

Building Resilience and Nutrition Grant Fund (BRAN)

Guidance Notes

**IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE CAREFULLY
BEFORE FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM.**

1. About the fund

West Suffolk Council, alongside the CAS Community Food Partnership Team, is launching a grant program to support voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups working to strengthen and sustain local food systems across the district.

The primary goal of this fund is to support community groups in enhancing the sustainability of local food systems. By focusing on resilience, innovation, and partnership, the fund aims to enable community organisations to create a stronger, more sustainable food system in West Suffolk, with the main focus being on supporting individuals to be food secure which will benefit local communities in the long term.

Projects should focus on improving processes, expanding access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food, and/or enhancing skills within the community to enable people better support themselves. All VCFSE groups are eligible to apply, provided that their project/activity meets the aims of the fund.

Please note, because of the focus on long term sustainability, we will not be funding food costs.

2. Aims of the Fund:

The core objective of the grant is to create sustainable, long-term benefits for local communities through food-related initiatives.

Support will be provided to enable community food organisations to:

- Become more self-sufficient, sustainable and resilient for the future
- Streamline processes and ways of working to become more efficient
- Further support clients out of hardship
- Improve skills and knowledge in the community to enable people to support themselves
- Create local solutions to improve food supply and logistics
- Increase opportunities to offer a broader range of local, nutritious and culturally and dietary appropriate food

3. Who can apply?

The funding is available for organisations within the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE).

4. Key Considerations:

When making an application we ask that consideration is given to a number of areas as listed below:

Strengths-Based Approach: Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate a clear need and community desire for the proposed project by engaging with the target audience.

Sustainability and Forward-Thinking: Although this fund can be used for one-off initiatives, applicants are encouraged to evidence the long-term impact of their project for the community (please see funding strands for more information)

Encouraging Partnership Working: Applicants are encouraged to consider how partnership working forms part of their project. This could include forming partnerships with local food producers, independent food businesses, community allotments, or other organisations that can provide resources, expertise, or support.

5. Funding Strands:

To maximise impact, the grants will be considered within funding strands. Your project can address one or more of these:

Start Ups: Applications which are looking to start a new food project within the community with a focus on any of the following: offering wider support alongside food, food logistics, sharing food, reducing food waste, connecting with local producers, cooking and growing skills, and food during school holiday schemes.

Expansion of existing provisions: Applications which are for existing food project who are looking to develop or expand their provision to be a more sustainable model and provide healthy, nutritious food items, and/or offer support services alongside existing food provision.

Skills Development: Applications which are for training and upskilling staff and volunteers, or courses/programmes for individuals/families to support growing, budgeting and cooking skills.

Infrastructure: Applications which are for small one-off purchases to support the larger project or match funding towards larger items.

We cannot provide retrospective funding for projects, and successful grants should be spent by 31st March 2026.

6. What can be funded

Applicants must use the funding on sustainable food projects which benefit the community. Below are examples of the types of activity the fund can be used for:

- Pilot costs of a project which can include a set limit of £300 towards fresh or frozen food items that support a balanced and nutritious diet, and a maximum revenue cost towards staff of £2,000. This would only be for pilot projects.
- Infrastructure such as shelving, storage, IT systems, fridges, freezers
- Creation of community spaces alongside food projects
- Partnership costs to provide additional support services (maximum 6 months)
- Tutors/instructors
- Course materials including equipment and ingredients
- Training courses for staff/volunteers e.g safeguarding, food hygiene, and for customers e.g budgeting, cookery, allotments
- Venue hire
- Advertising and marketing materials

The above are examples given as a guide and are not exhaustive.

7. What cannot be funded

- Ongoing revenue costs
- Subscriptions
- Rent
- Domestic property improvements
- Purchase of private vehicles
- Lost income/profits
- VAT - if you can claim back VAT, please do not include it in your costings
- Items or projects which only benefit an individual such as bursaries/sponsorship
- Projects with high ongoing maintenance costs
- Activities promoting political or religious beliefs
- Overseas travel or expeditions for individuals and groups.
- Private groups operating as a business for profit
- Activities that form part of statutory obligations such as curricular activity in schools
- Medical research and equipment for statutory or private healthcare
- Payments towards endowment funds, deficit funding or loans
- National and regional organisations unless they have a local base and/or where their application is for a specific project
- Political parties or organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party, or to discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- Medical research & equipment
- Sponsored or fundraising events
- An individual or family with personal need
- Retrospective costs
- Projects that will displace existing services and activities

8. How to apply

The application process is a two-stage process.

Stage one: If you would like to access funding through the scheme, you must initially contact the West Suffolk Community Food Partnership Officer Elizabeth Evans: elizabeth.evans@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk to discuss your project and determine if suitable for stage two:

Stage Two: you will be invited to make an application in line with this guidance and all completed forms should be sent to elizabeth.evans@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Completed applications will be considered by a panel on a six weekly basis and upon submission of your application form will be notified of the next panel date.

9.Process after application:

Each application will be scored against the scoring matrix below and considered by a panel of officers, including representation from Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council, Rope Trust and West Suffolk Council.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the Council and will be required to sign and complete a Grant Acceptance form. Grants will be paid by BACS.

An evaluation and monitoring form will be sent for completion after 6 months. Returning this form to us is one of the grant conditions. Please keep copies of receipts and invoices related to the project / activity as these form part of our monitoring process.

Scoring Matrix

To ensure grant applications submitted to the Fund meet the objectives, a systematic approach will be taken to assess submissions. The grant application appraisal process will be made up of 2 parts:

- Part 1: Due Diligence
- Part 2: Criteria Scoring

Part 1: Due Diligence evaluates key governance areas that are essential to deliver strong, fair, safe and ethical services. Applicants will be scored a 'Yes' or 'No' for each criteria.

Part 1: Due Diligence	Yes / No
Applicant is eligible under the guidance	Y/N
Applicant has been constituted for at least three months	Y/N
Applicant has robust safeguarding policies and procedures	Y/N
Applicant has policies and procedures in place	Y/N

Part 2: Criteria scoring will be conducted by assessors allocating scores per criteria. Each assessor will individually score application forms independently without influence or prejudice from other assessors, colleagues, or any other person(s)/organisation.

Scoring Criteria	Score
A. The applicant has clearly outlined what the funding will be spent on and how the funding will address the issue/s	/16
B. The application has clearly evidenced the need for this project	/16
C. Clear beneficiaries identified	/8
D. The application is realistic and achievable, and it is clear will be delivered in the timescales.	/16
E. The items have been realistically costed and full costs have been provided	/12
Total Score:	/68

- Groups can achieve a maximum score of 68 points.
- Applications that score less than half of the allocated marks for any of the criteria stated in Part 2 above will be referred back to the applicant or rejected.