

## **RURAL COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE FUND**

### **FUNDING CRITERIA 2024/25**

To be eligible to apply to Aberdeenshire's Rural Communities Challenge Fund (RCCF), the following criteria must be met:

#### **1. Applicants**

Applications can be made by any of the following organisations:

- Public sector organisations
- Co-operatives
- Charities registered in Scotland
- Constituted community groups or not-for-profit groups

Individuals, unconstituted groups and political or campaigning groups are not eligible for funding. Religious groups will not be ordinarily eligible, unless broad community benefit can be demonstrated.

Applicants must provide the following as part of their application:

- Constitution or memorandum and articles of association
- A recent bank statement covering a period of 3 months
- Most recent 3 years' annual accounts
- Equalities Policy
- Other organisational policies where relevant (e.g. health & safety, child protection, environmental)
- Valid lease/title deeds (where there is a lease please provide landlord's permission to carry out works)
- Planning Permission Approval letter where relevant (if planning permission is not required then evidence of this must be provided).
- Building Warrant Approval letter where relevant (if this is not required then evidence of this must be provided)
- Relevant Insurance policies certificates where relevant
- Evidence that match funding is in place
- Quotes for every cost item

#### **2. Location**

The eligible area will be all communities within the boundaries of Aberdeenshire, *excluding the Cairngorms National Park.*

#### **3. Priorities**

Funding will be targeted towards activities or infrastructure which support one or more of the following priorities:

- 1) **Low Carbon Community Buildings**
- 2) **Active and Connected Communities**

#### 4. Timescale

Projects must be fully completed and draw down all RCCF grant funding by **28 February 2025**. As such, all applications must be fully-costed (supported by quotes as per the LAG Procurement Guidance), have all appropriate permissions approved (e.g. planning permission, lease, building warrant) and a match funding package confirmed at the time of application.

If Planning Permission and Building Warrants are not in place they must be **Approved by 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024**. This is to ensure that the project will be delivered by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Check the useful links at bottom of this notice which will take you to the Aberdeenshire Council website where you can see the estimated waiting times for approval.

#### 5. Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be taken into account when determining funding awards:

- 1) **Strategic Fit** – To what extent does the project align with the priorities of the Locality Plans and Community Action Plans?
- 2) **Cross-Cutting Themes** – Can the project demonstrate a neutral or positive contribution to the following themes?:
  - a. Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity
  - b. Fairer Scotland Duty
  - c. Town Centre First Principle
  - d. Sustainability
  - e. Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing
- 3) **Legacy and Sustainability** – Will the project deliver a lasting legacy beyond it’s lifetime and be sustainable once grant funding has ended?
- 4) **Project Need and Demand** – Is there sufficient evidence that the project will meet an unmet demand?
- 5) **Need for Grant** – Is the grant requested the minimum amount required for the project to proceed and have other sources of match funding been adequately explored?
- 6) **Capacity to Deliver** – Does the delivery organisation have sufficient capacity (financial and people) to complete the project as set out and on time?

#### 6. Costs

The following thresholds for grant will apply to challenge fund applications:

- Minimum grant - £10,000
- Maximum grant - £49,999

- A minimum contribution of 10% match funding is desirable but not absolutely essential.

All match funding secured from other sources for the project activity must be transparently declared in grant applications and any changes to this funding package notified to the Council. Match funding should be in 'cash', not 'in-kind'. The level of match funding provided will be taken into account in the evaluation of bids, with projects demonstrating greater leverage of match funding viewed favourably.

Only capital expenditure will be considered under this programme, with the exception of professional fees (maximum 10% of overall costs) associated with capital projects.

All costs must be:

- **Essential** – All project costs must be essential for the project to be successfully delivered
- **Additional** – All project costs must be additional to core organisational costs which would be incurred even if the project did not go ahead
- **Best Value** – Applicants must demonstrate that project costs are value for money and provide evidence to support this
- **Actual** – Costs will be paid out on the actual amount incurred by the organisation up to the maximum contractually agreed amount

The following costs are ineligible for support:

- Costs formally committed to or spent prior to the agreed project start date
- Revenue costs which are not part of a larger capital project
- Costs incurred or invoiced after the project end date
- Costs involved in winding up a company or organisation
- Bad debts, fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation
- Payments not supported by invoices and/or documents proving expenditure
- Recoverable VAT
- Alcohol

## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The following outputs and outcomes will be monitored:

- Number of new facilities created
- Number of existing facilities enhanced
- Number of jobs created (in Full Time Equivalent @ 37 hours)
- Number of new products/services created
- Number of volunteer opportunities created
- Length of active travel routes enhanced or created
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Increase in biodiversity

- Increase in revenue to sustain and grow the organisation

Any assets funded by the project grant must be maintained in good condition, adequately insured and used for the purposes set out in the grant agreement for a minimum of 5 years after the project end date.

Project sponsors will be required to provide regular progress reports towards agreed targets and a final report at the end of the project setting out what was achieved.

**Closing date for applications is 11 August 2024.**

### **Useful links**

[Aberdeenshire Council - Apply for building warrant](#)

[Aberdeenshire Council - Apply for licence, permit or permission](#)

[Aberdeenshire Council - Listed Buildings](#)

[Aberdeenshire Council - Planning Permission](#)