

BMSDC Grants - Communities

Mid Suffolk District Council

Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

Mid Suffolk District Council offers Community Grants to organisations that deliver community support, projects or activities within Mid Suffolk. [The Mid Suffolk Plan](#) outlines the priorities of Mid Suffolk District Council. All funding awarded by the Council aligns to one or more of our priorities.

£750,000 of funding is available across Mid Suffolk through the Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund, to support the growth and development of the community sports sector in rural areas across Mid Suffolk. Applications must be for at least £20,000 and not more than £250,000 for projects which provide new or upgrade existing community sports facilities. Exceptional strategic projects over the limit of £250,000 will be considered.

These notes are designed to help you complete our Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund expression of interest and application forms and we suggest that you read them through fully before you complete a form.

Details on our other available Grants can be found on our website. View information on Community Grants in [Babergh](#) or [Mid Suffolk](#).

2. Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund

The funding is available to support community groups in Mid Suffolk develop and expand sport & physical activity infrastructure in areas outside of Stowmarket. We want to encourage communities to enhance their local area and promotes physical activity and sporting activities within their local community. The map below shows the zones of areas that have a lack of provision for sport & physical activity infrastructure.

[View Map.](#)

Applications can be submitted for pre-project costs and capital infrastructure, up to 100% of total costs. Between £20,000 and £250,000 can be applied for, and more than one application can be submitted by an organisation.

Applications must demonstrate a clear need for their project/organisation within Mid Suffolk and the wider community benefit. Applications which are not fully filled or lack required supporting documentation will not be considered eligible.

Expressions of interest can be submitted at any time with the Fund open on a first come, first served basis. As such, priority will be given to applications from organisations who have not previously applied or been awarded the Sports Infrastructure Fund.

Match funding is not required, though is encouraged. **A Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund application cannot be submitted alongside a Community Development Grant application.**



Other Mid Suffolk District Council funding such as Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may be available to apply for as match funding.

3. Terms and Conditions

3.1. Organisations

Applications for grants will only be considered from constituted Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations which:

- Already provide a service for the benefit of Mid Suffolk residents (place based).
- Are capable of obtaining from its own funds or other funding sources (grants) sufficient funding to cover the total project cost.
- Are financially viable, as evidenced by audited or independently examined accounts.
- Have Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies for employees, volunteers and attendees in place.
- Provide services which align with the Council's priorities, do not duplicate services already being provided/grant aided, and will meet proven identified needs.

Eligible organisations include, but are not limited to, Sports Clubs, Parish Councils, Playing Field Management Committees.

3.2. Ineligible Organisations

The Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund is not available for:

- Private individuals
- For-profit businesses
- Statutory authorities
- Schools where there is no wider community benefit
- Community groups without an independent bank account
- Services commenced or goods ordered prior to Grants being awarded

3.3. VAT

If your organisation is registered for and can reclaim VAT, any Grant awarded will be exclusive of VAT. If your organisation is unable to reclaim VAT, Grants awarded will be inclusive of VAT.

3.4. Conditions

- Projects must deliver a wide range of community sports benefits, and these benefits as well as project outcomes should be identified as part of the application process.
- All projects must be delivered within a specified time period. By the end of the period the services/project should be sustainable, or have a plan in place for future funding.
- To ensure best value for money, a minimum of two quotes are required for capital purchases and expenditure.
- Projects cannot be retrospectively funded, i.e. applications cannot be submitted for projects or purchases already completed/commenced.
- Where appropriate, applicants will need to provide evidence of their land tenure, usually ownership (freehold) or a lease with at least 10 years un-expired at the time of application.
- A grant approval given in advance of other decisions required from the Council does not imply that any other form of consent by the Council will be forthcoming, such as Planning Permission, Building Regulations approval or Community Infrastructure Levy bids.
- Some applications will need to be supported with additional documentation so that an accurate and complete understanding of the proposal is provided. The amount of

information and supporting documentation will be proportionate to the project, namely its size, complexity, and cost, and this can be discussed with the Grants Team prior to application submission.

- Where the application provides a facility or service that extends beyond the boundaries of the Mid Suffolk area, consideration may be given to the funding secured from neighbouring local authorities when assessing the level of Mid Suffolk support applicable.
- The Council reserves the right to request a copy of any applying organisation's policies or constitution prior to an application being assessed or funding being released to a successful applicant.
- If any conditions are breached, the Council reserves the right to seek recovery of all or part of the grant. If you do not immediately repay these monies, when requested to do so by the Council, the Council reserves the right to commence County Court proceedings for recovery of the outstanding monies, together with interest and Legal costs.
- Funding will not be released until the full funding package for the project has been evidenced.
- Equipment purchased or facilities built or improved must not be sold within 10 years of receiving funding.

4. Eligible Projects and Costs

A range of projects and costs can be applied for through the Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund. Applications can include for more than one element, i.e., an application can encompass pre-project costs, such as feasibility studies, as well as capital costs. A feasibility study is essential when planning a sports complex. Its goal is to evaluate if the project can succeed by looking into current market conditions, potential user demographics, and financial projections.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- New, upgraded or extended sports facilities
- Floodlights that provide or improve access for outdoor sport and activities
- Design and/or planning costs for new facilities & infrastructure changes
- Feasibility studies, to a maximum of £10,000 – no overall project will receive more than £250,000.
- Project delivery costs (i.e. paying for people to manage and support the project, Project Manager, consultant)
- Development of accessible activities at existing or new facilities
- Development of green space or pitches for physical activity or sport provision

Ineligible

- Projects located in Stowmarket

5. Fund Priorities

Applicants should be seeking for their project to enable one, some or all of the following themes:

Aim	Purpose	Examples
Active People	Diverse and inclusive physical activity offer or programme	Activities that support rural communities to meet up - socialise & exercise together
	Inclusive offer of social opportunities to support wellbeing	

		Accessible activities – Boccia, Walking Football, netball or tennis held at existing or new facilities.
Active Places & Spaces	Supporting provision of sustainable indoor or outdoor facilities which are accessible to all. Increasing locally based provision through community use facilities	Refurbishment or extension of facilities. Green spaces, pitches. Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, including netball courts, tennis courts. Floodlights
Active Partnerships	Developing physical activity opportunities for communities	Trim trail equipment, with activity class to support its use. New classes or introduction sessions for sports, using new or refurbished leisure facilities.

Evidence of need to support applications could include:

- Impact on wellbeing of residents & communities – is there community need? Is there community investment?
- Working with specific target groups.
- Enabling new activities within a local area with wellbeing benefits.
- Supports the town or parish aims such as a Neighbourhood Plan, People & Place Plan, Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan.
- Demonstrate regular activities that encourage people to be more active or to exercise or support people to have healthier lifestyles.
- Demonstrate regular activities that empower communities to improve services for health & wellbeing.

6. Process

Funding will be available in both the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

This is a two stage application process. Stage one requires the applicant to submit an Expression of Interest form, which provides an overview of the project, the identified need and gap that the project will fill as well as the difference it will make. This information will be used to make a decision about whether the applicant is invited to make a full application. We will use our local knowledge we have for the area and sport as well as considering other similar provision. This will enable us to understand how the project will benefit and fill a gap in provision within the community.

A Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund Application Form cannot be submitted until your Expression of Interest Form has been approved.

Stage two applications must be submitted within 6 months of our stage one decision. Significant changes to the plans outlined in the stage 1 process must not be made, such as the overall aim of your project, beneficiaries, the area or the budget.

Funding cannot be used to cover costs for services or activities that form part of the government's statutory responsibility.

6.1. Assessment

All applications will be scored by a publicly available scoring matrix. Applications which score under 50% on the Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund Scoring Matrix will not be considered eligible for funding.

In assessing your application priority will be given to applications that provide demonstrable improvements to community sporting infrastructure that serves a large and quantified number of people and fills an identified gap in provision.

Any application for funding to support or extend existing community assets and services must also demonstrate and evidence clear community need and evidence this.

Expression of Interest outcomes are at the discretion of the Council and cannot be appealed.

6.2. Offer Letters

Successful applicants will receive an offer letter setting out conditions, outcomes and the period during which the service/project needs to be completed and the grant offer claimed. Offers are valid for **4 weeks**, and after this period the offer will expire.

If any service/project fails to meet any of the conditions contained in the grant offer letter or the agreed targets/outputs, then consideration will be given to the grant offer being withdrawn and any grant monies already paid being recovered together with any interest applicable.

6.3. Payment

Funding will normally be released on receipt of invoices/receipts showing that expenditure has taken place. Projects must complete within 12 months of funding being awarded.

If any service/project fails to meet any of the conditions contained in the grant offer letter or the agreed targets/outputs, then consideration will be given to the grant offer being withdrawn and any grant monies already paid being recovered together with any interest applicable.

6.4. Monitoring

Successful applicants will be expected to provide information on how the fund is spent and how well their project achieved its aims. They will receive monitoring forms alongside their award offer so that it is clear before the project starts what information needs to be collected.

7. Contact

If you have any queries, would like more information or would like to discuss a potential project and funding application, please email the Grants Team at BMSDCGrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.