

Guidance

Stiùireadh

**Cost of Living
Support
Community Led
Initiatives**

(Grants of under £10,000 are available)

**Iomairtean fo Stiùir na
Coimhearsnachd airson
Taic le Cosgais Bith-beò**

(Tabhartasan fo £10,000 rim faotainn)

To help alleviate the impacts that the rising costs of living are having for Highland residents, The Highland Council agreed on 22nd September 2022 to create a £450,000 Cost of Living Support Fund. Applications are now invited from community groups to implement local initiatives that will help ease the cost of living impacts within their communities.

The aim of this cost of living grant fund is to enable community groups to provide local activities/provision that provide support to individuals and families during the winter months. This fund will support local initiatives to keep people warm, provide food and to enable people to heat their living areas and live safely in their homes.

The fund criteria are as follows:

- Provide community support initiatives that provide food/activities;
- Enhance existing provision through extending local hours or introducing/increasing food provision;
- Adapt existing provision to meet identified local needs;
- Strengthen or establish food larders or food table provision.

**Food prices
rocket**

Cost of energy

Mortgage rates go up

Interest rates rise

Struggle to fill shopping cart

**Inflation hits
consumers**

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1 Introduction

The Highland Council is responsible for the allocation of over £26 million of public money to the Third Sector (voluntary and community organisations) in the form of grants.

The principles of openness, integrity and accountability apply to all councils in their decisions on spending public money. These principles must also apply to funds and/or other resources transferred to external bodies.

Building on the learning from the pandemic, a Highland-wide grant fund of up to £450,000 is now available for applications to support communities to ease the impacts arising from the cost-of-living crisis. This fund was approved at The Highland Council meeting on 22nd September 2022.

2 Cost of Living Support: Community Led Initiatives Aims

Community-led initiatives enables a local response to address local needs which will complement any individual support payments. Building on the learning from the pandemic, a Highland-wide grant fund of up to £450,000 has been created to support communities to ease the impacts arising from the cost-of-living crisis.

Grants of up to £10,000 are being made available to enable community groups to provide local activities and support.

The aim of the grant fund is to enable community groups to provide local activities/provision to provide support during the winter months. This fund will support initiatives to keep people warm, provide food and to enable individuals and families to heat their living areas and to stay safely in their homes.

The fund criteria are as follows:

- Provide community support initiatives that provide food/activities
- Enhance existing provision through extending local hours or introducing/increasing food provision
- Adapt existing provision to meet identified local needs
- Strengthen or establish food larders or food table provision.
- All activities must be completed before end June 2023 where practicable.

3 Standard Grant Criteria

The following core criteria apply to all Highland Council grants and discretionary funding to voluntary and community organisations.

Some funding streams may have additional criteria which the applicant requires to consider.

General

- Applicant groups must have a constitution
- Be consistent with the purpose of the fund
- Applicants should have procedures in place to monitor and evaluate projects
- Applicants must demonstrate good value for money.

What the Highland Council Single Grant Schemes won't fund

- Applicant organisations must not be party political
- The Council welcomes applications from religious organisations that want to carry out work in the community, but the Council does not normally fund projects or activities:
 - that are designed primarily to promote religion itself; or
 - where people must take part in religious services in order to benefit
- Any costs already incurred
- Hospitality – The Council would not normally fund hospitality unless deemed to be a critical part of an Organisation's activity or project.

4 Standard Conditions of Award

The following conditions apply to all Highland Council grants and discretionary funding to Third Sector organisations (voluntary and community):

- 1 The Highland Council will only provide funding for organisations which have substantial access to children if they have adopted the Highland Child Protection Committee's Child Protection Policy. Grant supported organisations which hire out their facilities must also check that relevant groups have an appropriate policy in place. The Child Protection Policy for Community groups can be accessed at:
www.bit.ly/THC-child-protection-policy
- 2 Monies must be expended and claimed according to the timescale detailed in the letter of award. Where a project exceeds the original timescales or remains substantially incomplete at the expected conclusion date, the Highland Council reserves the right to withdraw the offer. Applicants should request an extension of the period of award, in writing, and should indicate the reason for this. No guarantee can be given that any request for extension of this period will be granted.
- 3 Payment Arrangements: Depending on the type of award, payment may be made in a number of ways for example:
 - For awards under £3000, the Council will consider paying a full award at the beginning of a project. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council pay the full grant up front for amounts over £3000;
 - A proportion of a revenue award (usually maximum of 50%) made as an initial payment and the remainder on project completion;
 - On completion of project;
 - Staged payments for capital projects on production of suitable evidence of expenditure e.g. receipted invoices, project accounts certified as a true and accurate record of expenditure by two office bearers of the organisation, audited accounts, architect's certificates etc.

The Council will make payments by Bank Automated Clearing System (BACS).

- 4 If costs incurred in any project are less than the amount approved by the Council, the remainder of the award must be returned to the Council.
- 5 If actual expenditure exceeds the amount of award, only the amount approved will be granted.

- 6 All awards must be used for the purpose for which they were allocated. If the project is materially different from that for which the award was approved, the award will not be paid or will be re-claimed unless changes have been agreed in advance and confirmed in writing. The award cannot be transferred to any other organisation without the written approval of the Council. If you give or sell items bought with the award to another owner, you will have to repay the award to the Council.
- 7 If the organisation that has received an award is disbanded, then goods, equipment or facilities purchased from the award will revert to the Council. If the goods, equipment or facilities have been lost, stolen or damaged and not replaced, all monies obtained from their insurance will revert to the Council.
- 8 Where it is intended that organisations dispose of equipment funded or supplied free of charge by the Highland Council then notification of intention to dispose should be made to the appropriate Council Service for consideration and approval.
- 9 Any equipment should be in the control of a named person at a given address in secure premises and must be adequately insured and regularly maintained by a qualified person. Any equipment should be supplied by a bona fide supplier and should comply with all statutory obligations under the relevant Health and Safety Regulations.
- 10 This funding has been awarded on the understanding that any planning permissions / building warrants etc will be obtained. Applicants will be required to ensure that they meet all other statutory requirements. Evidence of compliance may be required before payment is made.
- 11 Where a project involves improvement of premises or requires possession of land, the applicant will require to be the owner or tenant (on a lease for 5 years or more) of the premises or land before an award will be released.
- 12 If the project is one that involves and is dependent upon contribution from a number of bodies, payment of award will not be made until the Council is satisfied that such contributions are forthcoming.
- 13 The Council will require you to give due recognition of the Council's contribution by using The Highland Council logo on all relevant publicity material. Publicity requirements and the Council logo are available on the Council's website www.bit.ly/TheHighlandCouncilLogo
- 14 All financial records in connection with any project that receives grant and discretionary funding support from the Council must be available for inspection if required by an Officer from the Council or by the Council's Internal or External Auditors. Please do not dispose of any records for at least three years from payment of the final award instalment.

- 15 If you are applying for activities that could incur public liability (e.g. events, food provision, health and safety implications), you should provide evidence of your public liability insurance. If you do not yet have such insurance, please ensure that you include the cost of the insurance in your application.

Please note that for the Cost of Living Support Fund in particular, guidance on food safety and health and safety requirements for community groups are available at the links below:

www.bit.ly/Community-and-Charity-events

www.bit.ly/Food-Premises-Registration

www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/index.htm

- 16 The Council will not accept liability for any damages or injuries associated with projects or equipment for which funding support has been given by the Council.
- 17 The Highland Council will not fund or support retrospective applications. The purpose of the application must not have started in any way prior to the approval of the award.
- 18 The Council has obligations to meet the requirements of UK Equal Opportunities legislation. Recent and impending changes to the legal framework extend our responsibility as a public body to promote and encourage equal opportunities in addition to tackling unlawful discrimination. Equality and fairness are central to the way we conduct business. The Council reserves the right to withdraw its funding from an organisation which is deemed to be in breach of the principles within the Council's policies on equality and fairness. These policies can be accessed.

www.bit.ly/THC-equal-opportunities

5 What happens next

Contact and Help

If you have any general queries regarding funds, such as eligibility, it is usually a good idea to contact the appropriate fund directly. In many cases, it is preferable to speak to your Ward Manager in advance of applying as this could save you a lot of time in the long term. Details of the contact person for the funding you are applying for can be found on the Council's website at:

www.bit.ly/ward-managers

Decision Making

We will aim to provide you with a decision on your application within three weeks of receiving all necessary information to assess your grant application.

Submitting Applications

Completed applications and documentation should be sent to:

Email: **policy6@highland.gov.uk**