

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme Explanatory Notes



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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1. Introduction - Where does the New Home Bonus come from?

The New Homes Bonus is paid annually by the government as an incentive to communities and councils to welcome new housing. Every year, for a period of six years following the year the house was built, the council receives a grant that is payable on those new homes plus any homes that were empty and have been brought into use.

The New Homes Bonus is announced alongside our annual financial settlement. In two tier areas, like Worcestershire, the bonus is shared between the District Council and the county council (80% / 20%). The District Council therefore receives 80% of the total New Homes Bonus.

The grant is not ring fenced and therefore the Council is free to decide how to use the grant. There has been encouragement from Central Government for the funding to be utilised within communities however this does not form any legislative requirement.

For the financial year 2015/16 the Council has decided to make part of the New Homes Bonus available for a New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme.

The allocation available for the scheme is to be x% / £x of the element of New Homes Bonus Funding that relates to the financial year that the scheme commences. This will be considered to be the base for the calculation and will include both District and County funding totals for the specific year. No allocation will be made from New Homes Bonus that is being paid for previous years. *This section to be discussed at Cabinet 7th January 2015 for confirmation of allocation basis and to be recommended to Full Council.*

This Scheme will run for 12 months and be reviewed as part of the budget process for the financial year 2016/17.

2. Who Can Apply for a Grant?

The funding is available for communities that can evidence they have been affected by growth.

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme is intended for not-for-profit groups, such as voluntary organisations, residents' groups, community groups and associations including Parish Councils within those areas affected. Organisations outside the District may also apply where they are delivering projects/activities that benefit the District.

Grants will not be paid to individuals.

You will need to provide full details of your organisation when completing the application form.

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3. What are the Criteria for Awarding a Grant?

Projects should be substantial and sustainable and provide a legacy for the areas in which they are located whilst also being in line with the Council's strategic purposes (detailed at section 4 of these explanatory notes). The key element of these criteria is ensuring that funded projects complement the Council's long term strategic priorities.

Each organisation may bid for up to 20% of the available fund and applications in excess of £5k will need to provide a more detailed application and will need to provide supporting documentation including a business plan. Councillors will not usually consider more than one application from the same organisation within the 12 month period unless they are clearly for separate projects.

Priority will be given to applications according to the following criteria:

- Meet at least one of the Council's strategic purposes (see section 4 for full details.)
- The impact of growth on the relevant area
- Proposals demonstrate the basis of need or demand as well as the benefits
- Projects must be sustainable.
- All applicants agree to acknowledge the Council as a funder of the project.
- All funded projects keep full records of their activities and how the grant has been spent
- Proposals should outline how they will address the impacts (actual and anticipated) of growth.
- The names of other organisations that have approached for funding.
- The total cost and timescales of the project.
- The communities that will be served by the project.
- Support from the Ward Councillor

4. Bromsgrove District Council's Strategic Purposes

Our Strategic Purposes for Bromsgrove



Help me to live my life independently

Help me to be financially independent

Keep my place safe & looking good

Help me find somewhere to live in my locality

Help me run a successful business

Provide good things for me to see, do & visit

Support services enable us to deliver our purposes



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For more information view the Council Plan at:
<http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/council-plan.aspx>

5. Who Determines Grant Applications?

Officers of the Council will assess applications to ensure they satisfy the criteria for eligibility, whether any further information is required and whether costs are realistic relative to the proposals and the funds available.

Applications which are clearly ineligible or inappropriate may be rejected with the agreement of the Chairman of the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel. Otherwise officers will prepare a report for the Panel, summarising the bid and making a recommendation.

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel, comprising of Councillors (Leaders of each Group) will meet once a year in June. They are supported by officers and the meeting will be held in public.

Applicants will be invited to attend the meeting and have the opportunity to make a short presentation to the Members.

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel will then make a recommendation to the Council's Cabinet. Any interested party can make representations in writing, which will be reported to Cabinet. The Cabinet meetings are also open to the general public.

A full timetable is detailed at section 7 of these explanatory notes and sets out the exact dates of when the invitation for applicants will be opened and the closing date for applications, together with details of when the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel recommendations will be considered by Cabinet. Following approval of those recommendations the successful applicants will be contacted and provided with details of when the monies from successful bids will be paid.

6. How Grants are Paid and any Conditions attached to them.

A funding agreement will be signed and will include standard conditions, for example:

- Timescales for the project and a schedule of funding payments
- That the contribution made by the NHB Grants Scheme must be clearly identified to the local community.

Other conditions of funding may be included, depending on the nature of each project. All projects must be completed by the end of the financial year 2016/17 unless otherwise agreed by the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel.

If part-funding is agreed proof must be given as to where the other money is coming from.

A payment schedule will be agreed as part of the Funding Agreement for each successful application. Dependent upon the amount of the grant this could be phased to meet the forecast spend of the project or a one off payment for a small project.

Monitoring requirements will be dependent on the size and scale of the project and will be agreed for each individual project as part of the conditions of the funding. Any phased payments would be released subject to satisfactory monitoring/progress.

If the proposed project fails any funding already paid and not utilised must be returned, it cannot be transferred to another project.

7. What Happens if a Bid is not successful?

If a bid is not successful you will be advised and given the reasons. In exceptional circumstances the Panel may request some more information and offer to reconsider the bid at a future meeting.

There is no appeals process, however if you are refused a grant you can still apply for future/alternative projects providing they meet the Council's criteria.

8. The Grant Application Process Timetable

Date Applications Open	Date Applications Close

Date of New Homes Bonus Grants Panel Meeting	Date of Cabinet Meeting

9. Contacts and Where to find more information

New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel Members

Group Leaders

Supporting Officers

TBC

10. Documentation

Application Form - Small grants up to £4.9k

Application Form - Large grants £5k and over

Grants Assessment Criteria and scoring system with guidelines

Protocol for NHB Community Grants Panel

Funding Agreement

Monitoring Process