# Social Enterprise Support Fund – Guidance Notes

## Background

Social enterprises are in our communities and on our high streets, from coffee shops to pubs and leisure centres, arts venues, and community transport companies. By selling goods and services in the open market, social enterprises create employment and reinvest their profits back into their business or the local community.

A vibrant social enterprise sector requires a range of support to help it flourish. There is quite a journey to make from bright idea to successful social enterprise and well targeted support can make a big difference to the number, quality and sustainability of the social enterprises that develop.

As with many micro enterprises, the key challenge that social enterprises face is navigation on their growth journey and accessing the right support at the most appropriate time. This funding is designed to empower communities and support socially oriented businesses that address local issues and areas of need by developing hyper local services to re-engage local people in the workforce, providing quality sustainable employment and to use the input of those who have often moved to an area for a ‘better quality of life’ – bringing with them business skills that we can harness to benefit our economy and community to create inclusive economic growth.

Enabling bespoke support for social enterprises will continue to be a need but short-term intervention will have an impact that will lead to growth in the sector. Social enterprises have the potential to enrich local economies and reduce inequality.

The Social Enterprise Support Fund has been established to provide support to social enterprises within Babergh and Mid Suffolk on their journey, be that in development, supporting resilience or exploring the need and mechanism for delivering new services.

## Priorities and Outcomes

The Social Enterprise Support Fund has been funded through UK Shared Prosperity Funding, and all applications must meet one of the following priorities as set out by the Fund:

* Building sustainable, profit-making social businesses
* Supporting the establishment of new social enterprises
* Supporting existing social enterprises in diversifying or extending their offer to customers and communities
* Supporting those creating change in their local communities
* Increased capacity and aspiration for organisational development
* Social enterprises and charities are investment ready and more resilient
* Improved general capacity and capability as organisations, in particular in boosting management skills and knowledge
* Developing the local social economy through the creation of new jobs

As part of your application, we expect detail on how your organisation will deliver outcomes against these priorities, as well as indicators that will be used to measure the impact of support provided.

These outcomes and indicators should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART).

## Fund Details

Between £1,000 - £5,000 can be applied for. This is a **revenue only fund** and **cannot be put towards capital costs**. Match funding is not required, and up to 100% of costs can be supported.

Applications will be assessed on a first come, first serve basis, within the 2024-25 financial year. The Fund opens for applications on 5th August 2024 and the deadline for applications is 31st January 2025.

Funding must be spent by 31st March 2025. Proof of expenditure, e.g., invoices and receipts must be submitted to the Grants Team.

## What the Funding Can be used for

We want to support social enterprises to become stronger and more resilient because of this funding. The funding can be used for, but not limited to:

* External business support and consultancy – to help you strengthen your organisation. This could include:-
	+ Business planning or strategy
	+ Support with developing marketing or sale strategies
	+ Improving internal systems
	+ Training and development of support for staff, volunteers or board members
	+ Specialist HR support
	+ Improving your reach
	+ Demonstrating your impact
* Travel costs
* Staffing costs associated with business support and consultancy

We would encourage applicants to request funding for a proportionate share of your organisation’s true costs for undertaking any support provided, such as travel or staff costs.

If you would like guidance or fully-funded training on full cost recovery, more information can be found here: [Find out more about Full Cost Recovery - Community Action Suffolk](https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/case-studies/find-out-more-about-full-cost-recovery/)

## What the Funding Cannot be used for

* Direct service delivery, such as revenue costs towards existing or new projects/services
* Administrative or overhead costs
* Organisations that are not predominantly based in or working within communities in Babergh and/or Mid Suffolk, and cannot demonstrate a clear need within the Districts

## Who can Apply?

Social enterprises, including Community Interest Companies, Community Benefit Societies. Applications can be submitted by existing or new social enterprises based in, or operating in, Babergh and/or Mid Suffolk.

Groups must be constituted and have a bank account with one or more independent signatories.

We require that all organisations have 3 key policies in place:

* Safeguarding
* Health and Safety
* Equal Opportunities

If not, the development of these through Community Action Suffolk would be a condition of any offer: [Governance and Organisation Development - Community Action Suffolk](https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/governance-and-organisation-development/)

## How to Apply

Application forms can be found on each District Councils’ Community Grants webpage: [Babergh](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/babergh-district-council-funding-1) or [Mid Suffolk](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/mid-suffolk-district-council-funding-1)

All application forms must be submitted to the Grants Team at BMSDCGrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.

We would advise applicants to seek guidance prior to applying from Horia Azizi, Social Enterprise Support Officer at Community Action Suffolk at horia.azizi@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk. Horia is the lead Officer of Community Action Suffolk’s [Social Enterprise Support Project](https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/projects/social-enterprise-support-project-bms/).

