

Criteria for Applications to the Banff and Buchan “Area Initiatives Fund” 2024-2025

1. Projects must be aligned to at least one of the Community Planning/Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities listed below:
 - Changing Aberdeenshire’s relationship with alcohol
 - Reducing Child Poverty
 - Connected and Cohesive Communities
 - Improving the appearance and maintenance of towns and villages within Banff and Buchan
 - Stronger communities
 - Safer communities
 - Supporting health and active communities
 - Tackling poverty and inequality
 - Transport and connectivity
2. The budget will contribute up to 80% of the total cost of a project to a maximum of £5,000, or a maximum of £10,000 where the work has been identified and prioritised by the community itself through a Community Action Plan, or Local Place Plan, or equivalent).
3. All money awarded must be spent within the Banff and Buchan Area.
4. Funding for core activities such as staffing, or overheads will **not** be eligible.
5. In accordance with a decision taken by the Area Committee, at its meeting on 13 June 2023, the following shall apply in relation to funding for Christmas lights:
 - Applications should be for new lights only, unless, on advice from the Council’s energy team, repair would be supported as the better option, in terms of sustainability. Maintenance, installation and storage costs will **not** be supported.
 - Groups can source up to 50% of the total cost of the purchase of new lights from this fund to a maximum of £1,500.
 - Groups can only access this fund once every two years.
 - Support will only be given for displays which use energy efficient technology and focus on town centres or the main village thoroughfares.
6. The Council is required to ensure that there is proper accountability for public funds used in delivering services. Therefore, in order to comply with the “Follow the Public Pound” procedures applicants will be required to submit a copy of their most recent, independently examined set of accounts, including

a copy of their three most recent bank statements, and provide detailed information on any funds which have been ring-fenced for other projects. All information received may be considered in the decision-making process.

7. Applicants will be required to provide information on related funding applications, whether they have been successful and, if so, how much funding they have received.
8. Groups require to be properly constituted and submit a copy of their Constitution or Memorandum and Articles and any necessary and relevant qualifications, affiliations, and insurances.
9. Applications which are solely or substantially for individual benefit will **not** be considered.
10. Groups must be able to give an assurance that they will be able to complete their projects have receipts before **15 March 2025**. **PLEASE DO NOT APPLY FOR AREA INITIATIVE FUNDING UNLESS YOU ARE CONFIDENT THAT YOU CAN WORK WITHIN THIS TIMESCALE**. Groups will be expected to provide regular feedback on progress, to the Area Manager's Office, when requested.
11. Payment will be made retrospectively on receipts or other confirmation that the money has been spent in accordance with the proposals applied for. Payment will be made by BACS transfer to a group's bank account.
12. Applications for supporting core Council services will **not** be supported.
13. The use of the budget must **not** commit the Council to recurring expenditure or maintenance.
14. Successful applicants will be required to provide a short progress report after the funding has been received and the project is completed or well underway.

The Committee will consider each individual application on its own merits, and Members may wish to consider applications which do not accord completely with the above guidelines. For example:

- Certain groups may not have been constituted for a long enough period to be able to provide copies of their accounts but, with the agreement of the internal auditor, may be able to be considered.
- Members may choose not to consider applications from groups who have had previous, recent funding from the budget, even although their project complies with the above criteria.