

# Capital Grants Policy

(Revised March 2026)

## Introduction

The council provide grants to voluntary and community organisations to help build thriving communities and improve the quality of life for the residents of South Oxfordshire, through projects that; create thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, provides infrastructure that meets local need, and that take action on climate change and nature recovery.

Applicants apply online through the council's website, where the full guidance is available to help the applicant submit the best possible application.

## What type of project will the scheme fund?

This fund is for projects that support, The Way Ahead outward facing Council Plan priorities (2025-2029); to create thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, homes and infrastructure that meets local need, and that take action on climate change and nature recovery.

They must take place in the district or within a three-mile radius of the district boundary and be able to demonstrate significant numbers of South Oxfordshire residents will benefit, or that the project will improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups and will contribute towards at least one of The Way Ahead Council Plan priorities for 2025-2029. Submitting their application under a specific theme.

We will only fund capital expenditure (excluding vehicles) from this scheme like buying, building, replacing or making improvements to long term assets (buildings, play areas and equipment). To us a long-term asset must have a life of at least five years for a grant of up to £25,000 and ten years for grants over £25,000. It must remain the property of the organisation we are funding for the requisite five- or ten-year term.

This is a highly competitive grant scheme, and the council receives applications from many excellent and worthy projects. Therefore, it's rarely possible to fund every eligible application or award the full grant that is requested. We would advise applicants to have a thorough fundraising plan with contingencies in place and if there are significant funding gaps, please speak to the community enablement team as we may advise you to break down your project into phases.

We won't give grants towards loans, mortgages and revenue costs like maintenance, rent, clothing or salaries. We may not fund projects which could directly or indirectly

have a negative impact on supporting us to achieve The Way Ahead Council Plan aims. We can award grants for certain repairs, but it depends on the scale and nature of them, so we suggest contacting the community enablement team at [grants@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southandvale.gov.uk) before applying.

We will consider projects that have started. However, we will only accept applications for work/projects that won't complete before our decision is made, as we cannot fund any retrospective costs.

Organisations cannot apply for projects we have awarded grants to before under this Capital Grant Scheme unless it is for a different phase. Funds received from our other grant schemes can be used to contribute towards the project. However, the combined grant awards from the council should not exceed the total project costs.

We will only accept one application for one project per organisation.

## **Who can apply to the scheme?**

- Town and Parish Councils
- Non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies
- Community based organisations

Organisations will need to be able to provide a copy of their constitution or equivalent governing documents.

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity, and welcome applications from organisations who represent minority or vulnerable groups.

## **Who is not eligible?**

- Other local authorities/public sector bodies (for example Oxfordshire County Council, NHS trusts)
- Organisations that are funded by public sector/statutory bodies (for example Schools, GP practices)
- Groups who raise funds on behalf of or will improve/create facilities that will predominately benefit an ineligible organisation (for example PTA's delivering projects to benefit their school)
- Projects that usually fall to other public sector/statutory bodies to provide, or will primarily benefit organisations under their remit
- Individuals (this includes making any payments to individuals on behalf of community groups)
- Profit-based businesses
- Projects for residential buildings

## **What are the minimum and maximum amounts for the scheme?**

The council has a budget of £320,000, 15 per cent of which will be reserved for smaller projects with a project value of up to 10 per cent of the total budget. The remaining 85 per cent will be for larger projects, allowing like for like projects to be

compared. Any unallocated funds from the smaller pot will be added to the larger fund and vice versa.

Organisations can request a minimum of £5,000 and a maximum of £75,000 but no more than 50 per cent of their total project costs. In exceptional cases, like a major funder pulling out of a project that offers significant benefit to our residents we may consider a request for more than 50 per cent. We also have discretion to fully fund projects under the value of £10,000.

To request an exceptional amount, applicants must get approval from us (via the community enablement team) before submitting an application.

We will not award more than the amount requested.

The maximum an applicant can request from the larger fund is £75,000 or five per cent of the annual budget for smaller projects.

We award our grants as a percentage of the total project costs. If a project ends up costing less than expected we will pay the awarded percentage of the final cost, however if it costs more, we limit our award to the maximum amount agreed.

## **Opening and closing dates**

We open for applications once a year. We publish the opening and closing dates on our website.

We will open for a minimum of eight weeks and a decision in principle will be made by the Community Grants Panel within 14 -16 weeks of the closing date and then a formal decision will be made.

## **Scheme eligibility criteria**

In addition to meeting the requirements above, applicants must provide:

- a copy of the latest bank statement in the name of the organisation, as identified in the application and on their constitution
- two quotes for the project or a professional estimate for any building work
- a breakdown of the budget for the project including all the sources of funding
- a constitution that demonstrates that the project they are applying for matches the organisation objectives. They are a 'not for profit organisation' and the trustees don't receive benefits (except parish or town councils, churches or similar organisations that are governed by a central body and therefore don't have their own constitution).

And must confirm:

- they sign up to our standard conditions before proceeding with the application. These are available to download from the website and grants system

- organisations have the correct authority in place for their representatives to apply and enter into the Grant Agreement and legally bind the organisation. Parochial Church Councils and parish councils have their own governing arrangements for this, which should be followed
- the project won't start before an offer letter has been issued
- they have all the necessary consents such as planning permission, listed building consent, Diocese faculty, landlord or Head lease consent, compliance with any restrictions on the property title etc. and could provide these on request. Please note, we cannot fund planning permission, building regulations, legal or property fees if these have been provided by the council.
- your organisation has not received any Minimal Financial Assistance, in excess of £315,000 in the elapsed part of the current Financial Year and in the two Financial Years immediately preceding the current Financial Year. 'Financial Year' means a period of twelve (12) months ending with 31 March. Providing relevant evidence if subsidy has been paid.
- they will provide additional information to help us evaluate their application on request. If mandatory information is requested and not provided by a specified deadline, the application is at risk of being rejected.

Applicants requesting more than £10,000 but below £25,000 must also provide:

- copies of any necessary planning, listed building, Diocese faculty, landlord or Head lease consent, compliance with any restrictions on the property title and other relevant permissions
- for land or building applications, confirmation of property ownership or lease with five years remaining, and any break clause within that period
- their most recent financial accounts or their working budget and financial plan for the year if they're a new organisation. Parish Councils are required to submit their full accounts.
- a project plan including ongoing maintenance arrangements.

For land or buildings, applicants requesting over £25,000 must also provide:

- evidence of ownership of the property, interest in the property, or a lease with at least ten years remaining, including an official copy of the Land Registry title register and plan of no more than three months old. If the property is leased, or the Land Registry documents show another organisation has a claim on the title, please provide valid permission for the works from the third party (freeholder) / landlord.

The head of service responsible for community enablement can decide to accept applications that don't meet all the above criteria and will do this on a case-by-case basis. Applicants must give clear reasons why they can't meet a particular criteria for us to consider an exception. For example, where there would be a significant impact to the community if the project were not able to go ahead.

Organisations must formally accept the grant offer within four weeks of the date of offer letter otherwise the offer will be withdrawn.

Projects awarded up to £25,000 must complete within 12 months from accepting the offer. Projects awarded over £25,000 must start work within 12 months of accepting the offer and must complete within 24 months.

If there are any unexpected delays to the project, applicants can request one extension of up to 12 months, giving the reasons for the delay. We must receive these requests at least one month before the end of the original grant term.

We will send reminders for unclaimed grants three months before they expire for projects that have not started within the specified timescale. We will return any unclaimed awards after the expiry date to the council's general reserves.

## Decision making

### Community Enablement Team

The Community Enablement Team will review the eligibility of every application before using the scoring matrix in appendix one to suggest scores to the Community Grants Panel. They will also flag any concerns or issues for additional consideration, to support the panel's decision making.

### Head of service

In accordance with the council's constitution. The council's head of service responsible for community enablement and when relevant, in consultation with the relevant cabinet member (using delegated powers) will decide:

- if we will accept requests for over 50 per cent of the total project cost
- if we will accept applications that don't meet all the eligibility criteria
- whether to give extensions to the term of any grant
- whether to amend award percentages beyond what was originally agreed, as requested by applicants. Increases will stay within the 50 per cent maximum limit for the scheme.

### Community Grants Panel (known as the CGP)

The CGP considers officers' suggested scores for each application and makes recommendations to Cabinet for awards based on the scoring matrix at appendix one.

Competition for the fund means that not all worthy and eligible projects can receive funding.

Even if an application scores enough points, the panel can recommend **not funding** it if they:

- have serious concerns around the management of the project now or in the future
- believe the applicant has sufficient unrestricted reserves to fund the project themselves
- have serious concerns about the appropriateness of the project or its financial viability, such as if the organisation has not demonstrated having a sound fundraising plan with contingencies should any of their grant applications (to the council and others) be unsuccessful or award less than requested.
- believe the project doesn't meet the criteria or help deliver the council's Council Plan priorities.

Should the application not receive enough points to be awarded any funding, the CGP also have the discretion to **recommend a grant award of up to £10,000** if:

- an award can be justified as an important project for the community
- there are concerns that failure to fund the project or activity could result in a net disbenefit to the wider community.

The CGP recommendations are then presented to the Cabinet Member to consider and decide which grants to award.

## **Standard conditions for all grant awards**

All organisations are required to sign up to our standard conditions before proceeding with the application.

We may add extra conditions to any grant if we consider it necessary. This may include the use of a charge or restriction to protect the council's funds. These conditions will be determined using a risk matrix in consultation with our legal team for any projects that appear to present a medium or high risk. They will then be presented to the CGP and Cabinet Member for consideration.

The head of service responsible for community enablement has delegated authority to remove any agreed grant conditions.

We will confirm applicants have met all the conditions before making any payment. Failure to meet all the agreed conditions may delay payment or, in extreme cases, result in us withdrawing our grant offer.

## **Payment of grants**

We will only pay towards costs incurred after the date the offer letter has been issued, as we cannot pay for retrospective costs.

We will make a full upfront payment for grants up to £10,000. Grants above £10,001, will be paid in two stages, 75 per cent when we receive a valid signed acceptance form and standard conditions. We pay the balance when the project completes, upon receipt of evidence (receipts/invoices) of expenditure.

The council has the discretion to delay the first payment where it is perceived due to conditions outside the organisation control the project start date could be delayed. In exceptional cases like property purchases, we may make a single upfront payment, which officers may recommend as part of their evaluation. The council also has the discretion to pay in two stages, half when we receive a valid signed acceptance form and standard conditions, and half upon the confirmation of an exchange and completion date from the applicant's solicitor.

If the project costs less than expected, we will reduce our final payment accordingly and, if necessary, request back some of the first payment (the minimum amount for us to request repayment is £500).

Grants that have not been claimed within six months of the project completing will be closed and the final payment not issued if we do not hear from the applicant.

If you would like this policy in an alternative format please contact the equalities team via [equalities@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southandvale.gov.uk).

## Scoring and award matrix for Capital Grant applications

Suggested Scores	Priority Level	<b>Awards:</b> (all awards are subject to sufficient budget)  <b>Scores:</b> The scoring thresholds which identify what priority level the project falls into can be amended, depending on the number of applications received and potential allocation of funds to ensure maximum community benefit. As agreed by the Cabinet Member.
22-32 points	High priority	We will award full amount requested - budget permitting - Capped at 50 per cent of the cost unless we allow a request for more and they meet the criteria for an exception.
16-21 points	Medium priority	Award up to 75 per cent of the amount requested, dependant on the score – budget permitting. Medium priorities will only receive funding if there is budget left after all the high priority projects are awarded
0-15 points	Low priority	No funding awarded.

### Cross-Cutting Criteria – all projects to be scored against these

#### Community need, inclusion and consultation

Scoring guidance – the council wishes to support projects aimed at improving community well-being and resilience to sustain community facilities as well as providing new activities or facilities. We also wish to prioritise those projects which encourage access for all and help meet the council's equality objectives. **To achieve the highest point within each section**, we would like to see evidence that stakeholder consultation and/or an accessibility audit has been carried out to establish the level of need for the project.

*Should there be other similar facilities available in the local area, emphasis should be placed on providing evidence that there is sufficient demand within the community to support this work. We expect that all applications comply with the Equality Act 2010 and can offer support to help ensure your project is accessible for all. For projects that aim to improve parks, play equipment and public*

spaces (such as Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and outdoor sports facilities), please consider how to encourage usage from more girls and young women in your designs <https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/>.

Points	Criteria to score	Project examples
0	The project did not involve consultation with stakeholders, and no evidence of need, new activities or improvement to existing activities has been provided.	A decorative village sign that will be mainly used for people outside of the community or doesn't allow any community activities to take place nor give the community a facility to use.
1-2	<p>(1 point) Little additional use/improvement will be gained as a result of the project e.g the project replaces existing facilities or allows existing activities to continue.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The project moderately improves a minor community facility or activity.</p> <p>(2 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b> Some consultation has taken place.</p>	<p>It replaces furniture in the village hall with like-for-like replacements. No consideration has been given to providing more accessible furniture (higher chairs with backs and arm rests).</p> <p>Replacing like-for-like playground equipment without consultation for how the space could be improved to enable more users or provide more inclusive play equipment.</p> <p>A decision to undertake the project has been taken at committee level with little detail of how existing users or wider community have been consulted.</p>
3-4	<p>(3 points) the project moderately improves or extends a substantial community facility or activity.</p> <p>or</p> <p>the project significantly improves or extends a minor community facility or activity.</p> <p>or</p> <p>the project provides a new minor facility or activity for the community.</p>	<p>Replacing existing park benches with longer-lasting accessible ones, replacing the chairs in the village hall with more comfortable accessible ones or improve a play area to cater for more ages.</p> <p>Refurbishment of changing rooms to increase capacity and accessibility for disabled and mobility impaired people (e.g. disabled toilets, handrails, accessible changing rooms).</p>

	<p>(4 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b> consultation has been carried out with existing users but no evidence to suggest this has been done with the wider community.</p>	<p>Increase club participation by purchasing boats for a small canoeing club or increasing the size of a playing area providing some new equipment.</p> <p>Feedback has been formally invited from members via a survey or AGM. Some evidence of informal feedback from users of the facility would score less points.</p>
<p><b>5-6</b></p>	<p>(5 points) the project will provide substantial new facilities or activities to the community. or the project significantly improves the capacity of a significant community facility.</p> <p>(6 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b> substantial consultation has been carried out with the community/other stakeholders, including minority groups if project impacts on them.</p>	<p>Creating a brand-new play area where there wasn't one already which takes into consideration all users and provides inclusive equipment. (e.g. equipment for disabled children, sensory equipment, wheelchair accessible paths, accessible seating and picnic benches).</p> <p>Adding a large extension to a village hall that is accessible to all. If not already part of the building also considers disabled and mobility impaired users, people of small stature (e.g. disabled parking, accessible kitchen space, disabled toilet, wheelchair accessible doorways/ramps/entrance and egress).</p> <p>The significant reorganisation of a facility to increase capacity where full consideration has been given to all users including those that are disabled or mobility impaired.</p> <p>Creation of a new sporting facility such as Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), pavilion or playing pitch that meets the needs of all members of the community including disabled and mobility impaired people.</p>

		<p>An accessibility audit has been completed and changes to the project have been adopted to improve access to all.</p> <p>Every effort has been made to invite all members of the community and stakeholders to provide feedback through a formal survey, AGM or open days. The organisation has identified minority groups in the community and delivered targeted communication to encourage participation. Improvement of facility is included in the local plan or leisure facility strategy (or similar).</p>
<p><b>Deductions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deduct <b>one point</b> if the project reduces the activities/facilities on offer</li> <li>- Deduct <b>two points</b> if the project removes a community facility or stops existing activities taking place.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the panel can recommend not funding a project if they have serious concerns around the management of the project now or in the future, or serious concerns about the appropriateness of the project e.g. should it become apparent that the community don't support the project or would prefer a different solution</p>	<p>A project to overhaul and landscape a car park that reduces the number of parking spaces or disabled parking spaces.</p> <p>Demolishing an old skatepark without replacing it with anything.</p>

## Community benefit

Scoring guidance – This scoring criteria focusses on the groups or communities who will directly use the facility/take part in the project. **To achieve the highest point in each section**, projects should demonstrate that they are either benefiting a greater number of residents when compared to other projects in the same category, or specifically improving access for vulnerable people

and priority groups, which may include – note this is not an exhaustive or a definitive list- the elderly, isolated young families, migrants, homeless, economically or educationally disadvantaged, individuals with disabilities, and those with impairments.

Points	Criteria to score	Project examples
0	The project offers little or no direct benefit to the community.	A decorative sign or boundary wall with no other purpose.
1-2	<p>(1 point) A single sport or special interest group, like an art group, will benefit.</p> <p>Please note, if a sport club wanted to upgrade their pavilion and other groups frequently use it as well, it can score more.</p> <p>(2 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• projects benefiting a greater number of residents when compared to other projects in the same category.</li> </ul>	A project to buy cricket pitch covers, IT equipment for a photography club or landscaping a nursery's garden is only benefiting their members/users.
3-4	<p>(3 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two or more specific groups will benefit.</li> </ul> <p>(4 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• projects benefiting a greater number of residents when compared to other projects in the same category, or</li> <li>• where the project will have a significant impact on the health or wellbeing of one priority group.</li> </ul>	<p>A football club is upgrading its changing room, which a hockey club also use.</p> <p>Specialist equipment for a centre working with severely disabled people.</p> <p>A property/building that promotes social cohesion to help reduce social and rural isolation.</p>
5-6	<p>(5 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project will provide a facility that's open/available to anyone to access, (not just members).</li> </ul> <p>(6 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b></p>	<p>Play areas, community building or recreation ground that are accessible to all.</p> <p>The project improves accessibility of a community facility for vulnerable people or priority groups, which can include – note this is not an exhaustive or a definitive list - the elderly,</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• projects benefiting a greater number of residents when compared to other projects in the same category, or</li> <li>• where the project will have a significant impact on the health or wellbeing of more than one priority group and/or has demonstrated that they have considered how the facility will be inclusive and accessible to all users.</li> </ul>	isolated young families, migrants, homeless, economically or educationally disadvantaged, individuals with disabilities, and those with impairments.
<b>Deductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deduct at least <b>one point</b> if the project will reduce an existing benefit to the community without replacing it.</li> <li>- Deduct <b>two points</b> if it totally removes an existing benefit to the community without replacing it.</li> </ul>	Replacing a recreation ground with tennis courts for a members' club (open community benefit is reduced as only tennis members will benefit going forward).

## Action on Climate Change

Scoring guidance – the criteria in this section is designed to score against the climate credentials of the project itself and the actions taken to mitigate any climate impacts of the project.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Climate Action – Project – review of the climate credentials of the applied for project</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>0</b>	The project has not considered climate impacts and/or biodiversity in its design or implementation.	
<b>1-2</b>	The project has given some consideration to climate impacts and/or biodiversity in its design or implementation.	Application will be scored on the extent of the climate credentials of the project and any actions taken to mitigate climate impacts and improve biodiversity. Such as, selecting a local contractor/supplier who has a sustainability policy,
<b>3-4</b>	The project has given good consideration to climate impacts and/or biodiversity in its design or implementation.	

<b>5-6</b>	The project has given significant consideration to climate impacts and/or biodiversity in its design <b>and</b> implementation.	choosing non-plastic/environmentally-friendly/recycled local materials, maximising opportunities to enhance and increase biodiversity at the site – including tree planting, installing cycle racks and EV charge points at the site to encourage sustainable transport, activity to improve energy efficiency, installation of energy efficient technology such as solar panels.
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## Finance Sustainability

Scoring guidance – Officers will be looking for a sound fundraising plan with contingencies should any of their grant applications (to the council and others) be unsuccessful or receive less than requested.

Competition for funds mean that organisations which still have a large fundraising liability and will have to provide substantial evidence to give confidence that the project will be seen through to completion within the accepted project timeframe. Therefore, organisations are strongly encouraged to seek additional funding from elsewhere before applying to the council. **To achieve the highest points**, we would expect to see evidence that the applicant has included ongoing maintenance costs and eventual replacement.

Points	Criteria to score	Examples/ explanation
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No funding plan in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has not considered how they will fund the project.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding plan in place</li> <li>Not applied for all funds in the funding plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a funding plan that identifies how they will fund their project but have not applied for all the funds identified.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding plan in place</li> <li>Applied for all other funds identified in funding plan but secured <b>less than 50 per cent</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a funding plan that identifies how they will fund their project and have applied for all the funds identified.</li> <li>However, has <b>secured less than 50 per cent</b> of that balance i.e. has applied to another funder for the remaining project costs but has not received an award decision.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding plan in place</li> <li>Applied for all other funds identified in funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a funding plan that identifies how they will fund their project and have applied for all funds identified.</li> </ul>

	<p>plan and <b>secured 50 per cent or more</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information provided on how ongoing maintenance has been budgeted for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They have <b>secured 50 per cent or more</b> of those funds i.e. the organisation has applied to two other funders in addition to this scheme and has received an award decision from one of the external funders which is over half of the outstanding balance on their funding plan (excluding this grant application).</li> <li>The organisation has provided an ongoing budgeted maintenance plan, that includes the required maintenance needs and associated costs, with examples given on how the organisation will fund this and who will undertake the maintenance.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding plan in place</li> <li>Applied for all other funds identified in funding plan and <b>secured 50 per cent or more</b></li> <li>Funding plan includes contingency project costs</li> <li>Information provided on how ongoing maintenance has been budgeted for</li> <li>Information provided on how the organisation will fund replacements in due course (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a funding plan that identifies how they will fund their project and have applied for all funds identified.</li> <li>They have <b>secured 50 per cent or more</b> of those funds i.e. the organisation has applied to two other funders in addition to this scheme and has received an award decision from one of the external funders which is over half of the outstanding balance on their funding plan (excluding this grant application).</li> <li>The funding plan includes contingency project costs in case the total project cost increases i.e. the total project cost includes an additional 10 per cent to mitigate against cost increases.</li> <li>The organisation has provided an ongoing budgeted maintenance plan, that includes the required maintenance needs and associated costs, with examples given on how the organisation will fund this and who will undertake the maintenance.</li> <li>The organisation has identified how long the whole asset or parts of the completed asset will last and has a plan in place on how to fund the replacements to ensure it remains useable with the community.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding plan in place</li> <li>Applied for all other funds identified in funding plan and <b>secured 50 per cent or more</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a funding plan that identifies how they will fund their project and have applied for all funds identified.</li> <li>They have <b>secured 50 per cent or more</b> of those funds i.e. the organisation has applied to two other funders in addition to this scheme and has received an award decision from one of the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding plan includes details on contingency fundraising</li> <li>• Funding plan includes contingency project costs</li> <li>• Information provided on how ongoing maintenance has been budgeted for</li> <li>• Information provided on how the organisation will fund replacements in due course (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<p>external funders which is over half of the outstanding balance on their funding plan (excluding this grant application).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The funding plan identifies other grant schemes that can be applied for should some of their applications be unsuccessful or has confirmed additional funding the organisation could provide in the event of a shortfall in funding awarded.</li> <li>• The funding plan includes contingency project costs in case the total project cost increases i.e. the total project cost includes an additional 10 per cent to mitigate against cost increases</li> <li>• The organisation has provided an ongoing budgeted maintenance plan, that includes the required maintenance needs and associated costs, with examples given on how the organisation will fund this and who will undertake the maintenance.</li> <li>• The organisation has identified how long the whole asset or parts of the completed asset will last and has a plan in place on how to fund the replacements to ensure it remains useable with the community.</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding plan in place</li> <li>• Applied for all other funds identified in funding plan and <b>secured 100 per cent of required funding</b> (including if the organisation is funding the outstanding balance themselves)</li> <li>• Funding plan includes details on contingency fundraising</li> <li>• Funding plan includes contingency project costs</li> <li>• Information provided on how ongoing maintenance has been budgeted for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation has a funding plan that identifies how they will fund their project and have applied for all funds identified.</li> <li>• They have <b>secured 100 per cent or more</b> of those funds i.e. the organisation has applied to two other funders in addition to this scheme and has received an award decision from one of the external funders which is over half of the outstanding balance on their funding plan (excluding this grant application).</li> <li>• The funding plan identifies other grant schemes that can be applied for should some of their applications be unsuccessful or has confirmed additional funding the organisation could provide in the event of a shortfall in funding awarded.</li> <li>• The funding plan includes contingency project costs in case the total project cost increases i.e. the total project cost includes an additional 10 per cent to mitigate against cost increases</li> <li>• The organisation has provided an ongoing budgeted maintenance plan, that includes the required maintenance needs and associated</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information provided on how the organisation will fund replacements in due course (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<p>costs, with examples given on how the organisation will fund this and who will undertake the maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has identified how long the whole asset or parts of the completed asset will last and has a plan in place on how to fund the replacements to ensure it remains useable with the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Deductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deduct one point if the organisation's finances suggest they could contribute towards the cost.</li> <li>Deduct two points if they can afford the whole project without any funding.</li> </ul> <p>Even if an application scores enough points, the panel can recommend not funding the project if has serious concerns about its financial viability, such as if the organisation has not demonstrated having a sound fundraising plan with contingencies should any of their grant applications (to the council and others) be unsuccessful or award less than requested.</p>	

## The Way Ahead Council Plan 2025-2029 Themed criteria

Scoring guidelines – **The application will be marked against one of the following sections**, depending on which of the three outward facing Council Plan priorities the applicant categorises the project under. **If the application can demonstrate it meets more than one priority, additional points may be added.**

### 1. Action on climate change and nature recovery

- a. **Action on nature recovery** – e.g. tree planting and/or habitat creation with the aim to improve biodiversity.
- b. **Action on climate change** - e.g. projects that take action on climate change by reducing carbon emissions with the aim to become carbon neutral, such as energy saving technologies and sustainable transport projects.

### 2. Thriving, healthy and inclusive communities

– e.g. refurbishment of a village hall, improvements/creation of a new social enterprise, updates to an existing playground, creation of a community facility that reduces social isolation or an extended sports facility that improves physical wellbeing.

### 3. Homes and infrastructure that meet local need

– e.g creating a brand-new community building or playground, projects in housing developments, such as Didcot Garden Town, as well as Berinsfield Garden Village, or bringing back empty properties into use.

This section scores each project against the same set of criteria, which recognises improved outcomes for the community through specific, measurable targets. We are also looking for evidence of relevant partnership working and collaboration in project delivery.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Criteria to score</b>
<b>0</b>	<p>Response is not relevant to the priority theme and/or is not a key outcome of the presented project.</p> <p>The information given does not provide the officer with confidence that the project will result in better outcomes for the community.</p> <p>No information regarding partnership working or community engagement has been offered.</p>
<b>1-2</b>	<p>(1 point) Relevant response that addresses how a capital grant will provide better outcomes to the community at an acceptable standard.</p> <p>The theme has been considered in a minor way, but the information provided lacks some detail. Outputs have been identified, rather than outcomes considered, with more detail needed for how this will be measured.</p> <p>(2 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b></p> <p>Some information regarding minor partnership working or community engagement has been provided.</p>
<b>3-4</b>	<p>(3 points) Clear and relevant response that addresses how a capital grant will provide better outcomes to the community at a good standard under the specific theme.</p> <p>The theme has been considered in a major way with some key measurable outcomes identified.</p>

	<p>(4 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b></p> <p>Good examples of partnership working regarding project delivery, including examples of collaborations with other organisations and/or the community.</p>
<b>5-6</b>	<p>(5 points) Clear, relevant, and well detailed responses that addresses how a capital grant will provide better, measurable outcomes to the community at an excellent standard under the specific theme.</p> <p>Goes above expectations and fully integrates the project theme into the project plan and outcomes.</p> <p>(6 points) <b><u>as above and</u></b></p> <p>Clearly sets out how they will work in partnership at all levels of project delivery to meet the council plan priority and how partner organisations and/or the community have been involved in project planning and implementation.</p>
<b>Additional points</b>	<p>Add one point if the project can demonstrate it meets two council plan priorities.</p> <p>Add two points if the project can demonstrate it meets more than two council plan priorities.</p>

**Project examples under each theme**

Points	Action on climate change and nature recovery		Thriving, healthy, and inclusive communities	Homes and infrastructure that meet local need
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<b>0</b>	<p>A project to upgrade toilet facilities does not include energy saving features such as light sensors.</p> <p>A boiler is replaced with a more efficient one but only meeting building regulations.</p>	<p>Tree planting projects without evidence of landowner permission or commitment to long-term maintenance of the planting.</p> <p>Tree planting or habitat creation projects on unsuitable sites – all projects should involve some form of initial ecological survey to ensure the right trees (or other habitats) are being planted in the right place (i.e. not planting trees on existing wildflower meadows).</p> <p>Projects which have involved no consultation and have not obtained baseline information from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.</p>	<p>Projects that fall under another thematic area and/or meet the unsatisfactory criteria.</p>	<p>Projects that fall under another thematic area and/or meet the unsatisfactory criteria.</p>
<b>1-2</b>	<p>Minor investment in energy efficiency leading to reduced energy bills. Lighting or insulation in one area e.g. kitchen. Draught proofing installed in a</p>	<p>Projects involving only small areas with only minimal biodiversity and community benefit. No community or volunteer involvement.</p>	<p>New office equipment related to community transport schemes that reduces rural isolation.</p>	<p>Projects to encourage sustainable transport and reduce car dependency in a housing development but are replacing an existing facility with a like-for-like design (e.g.</p>

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	<p>building. A timer or smart metre is added to heating controls.</p> <p>Minor projects to help adapt to climate change e.g. water saving taps and urinals measured by reduced water consumption.</p> <p>Minor sustainable transport projects e.g. cycle racks resulting in some evidence of behaviour change.</p> <p>Equipment for projects that promote the circular economy (reuse and repair of goods and materials) e.g. IT equipment, storage, kitchen fixtures and fittings.</p>	<p>Small scale tree or hedgerow planting with little wider benefit and not following relevant local or national priorities.</p>	<p>New furniture for advice services that help to improve mental health.</p> <p>The installation of a Defibrillator to improve a community's physical wellbeing.</p> <p>Improvements to an existing social enterprise which promotes economic recovery such as community shop or community pub, but the project does not result in any new activities taking place (e.g. replacement of windows from single to double glazing).</p>	<p>replacing cycle storage, no additional capacity).</p>
3-4	<p>Investment in building energy efficiency using more than one technology e.g. LED lighting with lighting controls, insulation,</p>	<p>Medium scale projects evidencing good community involvement and a commitment to partnership working.</p>	<p>Facilities that encourage culture, leisure and art to promote social wellbeing (e.g. expansion of sports facilities, creation of public arts,</p>	<p>Refurbishing empty community properties for the benefit of the community/not residential (e.g. refurbishing a community hub for young</p>

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	<p>a building management system measured by a good reduction in energy bills.</p> <p>Projects to help adapt to climate change e.g. solar shading and water saving measures.</p>	<p>Projects or proposals fitting in with relevant local and national priorities. This might for example include planting a small woodland or creating wetlands in an appropriate location working with local volunteers and not-for-profit organisations.</p> <p>Projects well designed with evidence of consultation with relevant bodies.</p>	<p>purchasing of village hall staging, theatre refurbishment).</p> <p>Building refurbishment costs for organisations that support vulnerable people (e.g. those with disabilities or to improve mental health).</p> <p>Refurbishment of a facility that improves social isolation and deprivation (e.g. Buildings that hold advice and debt services. befriending services, good neighbour schemes, volunteer driver schemes, food banks).</p> <p>Improvements to an existing social enterprise that will allow for the expansion of services or for new services to take place. (e.g. a community shop expanding to carry more stock which</p>	<p>families, refurbishing a building that houses charitable organisations supporting vulnerable people).</p> <p>Improving green space facilities that are accessible for all in a housing development. (e.g. signage, creating private footpaths, fencing, planting, benches accessible for mobility impaired people).</p> <p>Projects to encourage sustainable transport and reduce car dependency by working with the community to upgrade already existing cycle storage in a housing development to allow more bikes and better protection.</p>

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			meets local demand or a community pub adding café facilities to enable longer opening hours for the community to meet and reduce social isolation).	
<b>5-6</b>	<p>Projects to help achieve significant carbon emission savings for organisations/facilities e.g. investment in renewable technologies such as solar energy and heat pumps</p> <p>Substantial investment in building energy efficiency such as full lighting retrofit, upgraded loft and wall insulation measured by a significant reduction in energy bills.</p> <p>A project ensures energy saving measures are a high-profile feature of the facility, with energy</p>	<p>Large scale habitat creation/restoration projects or tree planting projects forming a key part of meeting relevant local and national priorities.</p> <p>Projects that evidence widespread consultation/partnership working and careful planning to ensure the project is creating the right habitats in the right place.</p> <p>Projects that have thoroughly considered the long-term sustainability of the proposals and evidence how ongoing</p>	<p>Projects that promote economic recovery and quality employment through the creation of a new social enterprise such as a community shop or pub that will result in new job creation and/or create volunteer training opportunities that could provide future employment opportunities for local residents.</p> <p>Projects that help create new long term, sustainable funding opportunities for the organisation (e.g. refurbishment of a community</p>	<p>Projects that create new and improved infrastructure for communities in developments to promote cohesion and that are accessible to all (e.g. village halls, playgrounds, outdoor gyms, sports facilities).</p> <p>Creating accessible green spaces in partnership with local organisations to ensure that all members of the community can access the space to improve physical and mental wellbeing (e.g. purchase of land with accessible pathways,</p>

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	<p>monitors in public areas and information about the savings clearly visible and attractive manner to users.</p> <p>Substantial project for a community facility to help adapt to climate change e.g. rainwater harvesting system or substantial sustainable transport projects e.g. electric car charging points.</p> <p>Creation of a permanent community run facility that promotes the circular economy (reuse and repair of goods and materials) e.g. Repair Cafe, refill centre.</p>	<p>management and maintenance will be provided for.</p> <p>High quality proposals which are fully costed demonstrating value for money alongside an appropriate specification.</p>	<p>centre that includes a volunteer run café).</p> <p>Creation of a new facility that improves social isolation and deprivation (e.g. A new building that will house advice and debt services, food banks, befriending services).</p>	<p>extensive planting and facilities such as benches).</p> <p>Projects that actively promote sustainable transport and reduce car dependency by creating a new substantial cycle storage facility that meets the needs of the community and promotes sustainable methods of transport to the wider community.</p>