projects are not expected to deliver every output):

<u>Outputs</u>	Stage to be reported		
	<u>At Application</u>	At final grant claim	6 months after final claim
Number of facilities supported, created or installed	✓	✓	X
Number of EV charging points	✓	✓	X
Number of visitors or locals using charging points	x	✓	✓
Number of community energy projects funded such as scaled up biomass, heat pumps or solar	✓	✓	X

For community infrastructure grants the outcomes we will ask you to report on are as follows: (projects are not expected to deliver every outcome):

<u>Outcomes</u>	Stage to be reported		
	At Application	At final grant claim	6 months after final claim
<p><b>Jobs created:</b> this means the number of new, permanent, paid, full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created following support. This includes both part-time and full-time jobs, which should be recorded relative to full-time equivalent (FTE). FTE should be based on the standard full-time hours of the employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New means it should not have existed with that employer before the intervention.</li> <li>- Created jobs exclude those created solely to deliver the intervention (e.g. construction).</li> <li>- Permanent means it should have an intended life expectancy of at least 12 months from the point at which it is created.</li> <li>- Only count each individual FTE or job once through the lifetime of a project (i.e. it should not be counted every year)</li> <li>- FTE is a measure of an employee's scheduled hours in relation to an employer's hours for a full-time workweek</li> </ul> <p>As an example: If <i>the standard working hours for staff in the applicant organisation is 37 hours per week, someone</i></p>	✓	✓	✓

<p>who works 37 hours per week would be 1 FTE whilst someone who worked 25 hours per week would be 25 divided by 37 = 0.67 FTE</p>			
<p><b>Jobs safeguarded:</b> this means a permanent and paid job that was at risk prior to support being provided, and which the support helped the business to retain. This includes sole traders and business owners.</p> <p>Safeguarded jobs exclude those created solely to deliver the intervention (e.g., construction).</p> <p>This includes both part-time and full-time jobs, which should be recorded relative to full-time equivalent (FTE).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FTE should be based on the standard full-time hours of the employer.</li> <li>- At risk is defined as being forecast to be lost within 6 months.</li> <li>- Only count each individual FTE or job once through the lifetime of a project (i.e. it should not be counted every year)</li> <li>- FTE is a measure of an employee's scheduled hours in relation to an employer's hours for a full-time workweek</li> </ul> <p><i>As an example: If the standard working hours for staff in the applicant organisation is 37 hours per week, someone who works 37 hours per week would be 1 FTE whilst someone who worked 25 hours per week would be 25 divided by 37 = 0.67 FTE</i></p>	✓	✓	✓
<p><b>Increased users of facilities or amenities once the project has been completed.</b></p> <p>You will need to establish your baseline figure, i.e. the number of users of the facility before the project started, as well as 6 months after the project has completed.</p>	✓	x	✓
<p><b>Improved perception of facilities or amenities by people using them once the project has been completed:</b> this means the number of individuals who report their perception of the improved facilities/amenities as 'good' or 'very good'.</p> <p>As this is aiming to measure change, it can only be counted after the project has completed. As such applicants will be asked to survey users of the facility once the project has completed and provide us with this information.</p> <p>An example survey question could be: <i>'We have recently received funding through the Rural England Prosperity Fund to improve the heating and insulation in this community building. Do you think the improvements have been:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Very Good / Good / No change / Poor / Very poor</i></p>	x	x	✓
<p><b>The number of individuals who report accessibility to the facility as good or very good:</b> this could mean new</p>	x	x	✓

<p>accessible toilet facilities, audible and tactile signals, ramps and lifts etc.</p> <p>An example survey question could be: <i>'We have recently received funding through the Rural England Prosperity Fund to improve the accessibility of this community building. Do you think the improvements have been:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Very Good / Good / No change / Poor / Very poor</i></p>			
<p><b>Number of new enterprises created:</b> this means a new enterprise which has been registered at Companies House or HMRC as a result of the support provided.</p> <p>- Enterprise means a sole trader, micro business, small and medium-sized enterprise, or large business. It also includes social enterprises where these engage in economic activity.</p>	✓	✓	✓

## Appendix 2 - **Declaring other public funds received by the organisation:**

For any application considered under The Rural England Prosperity Fund, this scheme is covered by the UK Government Subsidy Control Act (2022). This has implications for certain types of grants from public sources given for certain types of projects. For relevant grants, the total amount of this 'Minimum Financial Assistance' (MFA) received over a rolling period of three fiscal years should not exceed £315,000 per organisation\* (including the grant you are applying for).

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to monitor the level of MFA received; you will be asked to declare that this has not been exceeded in the event of a grant offer being made.

\* The MFA financial threshold applies at company group level.

You can find more information at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-subsidy-control->



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