Brighter Borough Guidelines – April 2026

Introduction

Brighter Borough is a valued way for Councillors to support community groups who come together to improve neighbourhoods and strengthen local pride.

The fund supports small, practical projects that enhance local places, encourage community activity, and make a visible difference to everyday life.

The commitments we have made through Progress with Unity ensures Brighter Borough continues to play an important role in delivering our two key missions:

- Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses by breaking down the financial, health, education and environmental barriers that hold people back.
- Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish by working in genuine partnership with residents, helping every place celebrate its identity and achieve what it needs to thrive.

Projects supported through the Brighter Borough Fund should contribute to these shared aims by improving community wellbeing, supporting inclusive participation, enhancing local environments and helping neighbourhoods stay resilient, confident and connected.

These guidelines set out how the fund operates and how applications will be assessed. Their purpose is to ensure Brighter Borough continues to be used fairly, transparently and in ways that deliver meaningful community benefit aligned with our borough-wide ambitions.

By working together under the principles of Progress with Unity, we can continue to build stronger, healthier and more vibrant neighbourhoods across Wigan Borough, where every community feels valued, supported and able to take pride in the place they call home.

What is Brighter Borough?

Brighter Borough is Council funding that the community can apply for through their local Councillor, to propose and support schemes that improve and benefit the community within their Wards in line with Progress with Unity.

Each Councillor has the ability to utilise £6000 worth of Council funding to assist the local community each year to directly benefit their Ward. Where projects are identified which have a wider benefit, contributions can be made to jointly fund schemes.

Schemes are works that are delivered via a Council department that is not part of the Council's usual programme of works and therefore requires a funding source to allow specialist works/events to be delivered by the Council.

Before Applying

Before applying for funding, the following guidelines should be read.

Please note, Brighter Borough funding still needs to be approved through the standard process. Every application is considered on its community benefit and impact, and in some cases a request may not meet the criteria and **could** be declined.

These guidelines will assist Councillors and the wider community when applying for funding. This document outlines what can and cannot be funded through the Brighter Borough initiative.

Funding Groups are advised that Brighter Borough funding should not be considered to be a regular source of income or an annual expectation of funds.

If funding has been received by the organisation from a different funding stream within the Council within the last two years, this should be declared and will be taken into consideration when determining if the Brighter Borough application should be approved. Groups must not apply for Brighter Borough and other Council funding streams for the same cost.

Proposed projects must not involve the Council in future revenue commitments or any increased liabilities.

How do I apply for funding?

Once agreed with your local Councillor, organisations are required to register an account using the Brighter Borough page on the Council Website. Organisations will need to register the first time they make an application but thereafter their details will be saved.

Once registered, organisations must send in proof of their bank account. Organisations will need to provide details of their key officers (preferably in their constitution), and if there are any changes of officers between their registration and subsequent applications, these changes need to be updated on the system.

Who can apply?

- Community organisations based in Wigan Borough
- Organisations who have a community bank account with 2 signatories (not related and not at the same address). The account must be in the name of the community group
- Organisations with a constitution
- Organisations that are not for profit. (All income is used to achieve the organisation's charitable aims and cannot be paid out to members, shareholders or owners. Relation to a CIC – a CIC limited by shares is still not eligible as it has shareholders who can draw dividends)

Organisations/groups should not apply for funding on behalf of another group. If an individual or group requires support, information or advice about setting up formally please contact communitiesteam@wigan.gov.uk for further information

Once registered you will be able to create a grant application. Grants need to be approved by the Councillors highlighted on the application and will need final approval from a Council Officer. Once the grant has been approved, the grant will be passed for payment via BACS unless stated otherwise. This usually takes 7-10 working days from approval. Applicants will be able to view the status of their application via their account.

Criteria for Funding

What can be funded

- Improvements to open spaces, local parks, Streetscene enhancements etc – subject to applicable Council Policies and any necessary planning approvals
- Projects that promote inclusion and community cohesion
- Improvements to community facilities – subject to landlord permissions
- Contributions to local events – e.g. room hire for one off events, catering, activities etc
- Projects to improve community safety e.g. defibrillators (and other safety equipment)

What may be funded on a case-by-case basis

- Alley Gates (in consultation with the Leader/Deputy Leader and where exceptional circumstances can be proven)
- Support for school initiatives (outside the national curriculum; this does not include a school/classroom session)
- Prizes or presents

What cannot be funded

- Activities that have already taken place or purchases that have already been made (retrospective funding)
- Political activity or campaigning
- Works on unadopted land/highways where the landowner cannot be ascertained or is disputed, except in exceptional circumstances
- Room Hire (except for one off events as outlined above)
- Contributions to the annual running costs of an organisation, Repairs to buildings (unless there is a community benefit)
- Private Businesses
- Support or hire for animals or birds (please check with the BB Team for exceptional circumstances)
- Projects that are the responsibility of another statutory body
- Provision of equipment which is required by law
- Schemes/projects on private land, including schools (unless there is a clear community benefit and public access to the land. There should also be a written agreement with the registered landowner, giving permission for the work to proceed and detailing arrangements for access, liability, maintenance etc)
- Individuals (unless it forms a contribution to the cost of representing part of or the entire Borough at an event of regional or national importance. In this instance the grant must be paid via a properly constituted body and not by personal cheque)

Applications from Schools

Brighter Borough funding is intended to support projects that deliver clear wider community benefit.

As a general rule, schools and educational establishments are not normally eligible for funding where proposals:

- Benefit only pupils or staff
- Support curriculum delivery
- Fund facilities, equipment or activities that fall within core school responsibilities

Examples of projects unlikely to be funded include:

- Curriculum-based activities (e.g. forest school for pupils only)
- School-only benches, playground equipment or facilities
- Projects without access or benefit for the wider community

Community Benefit

Applications may be considered where a school-led project:

- Is open and accessible to the wider community
- Demonstrates clear benefit beyond the school population
- Is not solely for pupil use

Match Funding

Where a community-facing school project is supported:

- Brighter Borough funding should normally be no more than 25% of total costs
- Schools should evidence other funding sources (e.g. PTA, fundraising, grants)

What are the publicity requirements?

The Brighter Borough initiative is Council funded and therefore its publicity and promotion is the responsibility of the authority, to be overseen by its Public Relations Team. In the publicity of all projects, credit for funding support should be attributed to Wigan Council and in particular to the Brighter Borough initiative, along with other funders where additional support is in place. Contributing Wards may be mentioned, but there must be no element of political claim either indicated or inferred for any approved project. If you wish to add a plaque to an item supplied under BB funds, this is acceptable and the wording used should be, “This item was supplied by your local Ward Councillor/s using their Brighter Borough Funds allocated by Wigan Council” An example of the wording on site notices or in publicity material might be “Funded by Wigan Council”.

Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements

Following a successful Brighter Borough application you must retain receipts for all purchases. Our administration team will carry out audits and request copies of receipts as evidence of spend. Failure to provide receipts or sufficient proof of expenditure may result in the funding being reclaimed by the Council or recovery action being taken.

Items purchased with Brighter Borough funds remain the responsibility of the recipient organisation, who must ensure appropriate maintenance, storage and insurance (where relevant)

Around six months after your project has been approved, you will receive an evaluation form to complete. This form helps the Council understand the impact of Brighter Borough funding and ensures public money has been used appropriately. You will be asked to provide information about the project, including whether the aims and objectives set out in your original application were achieved. The form will also request supporting evidence such as photographs, case studies and feedback from participants (where relevant). Organisations are expected to complete and return the evaluation form in full. Failure to provide adequate monitoring information may affect eligibility for future funding and may result in the recovery of funds where required.

Where can I obtain further information?

Further information and help on all aspects of the Brighter Borough System can be obtained by emailing brighterborough@wigan.gov.uk