



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 or
Tel: 01446 704636

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh

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".

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

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 or Tel: 01446 704636

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.

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?

There is no minimum grant. The maximum grant that will be offered towards any single project is £25,000. Applications are invited for 1 – 5 years until March 2025 and we encourage projects of all sizes within this framework. Applications will be assessed in the following bands:

- **Grant applications of up to £3,000**
- **Grant applications between £3,001 and £25,000.**

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 for grants of between £3,001 and £25,000 are expected to make a contribution, either monetary and /or 'in kind' towards the overall project cost.

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. Small grants of up to £3,000 do not require a lot of detail and you can chat through this with the Strong Communities Grant Team. All we want to know is what you want to spend it on, what you hope to achieve, who will benefit and how this will help in you in the longer term. A simple form is provided for these small grant applications. For more complex, higher value projects you should provide us with a more detailed application. 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.

All funding must be spent by March 2025 with annual costs set out over financial years.

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
- Year on year funding if the projects can demonstrate sustainability in the longer term
- 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

How much should I write in my application?

Don't forget that for small grants we are not looking for a lot of detail. The application form for grants of up to £3,000 is concise and straightforward. The amount of information you give us in small applications should be proportionate to the amount of funding you are looking for. E.g. A few lines in each section is all that we require to support a small grant for equipment. If in doubt – ask.

The following examples may help you to judge the eligibility of your project.

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

Youth Groups in Action

Several youth groups Barry come together to buy £750 worth of car washing equipment, marketing and some events stands in order to generate money for day trips and equipment. They work with local events operators to offer this service at the Vale show and other events. They use the money generated to fund leisure trips for the groups.

Example of eligible costs

Washing Equipment	£450
Gazebo	£200
Marketing	£50
Cash box	£50
Total project cost	£750

What we would not support:

The cost of 88 day trips for youth groups to a community farm or adventure park each year.

What we would support: Case Study 3

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 4

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 5

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?

Funding is available until 31 March 2025 but must be spent and claimed by this date. 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 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.

What is the application timetable?

Application windows for both the main and small 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 up to £3,000 will be determined by the Managing Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration, following consultation with members of the grant evaluation panel. Details of the evaluation panel are set out below. The awards will be reported to Cabinet as part of the approval process for larger grants.

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 panel’s decision.

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 60.

	Priority Criteria	Score
1	Strategic fit with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and outcomes	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

Do not be scared by this section! If you aren’t sure how your project fits with this section, don’t worry - just ask the Strong Communities Grant Team and they can give you some pointers. The idea behind showing these links is to make sure that projects funded are relevant to the priorities of the Council and Welsh Government.

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
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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. For grants under £3,000 please tick which ones apply to you.

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 more closely reflect the diversity of the local population 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 implementing 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. For projects under £3,000 please tick which ones you think apply to you. Keep your information brief in this section.

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 year	80% of funding to be repaid
Within 3 year	60% of funding to be repaid
Within 4 year	40% of funding to be repaid
Within 5 year	20% of funding to be repaid
After 5 year	No funding to be repaid

How many quotes do I need to provide?

The tendering table below sets out the procedure you need to follow. Please ensure you have submitted the appropriate information with your application. We can help you with this process and advise you on how to put together specifications for quotes and tenders.

Tender Information

Estimated Value	Tender Action Required
Up to £250	Invite minimum of one quotation
Up to £3,000	Invite minimum of two quotations to the same clear specification.
£3,001 - £74,999	Invite minimum of three quotations to the same clear specification.
£75,000 – OJEU threshold £189k	Tender Process – contracts to be advertised to the market through Sell2Wales or own electronic procurement portal.

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.