

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

2026-27 Locality Awards Guidance

Contents

Introduction	2
Process	2
Monitoring	3
All Applications	3
What can be funded?	3
What cannot be funded?	4
Priorities	4
Categories	5
Community Facilities Improvements	5
Sports and Recreation	5
Health and Wellbeing	6
Play	6
Environment and Public Realm	6
Arts, Culture and Media	6
Young People	7
Transport and Highways	7
Event	7
Equipment	8
Food Bank	8
Community Group	8

Introduction

Locality Awards are a 'light-touch' Community Grant which allow District Councillors in Babergh and Mid Suffolk to support community groups and projects in their local area. Awards are one-off Grants, with no on-going funding commitment.

Budgets for 2026/27 are £2,000 per Councillor in Babergh and £10,000 per Councillor in Mid Suffolk. There is no maximum limit to how much can be applied for, with the exception of a maximum of £5,000 towards a community group's running costs. Applications are on average between £250 (the minimum) and £1,000, enabling Councillors to support a variety of projects and organisations per year.

Applicant organisations must have the correct governance and policies in place prior to being awarded funding. This primarily includes:

- A constitution or governing document
- An independent bank account in the name of the organisation, with two independent signatories
- An Equal Opportunities Policy
- A Safeguarding Policy
- A Health and Safety Policy

An application can be made to multiple Councillors in the same District for projects taking place in the district. Applications must be sent direct to Councillors for their consideration.

Funding can be for up to 100% of project costs. Applicants which receive a total of £2,000 or more from one Councillor or a combination of Councillors will be required to provide copies of their accounts, constitution, evidence of how costs have been calculated and may be subject to enhanced monitoring of spend.

Councillors have discretion over the use of their Locality Awards, with delegation to approve by Officers in the Communities Team.

Applications must demonstrate community benefit and must not benefit select individuals or promote a party-political cause.

Locality Awards open for applications on 11th May 2026 and will close on 29th January 2027. Any unallocated (unallocated refers to any money that has not been assigned to a specific project by way of an application form) funding that has not been committed Locality Awards funding as of 1st February 2027 will be included as part of Community Development Grant funding in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Process

The Locality Awards application process is a two-stage application form which requires completion from the applicant organisation and District Councillor.

Groups must discuss their proposal with their Councillor before applying.

Applications are assessed and processed by Officers within the Communities Team, within 5 working days of an application being submitted to them.

Payments will take between 1-2 weeks to be processed once an award has been approved.

Monitoring

Successful applicants must provide a copy of invoices and a monitoring form after the project has completed, within 12 months of the award being processed. Councillors are encouraged to maintain contact with the award recipient to understand the impact and benefits of the award.

Applicants who receive an award of more than £2,000 must also submit evidence which includes their constitution, bank statement and accounts and breakdown of costs (for example salary costs would need to include rates, costs calculations and actual time spent on the project). Due diligence is essential to ensure that the funds are used appropriately and that the recipients are legitimate and capable of delivering the project they are asking funding for. It also can identify gaps and weaknesses and provides the opportunity to signpost to Community Action Suffolk who offer expert support and guidance to the VCFSE sector. They can support with managing and developing an organisation and their advice includes getting fit for future funding bids forward planning and good governance.

All Applications

What can be funded?

- Specific projects, such as the purchase of equipment, refurbishment of a community facility or delivery of an event.
- A community group's running costs, such as venue hire or bills, up to a maximum of £5,000 per application.
- Any Parish or Town Council project up to a maximum of £5,000 per project. The project must be fully costed with quotes and timescales specified. (This supersedes ineligible project costs).
- Projects or organisations with a demonstrable benefit for the communities in which they are serving or taking place.
- Constituted community groups such as Parish and Town Councils, Parish Meetings, Sports Clubs, Village Halls and Playing Field Management Committees, charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs), Community Benefit Societies (CBSs).
- A constituted community group applying on behalf of an eligible project as proxy.
- Groups must have their own bank account with two unrelated signatories.
- Projects must be delivered, or monies spent within 6 months of the Award being processed.
- Projects delivered by schools if the project benefits and involves the communities around the school.
- Pre-application costs such as design, feasibility studies, consultations.
- Projects must take place in District.
- Land or property.

What cannot be funded?

- Organisations without a constitution or governing document, and without Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities and Health & Safety policies in place. Applicants without the required governance in place will be signposted to support and templates available through Community Action Suffolk (CAS): [Governance and Organisation Development - Community Action Suffolk](#).
- Projects which will be delivered after a period of longer than twelve months. A fixed timeframe is given for grantees to spend the funding to ensure that the funds are used efficiently and to achieve the intended outcomes. It also enables the Council to monitor the funding within a defined timeframe.
- Applications smaller than £250.
- Projects which have already been undertaken or costs which have already been paid for, i.e., no retrospective funding.
- Individuals, homeowners or Council tenants.
- For-profit organisations.
- Religious buildings or institutions where there is no wider community access.
- Projects that maybe considered religious or political or promote specific religious or political views.
- Legal costs, including planning applications.
- Running costs or staff costs for Town and Parish Councils, Parish Meetings.
- Suffolk County Council and District Councils, the NHS, MoD, or other statutory body.
- Projects that are education based and linked to the national curriculum. For example, school play areas, forest schools and school libraries.
- Facilities owned and operated by Babergh or Mid Suffolk District Councils.
- Awards may be made to a Community Interest Company (CIC) where it is “Limited by Guarantee” but cannot be made to a CIC where the group is “Limited by Shares”.

Priorities

Locality Awards are provided to community projects and activity that demonstrate wide ranging community benefits and are aligned to support the Councils’ priorities.

[Our Plan for Babergh](#)

[The Mid Suffolk Plan](#)

Categories

A range of different community projects can be supported through Locality Awards. Examples of eligible and ineligible projects by category can be found below:

Community Facilities Improvements

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large scale improvements to community facilities such as extensions, car park improvements - Initiatives to improve community access such as disability accessible ramps, toilets or baby changing facilities - Digital infrastructure projects such as new audio-visual equipment, screens or internet - Energy efficiency upgrades such as the installation of new solar panels, heating, insulation, heat pumps or new windows - Re-decoration works as part of a wider project, such as painting, new flooring - New kitchen equipment, or hall equipment such as chairs and tables - Emergency repair work such as flood damage, wind damage or an equivalent issue which risks the facility being out of use for an extended period of time - The conversion of churches to community use - Support towards the start-up of or equipment for community pubs and shops - Support towards energy costs, telecommunications, and other revenue costs - Support towards purchasing a building. - Support towards maintaining Community Land Trusts' (CLTs) revenue costs (excluding capital costs), covering administration and project management costs
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Sports and Recreation

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase of new equipment, kit/uniform or otherwise necessary items for sports clubs - Provision of new sporting facilities such as table tennis tables, painting badminton courts at a village hall - Improvements to existing sports facilities such as new energy efficient floodlights for a Tennis Club - Start-up of a new sports club at a community venue or extending number or location of sessions for existing sports clubs - New outdoor gym equipment - Repairs to extend the lifespan of sports equipment - Running costs of a sports club, such as venue hire, insurance
Ineligible projects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subsidising membership costs/subscription fees for sports club members

Health and Wellbeing

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The installation of a new defibrillator with community access (must be external, and be registered with the East of England Ambulance Service) - The start-up of new wellbeing groups - The purchase of equipment for health and wellbeing groups and charities - Equipment for community cafes - Revenue costs associated with existing health and wellbeing groups
Ineligible projects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects run by the NHS, or projects delivered by GP surgeries

Play

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase and installation of new play equipment and associated infrastructure such as fencing, seating and surfacing - The refurbishment and repair of existing equipment to extend the lifespan of said equipment in line with RoSPA guidelines
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Environment and Public Realm

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public realm improvements such as more accessible footpaths (i.e., upgrading from dirt to tarmac/gravel) - The installation of new benches, bins and notice/information boards - Wildflower, tree and hedge planting - The purchase of planters and other items such as village signs and gateways to enhance the appearance of village/town centres and develop a sense of place. - New homes for wildlife, such as bat/bird boxes, beehives - Equipment for litter picking groups - Community energy sharing initiatives, and purchase of associated equipment - Improvements to community owned farms and allotments - Regular maintenance of playing fields and footpaths (i.e., grass cutting, tree work within the 12 month spending period) - Support towards land purchase
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Arts, Culture and Media

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community art projects, i.e. the commission of artwork where the community has involvement - Support for community magazines or newsletters - The production of walking booklets or information leaflets - Community shows or productions being produced by Amateur Dramatic Societies or cultural venues - Heritage projects of local significance and community value - The refurbishment of war memorials
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Ineligible projects:	- Private artwork or private cultural venues
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Young People

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase of equipment for pre-schools constituted as a charity - The purchase of gear and equipment for uniformed groups such as Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Explorers, Squirrels, Air Cadets etc. - Costs associated with the start-up of a new unit at an existing uniformed group (e.g. a new Brownie unit at an existing Scout group) - Costs associated with a before or afterschool club - Schools and Academies. Projects delivered by these organisations must be for wider community access (different sections of the community and in addition to current parents of school children) and benefit and not to support normal school or business activity
Ineligible projects:	- Education based projects, or projects connected to the curriculum that take place during the school day, or activities that the school has a legal obligation to provide

Transport and Highways

Eligible projects include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support towards community transport providers - Costs associated with the implementation of a 20's plenty area, that meets the 20mph speed limit policy criteria, and in the absence of neighbourhood CIL being available to fund - The purchase and installation of Speed Indicator Devices (SID units) - The refurbishment of bus stops owned by Parish Councils - The upgrade of street lighting owned by Parish Councils
Ineligible projects:	- Road signage or any project on the road surface itself (i.e. kerbs, road painting, fixed speed reduction measures). Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are not the responsible authority for Highways and unable to fund statutory works, which come under the remit of Suffolk County Council

Event

Eligible projects include:	- A one-off cultural or commemorative community event taking place with wider community access. Examples include a village fete
Ineligible projects:	- Cultural or commemorative community events that are not affordable and accessible. Those events that charge a high-cost entry fee pose a significant barrier to accessibility for many individuals, particularly those facing financial hardship. This can reinforce cultural elitism and limit access for a broader audience

Equipment

Eligible projects include:	- The purchase of miscellaneous or one-off items and equipment for community groups
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Food Bank

Eligible projects include:	- The purchase of new equipment or facilities, such as storage, for Food Banks and community pantries
Ineligible projects:	- The purchase of food/drink

Community Group

Eligible projects include:	- Support towards volunteer training - Establishment of new community groups such as pop-up community cafes
Ineligible projects:	- Parish/Town Council training