



NP Grant Scheme Criteria

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council recognises the important role that neighbourhood planning plays in allowing local communities to shape the areas that they live in. Neighbourhood planning also plays a role in delivering homes across the borough, meeting identified local housing needs. In response to the withdrawal of support funding from Government via Locality in 2025, the Council has established its own grant scheme to support groups in the production of qualifying Neighbourhood Plans.

The grant has been established to supplement other resources available to Town and Parish councils who act as Qualifying Bodies for the Neighbourhood Planning process, including increases to parish council precepts, which is encouraged. The grant also recognises that most neighbourhood planning activity in the borough in coming years is likely to be reviewing existing plans rather than establishing new plans. It recognises both the skills that many parish councils and residents already hold, due to previous neighbourhood planning activity, and other up-skilling opportunities available to groups, such as through Locality.

Town and Parish Councils wanting to access the grant scheme will need to apply through the application process outlined below. The process will enable the Council to consider the nature of the neighbourhood plan due to be made, the level of technical support required and resulting costs. Several eligibility criteria will need to be met.

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Who can apply

Town and Parish Councils (Qualifying bodies in the neighbourhood planning process) within the Basingstoke and Deane borough administrative area (at the time the grant scheme is established)

are eligible to apply for the grant. In unparished areas, neighbourhood forums can be set up to act as the qualifying body for the local area and will also be eligible.

Relevant persons (for example from an established neighbourhood planning group) will need to meet with the Local Planning Authority before a grant is applied for. The named applicant for grant funding should be a representative of the Qualifying Body leading the plan and must not be a consultant or another body who will be paid through the award of the grant.

How much can be applied for

A maximum of £10,000 is available for the making of a qualifying Neighbourhood Plan. Plans that are not required to allocate housing sites to meet their identified housing need are unlikely to require the same level of technical support as plans that do include housing sites. Therefore, for these plans, up to £5,000 may be available. The amount of grant made available will reflect the outcome of the grant application process and will be made at the discretion of council officers subject to the availability of funding.

How will the grant be paid

The grant will be paid directly to the qualifying bodies, where the qualifying body is a Neighbourhood Forum it will need to have a bank account. Upon the successful award of a grant, payment will be made in arrears, however, in some limited cases qualifying bodies may approach BDBC to discuss alternative requirements.

What can the grant be used to pay for

The grant scheme has been established to contribute exclusively to the production and review of Neighbourhood Plans within Basingstoke and Deane Borough, supporting plans that meet the eligibility criteria. Costs associated with preparing a neighbourhood plan that can be covered by the grant are outlined below. Please note that general project costs such as printing and publicity are not covered by the grant.

Professional Services covered by the grant:

- training session for members of the steering group
- help with developing the evidence base and analysing it to identify issues and aims for the plan
- engaging with a facilitator to help with capacity building for community consultation or workshops
- services to ensure that the plan is formatted in a professional manner
- engaging a planning expert to help with policy drafting
- support for making site allocations
- technical studies and Strategic Environmental Assessment
- support in relation to the six-week pre submission consultation

- help with understanding if the plan is ready for examination

Grant funding will not cover the following:

- day to day running costs/overheads
- funding salaried posts
- paying for volunteer time
- reimbursing expenditure which has already been incurred
- paying for work carried out by a member of the Neighbourhood Planning Group
- funding for issues which are not within the remit of the neighbourhood plan
- capital items e.g. purchasing items which are a lasting asset such as a laptop
- campaigning activity at referendum.
- contingency for extra or unknown costs
- any other expenditure which is not directly related to the production of the neighbourhood plan

Funding will be provided for a 12-month period for costs incurred during that time period only and cannot be used to cover costs that were incurred in advance of any grant funding being agreed. Any grant funding not spent within the financial year will be returned to the Council.

What criteria must be met to be eligible for a grant

The Qualifying Body must meet with BDBC officers ahead of a grant application and commit to providing regular updates on the neighbourhood plan's progress.

To be eligible, it must be demonstrated that:

- the Neighbourhood Plan will meet the designated neighbourhood plan area's local housing need figure provided by the council; and
- the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will have regard to and be consistent with national planning policies; and
- the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to meeting the aims and objectives of both the adopted and evolving Local Plan and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the designated neighbourhood plan area; and
- other available funding opportunities have been considered and utilised; and
- the grant is required to produce the plan, in terms of required technical support and information

How to apply

Only one grant application can be awarded to each Neighbourhood Plan within a rolling twelve-month period and only one grant can be awarded per Plan.

Applications must include the following:

- a completed signed and dated application form which sets out that the eligibility criteria are met and additional supporting information, where relevant, as required by the form
- an itemised list setting out the costs which underpin the application.
- confirmation from the Qualifying Body that it supports the production of the neighbourhood plan, supported by a suitable timetable and project plan
- a copy of the terms of reference for the steering group leading on the Neighbourhood Plan

Please contact Local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk (<mailto:Local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk>) before applying

Download the application form (</content/doclib/4698.docx>)

Additional information

Consultancy Support/ Professional Services

When instructing any professional technical assistance, it must be ensured that relevant parties are appropriately qualified for the work that they are undertaking. For planning professionals this generally means that they are a chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI). There is a Directory of Planning Consultants available to view on the Royal Town Planning Institute Website: [The RTPI Directory of Planning Consultants \(https://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk/#/\)](https://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk/#/).

Quotes and invoices must be provided on company headed paper with a date.

Quotes are expected to be recent (no more than a year old) and include a breakdown of what is included – activities, fees and the consultant's day rate.

Procurement of professional services is expected to comply with the Qualifying Body's own procurement policies and procedures for evidencing value for money in the use of grant funding. The council for example has a three-quote process for works above £5,000.

On some occasions a fixed quote might be provided for a piece of work. If this is the case seek clarification in relation to how the cost has been determined and explain in the application how the cost is considered to be reasonable.

Conflicts of Interest

The Qualifying Body should consider any conflicts of interest and how these will be managed. Work is expected to be appointed in line with a terms of reference.