

STRONG COMMUNITIES WITH A BRIGHT FUTURE



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Funded by
UK Government



Strong Communities Grant Fund 2020 - 2025

Guidance Notes

For further information and advice contact **the Council's Strong Communities Grant Team** with your idea:

Email: scgapplications@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

What is the Strong Communities Grant Fund?

The Strong Communities Grant Fund will offer grants to Community Groups, Voluntary organisations and Town and Community Councils towards the cost of initiatives within the Vale of Glamorgan that help to support the Council's vision of "strong communities with a bright future".

We are pleased to advise that this round of the Strong Communities Grant Fund is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. As such, there will be specific requirements in your application to show how your project fits with the Shared Prosperity Fund Objectives, and if successful, projects will be required to provide some specific evidence regarding their outputs and outcomes. As always, the Strong Communities team will be available to help you navigate these.

The fund aims to:

1. Improve the resilience of organisations/groups or their activities by funding activities which add value to their current work and reduce their reliance on grant funding in the future;
2. Provide seed corn funding towards initiatives that can demonstrate longer term sustainability;
3. Undertake consultation, feasibility, design and other specialist work to develop proposals for future activity and funding bids;
4. Meet the capital costs of schemes by purchasing plant, machinery, equipment or other assets or
5. Undertake work that would enable services to be provided, for example, through increased income generation potential.
6. Open up Section 106 funding to specific communities where developments have taken place. Funding for facilities and open space projects in specific areas will be announced when each round is opened for applications.
7. Encourage projects that include innovative ways of addressing climate change.
8. Encourage projects that help Vale communities to cope with the rising cost of living.

How do I apply?

Applicants must complete a Strong Communities Grant application form. Anyone considering making an application must contact the Strong Communities Grant Team **before** completing an application form, so that eligibility can be assessed at an early stage.

Email: scgfapplications@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk : with a brief paragraph outlining your project, so that we can advise you further.

We will provide you with an online form appropriate to the grant sum you are requesting. Additional information will normally be required in support of your application. In particular, evidence of any consents, permissions or licences needed to allow you to carry out your project will be required. Financial quotations will also be required in most circumstances.

Incomplete applications or applications submitted without the correct supporting documentation may not be considered.

Who can apply?

The following categories of organisation are eligible to apply:

- Community groups and voluntary organisations
- Town and Community Councils, independently or in partnership with a community group where the latter lacks legal status.
- Consortia of the above, including those that have established formal governance arrangements such as social enterprises.

How much can we apply for?

Applications are invited for grants of between £3,001 and £25,000. minimum grant is £,3001. **The maximum grant that will be offered towards any single project is £25,000.** All successful projects must be completed by **no later than 31st March 2025.**

Relevant deadlines for submission of applications will be posted on the Council's Strong Communities Grant Fund webpage: <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/Business-Support/Strong-Communities-Grant.aspx>

Value for money is a key assessment factor and demand is likely to be high. Applicants are expected to make a contribution, either monetary and /or 'in kind' towards the overall project cost. The level of contribution will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Please do not be discouraged by the application form – the Council is here to support you through the application process. We hope that this will help you in the future if you apply for other funding from other bodies.

The amount of information that we are expecting you to provide in this form should be proportionate to the amount of money you are applying for. We need to know exactly what you plan to spend the grant on, what you hope to achieve through your project, who will benefit and how this will help in you in the longer term. You can contact us at any point for support to complete your application and we encourage you to provide us with an early draft so that we can provide feedback, if necessary.

The fund total over 5 years is £837,533 until March 2025*

£150,000 is available for Capital projects over 3 years.

£660,000 is available for Revenue projects over 3 years

£27,533 is an unallocated fund held in reserve from the previous grant programme.

In addition, Section 106 contributions received for the purpose of Communities Facilities and Open Space may be available within specific areas. The Vale of Glamorgan Council seeks contributions from developers towards the costs of providing or enhancing community infrastructure, in order to mitigate the impacts that arise as a consequence of their development.

It is important to note that S106 monies may only be spent on facilities where the new development has contributed to the need to provide or enhance the facilities. Applicants will need to demonstrate when applying for any S106 contributions, that this has been considered.

S106 funding is usually available for capital projects only, but revenue projects that link to the needs identified within new developments may also be supported.

What can be funded?

Here are some examples of things that could be supported. (This list is not exhaustive).

- Projects that improve the ability of the applicant to generate income.
- Projects that support an applicant to take on and sustain an asset.
- Feasibility studies, community mapping & detailed design to prepare for funding bids
- Purchase and hire of equipment, machinery or other assets.
- Marketing and translation costs
- Capital works, including refurbishment of buildings and open spaces.
- Investments which reduce the long-term running costs of the applicant organisation
- Investments which improve the efficiency of the applicant organisation
- Activities which pool resources across several organisations in order to save costs.
- Research and other consultancy costs
- Cost of staff, only where the cost relates to delivery of the project.
- Training
- Travel & subsistence related to the project, including volunteer expenses.
- Irrecoverable VAT

- Venue hire
- A contribution to project overheads up to a maximum of 10% of the total value of the funding applied for

What can't be funded?

The following are examples of things that would not generally be supported. (This list is not exhaustive).

- Day-to-day running costs (e.g. core staff, utility bills, council tax, rent and insurance)
- Projects that are more appropriate for support from other Council Schemes: e.g. Events fund
- Projects that do not align to the Council's Corporate Plan
- Projects that cannot demonstrate need.
- One off fundraising events
- Projects that happen or start before we confirm our grant.
- Items that mainly benefit individuals (for example, equipment that is not shared)
- Religious or political activities, including campaign groups.
- Hospitality e.g. Purchase of alcohol.
- Routine repairs and maintenance – e.g. Boiler servicing, grass cutting.
- Projects that do not take place in the Vale of Glamorgan
- Recoverable VAT

The following examples may help you to judge the eligibility of your project. Please note, however, that projects extending beyond one year are no longer eligible for support. **All projects must be completed by no later than 31st March 2025.**

What we would support: Case Study 1

The Community Kitchen

A community identifies the need for a lunch club through talking to users of the community centre and other residents. This kitchen could also be used for weddings and other functions, therefore making the overall facility more sustainable. The Hall does not have a commercial grade kitchen. Funding could be used to purchase equipment and the installation of the kitchen. The fund could also support the training of volunteers and marketing of the club itself. Support for marketing the newly installed kitchen could also be provided. The lunch club would cover its costs and generate additional income through appropriate charging which would allow for future investment in replacement equipment.

Example of eligible costs

Installation of new kitchen and other equipment at community centre	£12,500
Project / volunteer Coordinator over 2 years (part-time)	£5,000
Training and certification of volunteers	£1,800
Travel costs for the volunteers	£300

Marketing materials (pop ups, leaflets and 2 x adverts in local press)	£880
Menu development	£600
Total project cost	£21,080

Applicants for grants of between £3,001 and £25,000 will be expected to make a contribution to the overall project cost.

What we would not support:

A community thinks that a lunch club will work and wants to pay a catering company to come in and provide this service using the existing facility. It wants to pay itself room hire and pay session staff to support the activity. It proposes to charge a nominal amount for lunch or offer it for free which means the grant is subsidising the running costs of this service.

What we would support: Case Study 2

Service user training and employment projects – catering

A community led organisation identifies training opportunities for its service users through the establishment of a community café. Funding could be used to develop the café space, provide seed corn funding for rent and staffing costs. Volunteers would gain valuable skills over a 3 year period, and hopefully move into employment. The café would also have developed a customer base and regular income over this period to enable it to cover costs in the longer term.

Example of eligible costs

Installation of new kitchen	£12,600
Rent for space @ £2,000pa	£6,000
Project / volunteer Coordinator over 3 yrs	£20,000
Travel costs for the volunteers	£1200
Marketing materials (pop ups, leaflets and 2 x adverts in local press)	£1500
Total project cost	£41,300

Any grant offer would be limited to a maximum of £25,000 towards the overall project cost.

Applicants for grants of between £3,001 and £25,000 will be expected to make a contribution to the overall project cost

What we would not support

The cost of a training officer to train 36 clients in classroom environment in catering skills. No long term income could be identified through this approach. The project would just end after three years.

What we would support: Case Study 3

A Community Hub & Garden

A community identifies the need for a community hub in the area due to increased pressures on its existing facilities due to a new housing development on the edge of the village. Section 106 is available to the village in question. Funding could be given in two stages to support detailed community surveys and resulting designs of a new facilities. The community identified the need for a community hub, offering an ICT suite, coffee shop and crèche facilities. It also identified a need for a community garden in an adjoining resident's accommodation for older people. These projects would then be costed and a stage 2 grant could be awarded subject to the approval of the local Ward Members.

What we would not support.

A proposal from a limited number of residents to build a play area with no evidence of need for such facilities. The Council can support residents to identify need through its community mapping toolkit. Watch [this short video](#) on our YouTube Channel to hear about some communities in the Vale that have participated.

What we would support: Case Study 4

Taking on assets – A sports club

A bowls club that is taking on an asset owned by the Council currently has the green mowed by contractors. It cannot afford to do this once it takes on the asset. It works with two other clubs nearby to see how they can reduce the costs of grass cutting and painting. It was decided that a mower and a trailer to transport it would help them to reduce costs. The club thinks that it may be able to use the mower and volunteers to offer services at other clubs across the County. Payment for this service would help cover running costs.

They also think that the clubhouse could be rented out for conferencing and events so have asked for some conference equipment.

Example of eligible costs

Sit on specialist mower	£8,000
Trailer and 3 x hook-ups to transport between clubs	£1,800
Health and safety training	£600
3 x security sheds and locks	£1,500
Projector, Screen and Flip Chart Stands	£1,000
Total project cost	£12,900

Applicants for grants of between £3,001 and £25,000 will be expected to make a contribution to the overall project cost

What we would not support:

The cost of 3 years grass cutting by a garden contractor
3 year lease of a mower (what happens at the end of 3 years?)
Ongoing servicing and repair costs of the mower

Do I include VAT in my application?

You can only include VAT in the application if you cannot claim it back from HM Revenue and Customs. Applicants are responsible for taking advice on VAT. Unfortunately, the Council cannot offer this advice.

How long does a grant last?

If your application is successful, your funding offer letter will specify a deadline by which the project must be completed. You will also be required to report on the progress of your project periodically and in line with the terms and conditions of your grant offer.

How will the grant be paid?

The grant will be paid in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the funding letter. The grant will usually be paid retrospectively and subject to all invoices / receipts being submitted to the Council. In exceptional circumstances where this could cause real difficulties for small organisations, stage payments will be considered. The best thing to do is talk to us about your financial position and we will do our best to work out the method of grant payment. Your funding letter will state grant amount as a percentage of the total project cost. Strong Communities Grant Fund payments cannot be allocated against specific elements of the project.

What is the application timetable?

Application windows for the grant funds will be advertised on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website. Your application must be complete with all attachments and submitted by email, by 12 noon on the deadline date. You can submit your application at any point during the window. Keep in touch with us and don't hesitate to ask any questions by emailing scgfapplications@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

If your application is successful, you will be issued a funding letter and associated documents to sign and return **electronically**. The pack will explain any conditions, the approval process and how to submit a grant claim. If you have any questions at this point we will be happy to help you.

Who makes the decision and what are the assessment criteria?

Your application will be examined by the relevant Grants Officer at the Vale of Glamorgan Council and any queries followed up with you.

Applications for grants of between £3,001 and £25,000 will be submitted to a grants evaluation panel meeting for consideration. The panel is made up of the following:

- Leader of the Council
- Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration
- One representative from a Town Council

- One representative from a Community Council
- One representative from each of any donors of recurring third party funding
- One representative from Glamorgan Voluntary Services
- One representative from a member organisation of the Public Services Board
- One representative from the Waterloo Foundation

The Grant Panel may choose to attach conditions to your grant offer, if successful. You will then be notified in writing of the decision on your application.

The panel will assess your application against the following criteria:

Assessment Criteria

Strong Communities Grant Fund project proposals will be scored using the following scoring scale of 0 – 25 to give a maximum total score of 100. No application will progress which scores less than the minimum quality threshold of 70.

	Priority Criteria	Score
1	Strategic fit with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Prosperity Fund interventions • Vale Council Priorities (Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025 and the Strategic Equalities Plan 2020 – 2024) • Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 	0 – 25
2	Value for money, including a proportionate number of outputs and outcomes pledged for the level of funding requested.	0 – 25
3	Stakeholder engagement in shaping and delivering the project	0 – 25
4	Added value and sustainability	0 – 25
	Total	100

Criteria 1 – Strategic Fit

Score up to 25

If you aren't sure how your project fits with this section, don't worry - just contact the Strong Communities Grant Officer for advice. The idea behind showing these links is to make sure that projects funded are relevant to the priorities of the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Council and Welsh Government.

Fit with Shared Prosperity Fund interventions. These are:

Communities and Place
Improvements to town centres and high streets (W1) Support for local arts, cultural and creative activities (W6) Active travel enhancements and other small scale green transport projects (W7) Impactful volunteering and/or social action projects (W9) Community measures to reduce the cost-of-living etc (W13) Relevant feasibility studies (W14)

All projects funded by the UKSPF in the Vale of Glamorgan, must align with one or more of the interventions listed above, and must contribute to the outputs and outcomes associated with that intervention. (See Appendix A)

Contribution to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's values set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 25 and consistent with Council's Wellbeing Objectives. These are:

Objective 1: To work with and for our communities

Objective 2: To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth

Objective 3: To support people at home and in their community

Objective 4: To respect enhance and enjoy our environment

Projects should be able to demonstrate a link to one or more of the above objectives. For grants over £3,000 state how your project is consistent with the outcome(s) you have chosen.

Contribution to the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020 – 2024 – Working together for a fairer future.

The plan contains 10 Strategic Equality Objectives. These are:

1. Improve how we involve, engage, and communicate with protected groups about our work and decisions.
2. Continue to reduce the gender pay gap in the Council, identify whether there is a pay gap for ethnic minorities in the Council by March 2021, and report on both annually.
3. Improve employment opportunities in the Council for protected groups, particularly disabled and young people, to reflect the diversity of the local population more closely by March 2024.
4. Continue to work on developing a more inclusive work environment that supports staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential through a range of actions by March 2024.

5. Seek the views of protected groups on proposed changes to policy, budgets and services
6. Encourage people with protected characteristics to report hate crimes, harassment, and discrimination
7. Develop and implement processes throughout the life of this plan to address hate crimes, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
8. Consider the housing needs of people with protected characteristics and how our work impacts on them, taking action to address any disproportionate impacts on these groups.
9. Work in partnership to consider issues relating to transport accessibility, particularly for disabled people and older people.
10. Develop and implement plans throughout the life of this plan to promote our natural and built environment and cultural heritage, including accessibility, to protected groups.

These equality objectives support our work to achieve the five ways of working and contribute to our well-being objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Projects should be able to demonstrate compatibility with the Plan and its objectives.

[Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015.](#)

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the well-being of Wales.

The Act has **7 well-being goals**. These are:

- A globally responsible Wales
- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

The Act has **5 ways of working**:

- Integration
- Collaboration
- Prevention
- Long-Term
- Involvement

Projects should be able to demonstrate a link to one or more of the above wellbeing goals and ways of working. For projects over £3,000 please state how your project is consistent with the ones you have chosen.

Reshaping Services

The Council is delivering a Reshaping Services programme. This programme seeks to reshape the Council to enable it to meet the future needs of citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan within the context of unprecedented financial challenges. **Projects that support this Reshaping Services programme should score well against Criteria 1.**

The Strategy has three objectives:

- To identify alternative ways of delivering services which provide better outcomes for citizens and / or more efficient means of delivery.
- To meet financial challenges while mitigating the impact of cuts on service users
- To develop the Council and its partners to ensure they are able to meet future challenges.

The Council recognises the value of the contribution that Town and Community Councils and the voluntary sector have to play; there is a project dedicated to developing these relationships and working in partnership on specific projects, including community asset transfers. If you can show how your project links to our Reshaping Service programme then it should achieve a higher score.

Criteria 2 – Value for money and outcomes

Score up to 25

This criterion speaks for itself. We want to know what you intend to achieve through your project. You may create jobs, improve health, generate funding for your organisation or take on an asset in your community. Give us an idea of what you hope to achieve and how much this will cost. We have a limited amount of money and projects that achieve more with their grants will score more highly in this section.

Criteria 3 - Stakeholder engagement in shaping and delivering the project

Score up to 25

Projects should be developed in response to detailed local knowledge and sound evidence of need. Local communities are best placed to understand their local circumstances and to identify the barriers and opportunities facing them. Applicants should explain **who** their stakeholders are; **how** they have been engaged during the development of the project and how they will continue to be involved in its delivery. Applicants should explain the ways in which the final project reflects the outcome of the community engagement.

Criteria 4 – Added value and sustainability

Score up to 25

Applicants should explain the added value that will derive from their project, beyond the core activities it currently delivers. A key consideration in project development should be how the project can improve the resilience of the organisation and reduce reliance on grant funding in the future. We cannot support the core running costs of your organisation using this funding.

Marketing / Promotional Materials

Your grant offer is conditional upon the use the funding partners' logos on associated marketing / promotional products e.g., flyers, website, social media, interpretation panels. There is specific guidance on this matter which you are asked to follow and if your application is successful, we will supply this with your funding letter.

Will I need to monitor the project?

As part of your application, you will have set out what you hope to achieve with your funding. This might be the number of individuals benefiting, receiving training, or physical projects completed. We will ask you to report to us on progress periodically during delivery of your project and on its completion. Please work with our officers as part of this application process to agree and set out the outcomes of your project.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council must be notified if you propose to change the use, or sell any building or equipment acquired, reclaimed or refurbished using this grant. If this does not continue to reflect the objectives of the grant scheme VOGC may recover from you funds up to the total amount of grant paid in respect of that project for a period of up to 5 years from final payment of the grant.

Date of disposal of asset (s)	Amount to be repaid
Within 1 year	Funding to be repaid in full
Within 2 years	80% of funding to be repaid
Within 3 years	60% of funding to be repaid
Within 4 years	40% of funding to be repaid
Within 5 years	20% of funding to be repaid
After 5 years	No funding to be repaid

How many quotes do I need to seek?

The tendering table below sets out the procedure you need to follow.

All projects costs should be accurate and based on fact. Projects that are awarded funding cannot return and ask for additional funds because their project was not properly costed. Therefore, projects should be costed based on the recent acquisition of quotes, or recent experience. Projects will be required to provide evidence of the following tendering activity before grants will be paid, and we strongly advise that this is undertaken prior to application submission.

Tender Information

Estimated value	Tender Action Required
Up to £2,499	Direct award
£2,500-£24,999	3 written quotes or prices sought from relevant suppliers of goods, works and/or services
Over £25,000	Formal tender process

Outputs and outcomes

All projects funded must align with one or more of the interventions listed on page 10 and must contribute to the outputs and outcomes associated with that intervention. A full list of Outputs and Outcomes can be viewed in Appendix A. Projects will be required to provide evidence that they have achieved their proposed Outputs and Outcomes.

Your application for grant funding must be approved prior to starting work. No grant money will be available for works carried out prior to written approval being issued.

All approved work must be completed and evidence of payment by the applicant submitted before the grant can be claimed.

IMPORTANT

It is important that you read these notes and the step-by-step guide to completing your application form – they will help you complete your application correctly and help avoid any delays in processing.

Appendix A Shared Prosperity Fund Interventions

Communities & Place				
Intervention	Outputs	Target	Outcomes	Target
W1 Improvements to town centres and high streets	M2 public realm improved/created		Increased footfall	
			Increased visitor numbers	
			Reduced vacancy rates	

			Improved perception of facilities/amenities	
			Improved accessibility	
W6 Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities	Number of organisations receiving grants		Jobs safeguarded	
	Number of local events or activities supported.		Increased visitors	
			Improved engagement numbers	
W7 Active travel enhancements and other small scale green transport projects	Amount of new or improved cycleways of paths		Increased use of cycleways or paths (%)	
W9 Impactful volunteering and/or social action projects	Number of volunteering opportunities supported		Improved engagement numbers (%)	
	Number of projects			
W13 Community measures to reduce the cost of living etc	Number of organisations receiving grants.		Greenhouse gas reduction (%)	
	Number of households receiving support			
W14 Relevant feasibility studies	Number of feasibility studies supported.		Increased number of projects arising from funded studies	