



Strengthening Communities Grant (SCG) scheme 2026/27 - Guidance notes for applicants

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1. What is the Strengthening Communities Grant (SCG) Scheme

The Strengthening Communities Grant (SCG) supports organisational and service development for eligible community and voluntary sector organisations in Basingstoke and Deane. Grants up to £15,000 are available. To be considered, projects must:

- evidence clear community need
- showcase how they will strengthen the organisation's future operational capacity

2. SCG Priorities

Your organisation's core values and application should show how your project aligns with, and contributes to, the priorities set out in our [council plan 2023 to 2027](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/councilplan)

(<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/councilplan>):

- a place where people can have pride in their communities and the borough
- a borough where we protect, restore, reconnect and enhance our natural environment
- a council that delivers high-quality services for our residents

Organisations must also:

- demonstrate how they support the council's [Climate Emergency Action Plan](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/climate-change-and-air-quality-strategy) (<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/climate-change-and-air-quality-strategy>), and contribute towards our carbon neutral target
- show how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are considered within their organisational practices and service delivery, in line with the council's [Corporate Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/3311.pdf) (<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/3311.pdf>)

We are particularly interested in supporting projects that are focusing on any of the following areas:

- improving outcomes for residents' physical health and mental wellbeing
- supporting residents with cost of living challenges
- addressing gaps in current youth provision
- improving or widening access to services and activities

3. Who can apply

The following **not-for-profit formally constituted** organisations, groups and clubs **located or delivering services within Basingstoke and Deane** can apply:

- unincorporated organisations, groups and clubs
- charitable companies
- charitable incorporated organisations (CIO's)
- community interest companies (CIC's)
- community amateur sports clubs (CASC's)

Note: Organisations must have a bank account in the organisation's name, managed by at least two unrelated individuals.

4. Who cannot apply

We cannot fund:

- individuals, sole traders and companies that can pay profits to directors, shareholders or members (including Companies Limited by Shares)
- organisations that promote political or religious activities exclusively
- groups that have uncommitted/unrestricted funds that could be used to fund the project
- organisations currently in receipt of Strategic Partner Contribution funding

If you would like to confirm whether your organisation is eligible, please contact us **at least two weeks before applying** and our officers will be happy to support you.

5. What we can fund

This scheme is designed to enable organisations to better meet the needs of their communities now and in the future, through different activities.

Activities that strengthen organisational capacity **may** include:

- improving the organisation's ability to deliver services for Basingstoke and Deane residents
- building internal skills and capacity
- improving efficiency through better use of resources or technology
- upskilling or training staff and volunteers
- developing new or growing existing income streams
- marketing-related improvements (organisations are encouraged to contact **Basingstoke Voluntary Action** for a free marketing health check and include the feedback with their application. *Please approach them with plenty of time before submitting an application, to ensure you can secure an appointment*).

Activities that develop or expand services **may** include:

- expanding services into a new area or piloting a new service
- extending an existing successful service into additional parts of the borough
- adapting or enhancing a service to accommodate more people, reach new audiences, or fill gaps in current provision

To support the activities above, the scheme **can** fund costs such as:

- additional staffing capacity (new posts, increased hours, consultants, sessional staff)
- training for staff or volunteers
- recruitment costs
- volunteer expenses
- marketing and outreach costs

We do not have a minimum match funding requirement. If the scheme is oversubscribed, priority might be given to applicants that have received limited or no Basingstoke and Deane funding in the past. We may also make a partial funding offer if some costs are not eligible or if we believe you could reasonably contribute to the project.

Option for Two Year Funding

We may approve two-year funding for projects looking to **establish new services**.

Second year funding would be:

- up to a maximum of 75% of the amount awarded in year one
- dependent on the organisation achieving agreed milestones and providing an end of year report
- subject to full Council budget approval in February 2027

6. What we cannot fund

Cost Types

- Capital costs, such as physical changes to premises
 - General, unspecified or contingency costs
 - Core costs that are not directly linked to the specific development project you are applying for
-

Project Type and Purpose

- Costs relating exclusively to political or religious activities
 - Projects with an alternative primary source of funding already identified
-

Ownership and Access

- Projects that primarily benefit an individual or for-profit organisation
 - Projects that cannot demonstrate clear community benefit
-

Timing and Location

- Projects that have already started before a funding decision is made and before we confirm that your project can begin
 - Projects based outside of the borough, or where Basingstoke and Deane residents are not the majority beneficiaries
-

Responsibility and Statutory Duties

- Statutory activities
 - Activities that are the responsibility of another organisation (eg. borough/county council or government agency)
-

If you would like to confirm whether we can fund your organisation's project, please contact us **at least two weeks before applying** and our officers will be happy to support you.

7. Conditions of funding

Organisations and the projects they apply for must:

Eligibility and access

- Be open to all, free from discrimination and reasonably priced
-

Project Delivery Standards

- Demonstrate project need and community support (eg. consultation, feedback, testimonials)
 - Include success indicators/Key Performance Indicators for post-completion monitoring
 - Use funding within 12 months of offer (unless agreed otherwise)
-

Financial Requirements

- Follow BDBC procurement rules: minimum of 3 quotes for consultants or outsourced services for any costs over £5,000
 - Have secured additional funding if the grant does not cover the full cost
 - Organisations with reserves must explain why they cannot contribute/ fund the project from their own reserves
 - Provide a clear plan for how any funded activities or services will be resourced after the grant period, without relying on further unsecured grant funding
 - Explain how staff and/or volunteers will be trained or upskilled during the grant period so they can maintain any new services or organisational improvements.
-

8. Submissions

In the application, you must provide the following (please check the application form for further details):

- organisation and contact details
- project details
- project management & budget details
- funding options and financial need
- evidence of project need and community support
- impact assessment (benefits and measures for monitoring)
- value for money
- organisational sustainability (future costs, income)
- environmental sustainability
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion practices

You will need to submit the following supporting documents with your application:

- a copy of your organisation's governing document and name it '**Governing Doc + your organisation's name**'
- a copy of your organisation's most recent audited annual accounts and name it '**Accounts + your organisation's name**'
- a copy of a bank statement in your organisation's name and dated within the last 3 months and named it '**Bank Statement + your organisation's name**'
- a copy of your organisations reserves policy and name it '**Reserves Policy + your organisation's name**'
- evidence of any other grant/ funding offers and name it '**OGF + your organisation's name**'
- evidence of need documents and name them '**AC1. + number**'
- evidence of support documents and named them '**AC2. + number**'
- evidence of costs (quotes/estimates) for each part of your project and named them '**Cost + number**'

9. Application process

To apply, **submit the completed application and supporting documents [by email \(mailto:scg@basingstoke.gov.uk\)](mailto:scg@basingstoke.gov.uk) by midday (12pm) on Thursday 30 April 2026.**

- ✓ Use the provided application form and complete it digitally.
- ✓ Submit the application as a **Word document** via email (not PDF or file-sharing links).
- ✓ Responses should be **proportionate to project size and funding requested.**
- ✓ Please use **bullet points** and avoid long text.

Support

If you have any questions or require any support to discuss and/or apply, please [contact our Grants team \(mailto:scg@basingstoke.gov.uk\)](mailto:scg@basingstoke.gov.uk).

If you require an alternative format, such as a printed version, please let us know. Contact the Community Funding Officer at least **2 weeks before the deadline** if you need help accessing the form or have any other queries.

10. Key dates

Only organisations who submit an application and supporting documents by the deadline of **midday (12pm) on Thursday 30 April 2026** can be considered.

We will review applications after the deadline and may request further information between **Tuesday 5 and Friday 8 May 2026**. Please be aware that we may contact you during this time to request further information.

We will inform you about the outcome of your application by email by **Friday 12 June 2026**.

We will be joining online **Meet the Funder** sessions hosted by Basingstoke Voluntary Action.

- 8 April 2026, 12.30pm to 1.30pm - [Book your space on 8 April](https://www.bvaction.org.uk/groups/training-events/event/990)
(<https://www.bvaction.org.uk/groups/training-events/event/990>)
- 9 April 2026, 6pm to 7pm - [Book your space on 9 April](https://www.bvaction.org.uk/groups/training-events/event/991)
(<https://www.bvaction.org.uk/groups/training-events/event/991>)

11. Assessment

Please note that:

- applications are acknowledged upon receipt
- officers check for completeness and eligibility
- applications are scored independently by two officers, then reviewed by a moderation panel
- final decisions are made by the Cabinet Member for Communities, Partnerships and Inclusion and the Chief Finance Officer

Assessment Criteria

Applications are scored against the following weighted criteria:

Criteria	Maximum score available	Weighting	Total maximum score available
1 Project Need	4	5	20
2 Community Support	4	5	20
3 Expected Impact	4	4	16
4 Value for Money	4	4	16
5 Organisational Sustainability	4	3	12
6 Environmental Sustainability	4	2	8
7 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)	4	2	8
Total possible score			100

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria

1 Evidence of Need	Is there a need to be addressed? What is the need? Is there evidence to support this need such as testimonials, usage numbers?
2 Evidence of Community Support	Does this project have user and stakeholder support? Is there evidence to prove this such as user feedback, consultations, surveys?
3 Expected Impact	What will the project benefits be? And how will you measure the impact? Do you have data to showcase current position and clear aims to improve such as usage figures and how you plan to increase and/ or maintain them?
4 Value for Money	Is your proposed solution the most effective way to address the issue and why? What alternatives have been considered? How will the project improve your organisation's financial stability?
5 Organisational Sustainability	How will the funded activities support your resilience and longer-term sustainability? Have you demonstrated how any organisational changes will help meet the needs of residents? Do you have a clear and realistic plan for what will happen after this funding ends?
6 Environmental Sustainability	Which of the six areas of focus in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy will your project support?
7 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)	How will the project ensure widening reach and removing barriers? How will the project address deprivation and tackle inequalities?

For each of the above criteria applications will be given a score in line with the table below:

Scoring scale description	Score
Deficient - Not enough information provided to assess. Some questions relevant to the theme not answered.	0
Limited - Limited or vague information provided. Significant elements of the theme not addressed. Specifically requested information or evidence not provided.	1
Acceptable – An acceptable response submitted which addresses most elements of the theme. Acceptable level of detail provided. Suitable evidence provided where requested.	2

Scoring scale description	Score
Comprehensive – A comprehensive response submitted against all relevant elements of the theme in terms of detail and evidence. Assessors are confident that all elements of the theme have been met.	3
Outstanding – A comprehensive and convincing response submitted against all elements of the theme. The level of detail provided, and the quality of the evidence submitted suggest that significant outcomes will be achieved against the grant criteria.	4

Applications scoring **0 on any question** or **1 on more than one criteria** will not be supported.
Minimum score to be considered: **40 out of 100**
Recommendations for funding will be made based on the scores given and the budget available.

12. Outcomes

Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email **no later than 12 June 2026**.

If your application is **successful**:

- we will outline our grant offer (amount, as well as how and when we will pay) and conditions (for example: monitoring KPI's)
- once agreed we will draw up a formal Agreement which we must both sign before you can start your project and before any grant money can be paid

If your application is **unsuccessful**:

- we will offer you feedback and may signpost you to other sources of funding or support

13. Further help and advice

There are lots of resources available online to help you develop a strong application and the websites listed below provide some useful advice and tips:

- [Information on writing a funding application \(resourcecentre.org.uk\)](https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/writing-a-funding-application/)
(<https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/writing-a-funding-application/>)
- [A guide to writing a great grant application \(cafonline.org\)](https://www.cafonline.org/services-for-charities/funding-for-charities/prepare-a-grant-application) (<https://www.cafonline.org/services-for-charities/funding-for-charities/prepare-a-grant-application>)
- [Grant fundraising top bid writing tips \(charity-fundraising.org.uk\)](https://www.charity-fundraising.org.uk/grant-fundraising-top-bid-writing-tips) (<https://www.charity-fundraising.org.uk/grant-fundraising-top-bid-writing-tips>)
- [All about grants getting ready to apply \(ncvo.org.uk\)](https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/funding-income/all-about-grants/getting-ready-apply/) (<https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/funding-income/all-about-grants/getting-ready-apply/>)

If you need support with setting up a bank account, finding and applying for other sources of funding, advice on your organisation's governance and policies, Basingstoke Voluntary Action (BVA) can help. Contact them by emailing contact@bvaction.org.uk (<mailto:contact@bvaction.org.uk>).

14. Documents

 [_SCG Application Form - 2026-27_\(DOCX\)_\[98 kb\]](#)
(</content/page/92590/SCG%20Application%20Form%20-%202026-27.docx>)

15. Submitting your application

Please submit the completed application and supporting documents by emailing scg@basingstoke.gov.uk (<mailto:scg@basingstoke.gov.uk>) by **midday (12pm) on Thursday 30 April 2026**.

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