Cost of Living Community Fund 2022/23

Criteria and guide for applicants

1   Introduction

With rising energy prices and inflation, many residents are facing significant challenges with the cost of living.

The council has already established direct support to residents through the Cost of Living Assistance Fund to help those facing financial difficulties. More information is available at https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/costofliving

However, the council recognises that many local community and voluntary organisations play a key role in supporting residents in need or facing difficult financial situations.

To support the sector with providing additional assistance to those residents who need it, the council has partnered with the Greenham Trust to establish the Cost of Living Community Fund (CLCF).

The joint scheme will be open to any not-for-profit community or voluntary sector organisation or group located and delivering services in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane.

Applications to the scheme will need to:
- demonstrate clearly how the funding will help residents of the borough of Basingstoke and Deane with the rising cost of living
- evidence there is a real community need for what the funding is being sought for
- have clear measurable outcomes

Please note that this scheme does not fund capital costs. It is a revenue only scheme. Expenditure such as physical improvements or changes to premises and facilities is not eligible under this scheme.

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

Applications will need to be made via the Good Exchange.
Guide to how to apply via the Good Exchange is here

Timetable:

Stage	Date
Scheme opens for application	Wednesday 7 December 2022
Deadline for application	Tuesday 17 January 2023
Completion of evaluation and assessment of applications	Friday 27 January 2023
Notification of outcome to applicants	w/c Monday 30 January 2023
Deadline for return of grant agreements	Friday 10 February 2023
Payment of grants	w/c Monday 13 February 2023
End of activities and funding	Monday 31 July 2023
Final progress report due	Thursday 31 August

2   Who can apply?

The Cost of Living Community Fund is open to any not-for-profit community and voluntary sector organisation or group that is operating and delivering services in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. Organisations or groups must be formally-constituted and have a bank account.

Organisations/groups that have previously received grant funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and/or the Greenham Trust can apply.

Organisations/groups can only submit one application to this round of the scheme.

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 (applicants will be asked to provide information on reserves in the application form)

3   Priorities for funding

Any application submitted to the Cost of Living Community Fund will need to demonstrate that it will increase capacity of the organisation to deliver services and activities that will directly support residents of the borough of Basingstoke and Deane affected by the rising cost of living. Applicants will need to evidence there is a clear need for the services and activities.

All applications must provide value for money and additionality and must have measurable outcomes.

Please note that the scheme is not aimed at providing core funding to organisations and that it is not intended to fund normal operating costs.

4   How much funding is available?

The total budget allocated to the community grant scheme for 2022/23 is £85,000. This is made of £65,000 from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and £20,000 from the Greenham Trust.

Organisations can apply for a grant of up to £5,000.

Under exceptional circumstances, a grant of more than £5,000 may be awarded. Applicants will need to demonstrate and explain clearly why they require more than £5,000.

Organisations can only submit one application.

5   What can the funding be used for?

The Cost of Living Community Fund must be used to support organisations with providing direct services and activities to residents of the borough of Basingstoke and

Deane affected by the rising cost of living. This includes a range of services and activities such as:

- Providing advice and assistance with financial and debt management
- Providing emergency food supplies or essential household items
- Providing mental health support to those residents facing crisis due to the rising cost of living
- Supporting residents with better energy use and energy efficiency
- Supporting residents with reducing food waste

Please note that the list of activities above is not exhaustive but provides examples of the type of services and activities eligible under this scheme. Organisations can provide other services and activities but will need to demonstrate clearly in their application how they will help residents with the rising cost of living.

Please also note that this scheme does not fund capital costs. It is a revenue only scheme. Expenditure such as physical improvements or changes to premises and facilities is not eligible under this scheme. However, organisations can seek funding to purchase small physical items that are essential to delivering the services and activities outlined in their application. This should only be a very small part of the funding requested.

The fund cannot be used to cover normal operating costs of the organisation including overheads, existing staffing, premises, etc. However, organisations can apply for funding to cover additional costs associated with the services and activities it will deliver to support residents. For example, should an organisation need to recruit a new member of staff, increase existing working hours on a temporary basis or train more volunteers to deliver services and activities, these costs would be eligible under the scheme.

Please note that the Fund cannot be used to make direct payments to residents. For example, should an organisation seek funding to provide essential household items to residents, they would need to purchase the items on behalf of the resident.

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 residents affected by the rising cost of living.

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

6   How much can be applied for?

Organisations can apply for grants of up to £5,000. There is no minimum.

Under exceptional circumstances, a grant of more than £5,000 may be awarded. Applicants will need to demonstrate and explain clearly why they require more than £5,000.

Organisations can only submit one application.

Organisations that currently receive funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council through other schemes can apply to this Fund.

7   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 support residents affected by the rising cost of living. This can for example be through providing data , findings from research, or feedback from surveys.

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.

8   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 residents affected by the rising cost of living. 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.

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

Organisations will need to submit their application via the Good Exchange

9   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 from the Greenham Trust and the council. 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	5	20
3.1	4	5	20
3.2	4	5	20
4.1	4	5	20
4.2	4	5	20
			100

For more information on how to make an application and how to complete the form, see section 12 below.

10   When can I apply for funding?

The scheme is open for applications between Wednesday 7 December 2022 and Tuesday 17 January 2023. Applications must be submitted via the Good Exchange by 23.59 on Tuesday 17 January 2023. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

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

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

Funding will be released upon signature of a grant agreement.

After the end of the period of grant funding (31 July 2023), 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 submitted via the [Good Exchange](#) by 17:00 on Thursday 31 August 2023.

The report will be reviewed by the council and Greenham Trust and if there are any issues with the way the funds were used, the planned activities were not completed and/or 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 grants@basingstoke.gov.uk as soon as possible.

12   <u>How to make an application?</u>

Applicants will need to complete an application form and provide supporting documents such as the organisation's constitution and audited accounts. Applications must be made via the Good Exchange. All application and supporting documents must be submitted by 23:59 on Tuesday 17 January 2023. 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.

<u>Section one: about your organisation</u>

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. 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.

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

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 5 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 residents. 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 organisation's operating and core costs.

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 what community needs the activities and services they are seeking funding will help address. It also asks information on who will benefit from these services and activities.

Question 3.1

This is a scoring question with a weighting of 5 and a wordcount limit of 400 words.

The funding is aimed at supporting residents affected by the rising cost of living. It will be important for the assessors to understand what these needs are and how they have been identified. Therefore, 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 5 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 the beneficiaries of the activities and services and how these activities and services will help them.

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. 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 activities and services it is seeking for will make to residents affected by the rising cost of living. 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 a progress and performance report. 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 a scoring question with a weighting of 5 and 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 how they will ensure that the services and activities they are seeking funding for will be accessible and inclusive.

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 organisations can access up to £5,000 of grant funding. Make sure you only apply for the amount of funding you need. Under exceptional circumstances, a grant of more than £5,000 may be awarded. Applicants will need to demonstrate and explain clearly why they require more than £5,000.

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 and if applicants cannot explain clearly why the cash reserves they hold cannot be used to fund the activities they are seeking funding for, their application may be unsuccessful.

This section focuses on the level of cash reserves the applicant organisation holds. Please indicate the amount of restricted/committed and unrestricted/uncommitted reserves your organisation holds. Please also explain clearly what those reserves are for. If your organisation has unrestricted/uncommitted reserves, you will need to justify why these can't be used to fund the activities your organisation is seeking funding for.

Question 5.5

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 5.6

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.

Section six: 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 these documents.

13   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 grants@basingstoke.gov.uk

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://www.charity-fundraising.org.uk/grant-fundraising-top-bid-writing-tips
- https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/funding-income/all-about-grants/getting-ready-apply/