

Brighter Borough (BB) Guidelines

(updated 2024)

What is 'Brighter Borough'?

The Brighter Borough initiative provides a fund for Councillors to propose and support schemes that improve the environment and benefit the community within their Wards in line with The Deal 2030 ,New Era and Community Wealth Building provisions.

An annual allocation (currently £6,000 as at March 2023) is made to each Elected Member, which must be used to directly benefit their Ward. Where projects are identified which have a wider benefit, contributions can be made to jointly fund schemes.

Each Elected Member in the Ward will have their own allocation, but at their request and agreement, these funds can be combined to benefit the Ward.

Should a Member resign or vacate their seat for whatever reason, any outstanding BB funds will be transferred to the re-elected or replacing Member. During any pre-election period pending elections, Brighter Borough funding is frozen for those members seeking re-election. If a member is not standing for re-election, they may continue to support BB funding applications.

What can be funded?

Funds may be used to make financial contributions either directly to schemes undertaken by departments of the Council or can be awarded as grants to eligible voluntary or community groups. The application must include an intended outcome on how the Group proposes to achieve the Council's objectives. Examples are :-

- Improvements to open spaces, local parks, etc
- Street scene enhancement – subject to necessary Council policies and planning approvals.
- Improvements to community facilities
- Support for voluntary and community groups
- Contributions to community events - i.e. room hire for one off events.
- Support for school initiatives (outside the national curriculum but not school/classroom session)
- Support for festive celebrations
- Projects to improve community safety

Points to Note

Brighter Borough funding may only be used to assist individuals where it forms a contribution to the cost of representing part of the entire Borough at an event of regional or national importance . The monies will be paid to the properly constituted body and not the individual.

Expenditure must be 'one-off' and there should be no expectation of future funding. Grant assistance is intended to support specific projects and not to contribute to the annual running costs of an organisation. Repeated requests for funding will not be approved. Repeated funding requests are where more than one payment has been requested by a member to the same organisation within a 36 month period and where clear and identifiable benefits for the current BB funding request are not set out in the funding application.

Members should be aware that if funding has been received 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

Members Interests

When submitting a proposal under the Brighter Borough initiative, Members should be conscious of the Members' Code of Conduct and should not support any proposal in which they have a personal and prejudicial interest or a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI). Particular care should be exercised in this regard.

Examples of an interest would include: -

Where a Member's involvement with a community or voluntary group could be seen as capable of influencing the group or its activities this will be seen as a personal interest. Members should not support any applications for community or voluntary groups where they hold a significant position such as Treasurer, Secretary or Chair (even if that role is voluntary and/or unpaid). Members should declare any interest in the group when submitting their Brighter Borough application.

Members should also decide to declare an interest if they or a close family member are involved with the group that is applying for funding or if they or a close family member are regular attenders at the Group in question.

Under **no** circumstances will payment of Brighter Borough funds be made directly to Elected Members, these must be paid to the community or voluntary group.

What cannot be funded?

- Activities that have already taken place or purchases that have already been made (retrospective funding)
- Political or religious causes or campaigns. Grants can be awarded to religious groups where the funding is for projects to benefit and involve the wider community.
(This includes Groups that are associated with political campaigns)

- Brighter Borough funding may only be used to assist individuals, where 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 (see grants section below) and not by personal cheque.
- Works on unadopted land/highways where the landowner cannot be ascertained or is disputed except in exceptional circumstances.
- Alley Gates (*except in consultation with the Leader/Deputy Leader and where exceptional circumstances can be proven*).
- Room Hire
- Repairs to buildings (unless there is a community benefit)
- Religious events
- Prizes or presents
- Private Businesses which includes private sports venues, gyms or unless there is a community benefit that can be clearly demonstrated eg a community open day
- Applications requesting support or hire for animals or birds.
- Public Liability Insurance, including running costs and utility bills.
- The procuring of equipment or services as a result of reduced or lost Council and/or other public sector funding.
- Fund projects that are the responsibility of another statutory body (for example the cost of Police motorcycle lights).
- Provide equipment which is required by law
- Support projects that are in conflict with existing Council policy or strategies
- Schemes on private land unless there is a clear community benefit and 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
- Proposed projects must not involve the Council in future revenue commitments or any increased liabilities. Future maintenance of projects can only be funded when this is capitalised into a one-off payment

- Any event where there is a cost to the public eg ticketed events or pay on the door. Events that are supported by Brighter Borough funding should be free to the public.

Should a Member be found to have breached any provision of the Members' Code of Conduct, then the sanction of withdrawing their Brighter Borough funding, for a period of up to 4 years depending on the severity of the breach, shall be available.

The process for groups wishing to access the funds of those Members currently under sanction is:

- Send an email to brighterborough@wigan.gov.uk which must contain details of the scheme, the amount requested and the reason why the other Councillors have not been approached. The Leader or Deputy Leader will then decide on whether or not to support the application and release the funds from that Members' suspended funds.
- The applicant will be advised of the decision by email and if agreed of the process they then need to follow to access the frozen funds.
- Requests not made in this way will not be considered.

What is the procedure for spending Brighter Borough allocation?

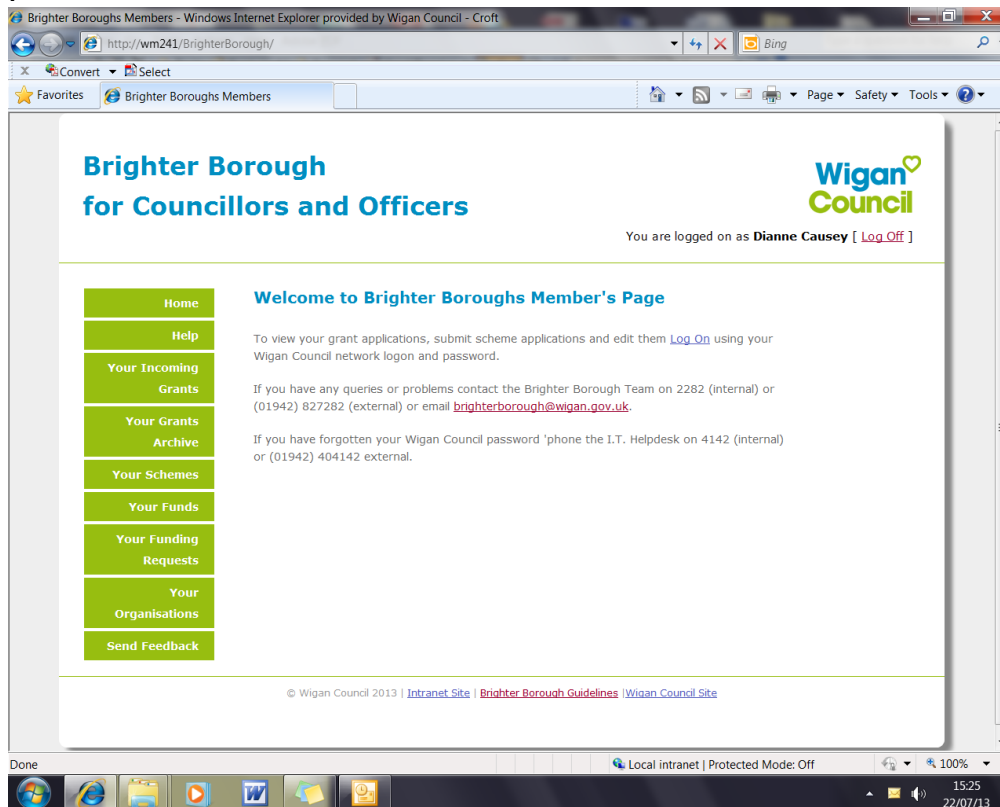
1. Identify proposal to be supported by Brighter Borough Initiative
2. Refer to this document to check that expenditure sits within guidelines
3. Consult with other Ward members as appropriate
4. Establish cost of work or amount of grant required.
5. VAT - If works are ordered by a Member directly from the Council, VAT may be incurred by the Council which is reclaimable by the Council. This means the cost to the Brighter Borough allocation is lower (i.e. net of VAT). However, if a grant is allocated to a group/organisation who subsequently order works from the Council, or any other registered for VAT trader, that group must be charged VAT. Therefore, Members may wish to consider VAT implications when they are looking at costs and if necessary, contact Democratic Services, who will then seek advice from the Finance Officers before an award of grant is made.

All applications for Brighter Borough funding must be done online. Members will have the link to the site to input any schemes you wish to apply for (see below for further clarification on **Schemes** or **Grants**). You will also have a link to give out to community groups once you have agreed to support a Brighter Borough grant.

In order to ensure that Brighter Borough funding is allocated as intended, it is important that Members provide as much detail as possible of the proposal they wish to support.

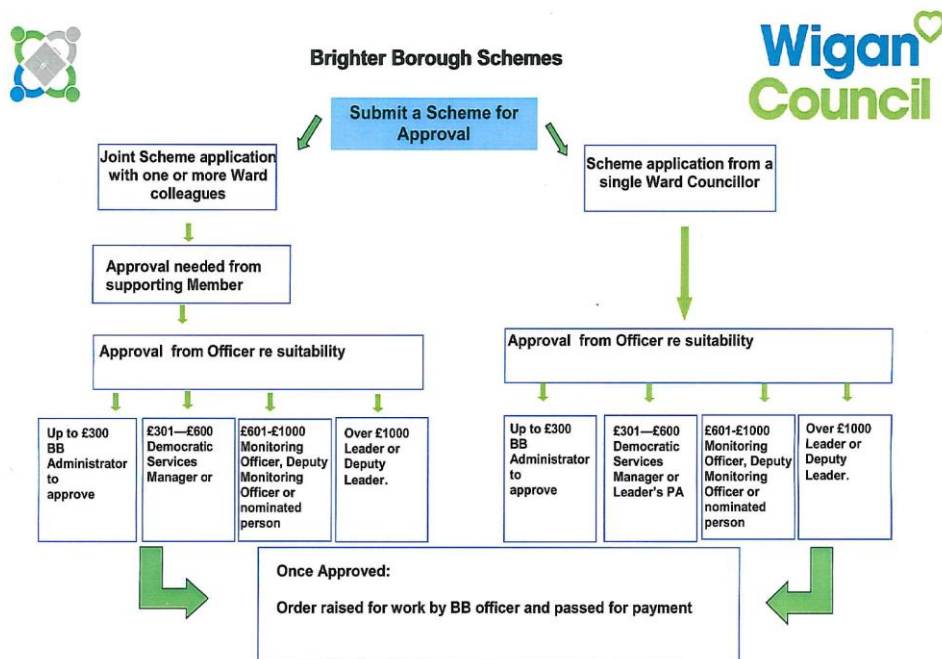
What is the approval process for Schemes?

Members will need to log on to the Brighter Borough site, please see example below



To create a new Scheme go to **My Schemes** on the left and you will see the option to **Create a new Scheme**.

Once you have submitted the scheme it will go through the following process



Progress of schemes and any grants agreed by a member can be viewed via the system.

A member will also be able to see previous grants, funds remaining etc. on the tabs on the left-hand side.

Approval for Schemes must be obtained before any expenditure can be incurred and Members should allow sufficient time for this when planning to contribute to projects and to award grants.

Only if there are exceptional circumstances can approval be sought for urgent works and this is at the discretion of the Deputy Chief Executive (Director – Resources and Contracts)

All spending must be supported by receipts, which should be sent into the Council and a copy retained as part of your records within 12 months of the spend. These are subject to checking through audit visits by Council officers. If any items of significant value are disposed of in the future or are no longer needed for the required purpose the Council will expect to be reimbursed. A second grant will not be allocated until receipts for the previous grant have been provided.

As recommended by the Council's Audit section, a grant agreement form will be issued, and a signed copy returned by the recipients for every approved grant award. This will form part of the application process.

Any party receiving monies under the Brighter Borough Scheme will be expected to sign the Brighter Borough Grant Agreement and adhere to the conditions set out in that agreement.

Any unspent funding or funding not spent as approved should be returned to the Council. Any unreturned funds will be pursued by the Council. Any approved funding not spent within six months may be Investigated by the Council's Auditors if not returned.

The above rules will apply to both Brighter Borough grants and schemes.

How will the proposals be implemented?

Schemes – works to be delivered via a Council Department.

The law does not allow Elected Members to directly incur Council expenditure. Therefore all Brighter Borough expenditure must be authorised for payment by Council Officers and a lead Department or Officer identified to have responsibility for implementing the works. Members must not place orders with suppliers, themselves, but should liaise with the relevant Officer to arrange for an official order to be placed after funding has been approved. The Council's lead officer will not place any order until the application has been approved by the Assistant Director – Legal and the Leader/Deputy Leader if required.

Where for any reason a Member wishes to recommend the use of a particular contractor or supplier for a Brighter Borough scheme they must demonstrate and provide independent written evidence that the contractor or supplier is suitably qualified and experienced to undertake the work and that a competitive quote has been provided. Alternative quotes would need to be obtained to ensure competitiveness and value for money and in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. In some cases, depending upon the nature of the work, evidence would have to be also provided in respect of health and safety requirements and having adequate public liability insurance and employee's liability insurance in place. Without these safeguards the council will not be able to place an order with that contractor.

Where the work proposed is on open space, footpaths, or similar areas of land, then the contractor must be on a framework that has been approved by the Council, unless the work is of a particular specialist nature. The use of such contractors ensures a level of quality control and that the appropriate safeguards are in place as required above. In addition, the member should ensure that the Council has permission to enter any land on which works are to be carried out.

In addition, if any contractor so recommended has a relationship with an Elected Member, which is deemed to be a personal or prejudicial interest, then this should be declared. Without overriding circumstances such contractors should not be used. It is the responsibility of the recommending Elected Member to make this declaration. Reference should be made to the Code of Conduct for Members.

Grants for Community or Voluntary Groups

Grants may be used as contributions to the activities of community or voluntary groups. In order to be eligible to receive support from the Brighter Borough initiative Organisations are required to use the online system to register once agreed with a

member The organisation will need to register the first time they make an application but thereafter their details will be saved. For first applications they must send in proof of a bank account. Organisations 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. Applications will only be accepted from these officers.

The organisation will need to confirm that they have discussed this application with the relevant Member and on what date and also complete all sections of the form, which includes contact details (including email), bank account details and confirm that they have one of the following - constitution or written rules, latest accounts, or a statement of income and expenditure and current liability insurance if applicable. The Council will not require this information to be submitted with the application but may at a future date request to see any relevant documentation. The following levels of approvals are in force (these levels are required

- Approval from the supporting Member **If the supporting Member is unable to complete approval on the system, they must provide their approval by email, which will be retained by the BB Administrator as part of the audit trail**
- BB Administrator approval as to its suitability and receipt of bank details.
- BB Administrator approval of standard grants/schemes up to £500
- Schemes from £501 and up to £1000 require approval of the Democratic Services Manager or her Deputy
- Schemes from £1001 will also require the approval of the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer and then Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council.
- After final approval, the scheme will be passed for payment via BACS which should be made within 7/10 days and an email will be sent to the organisation once final approval has been given.

Responsibility for the appointment of contractors and ensuring value for money rests with the employing organisation and not with the Council.

Parties will be expected to sign the Brighter Borough Grant Agreement and adhere to the conditions set out in that agreement

Grants for school initiatives

Brighter Borough funding may be used to support a school initiative providing the activity is outside the requirements of the national curriculum. Payments may be made directly into the school's delegated bank account.

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 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”.

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

Courtesy Notes

1. Members are encouraged to spend their allocation each financial year. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Officers will monitor this spend on a regular basis.
2. Reciprocal arrangements should be in place between Wards where one Ward has supported another.
3. On schemes only – where Members seek support of Ward Colleagues, they must ensure that that Member has given full support before submitting the request.
4. Councillors must not email out to all Members to request funding for a particular cause, this must be done, if approved, via the Deputy Leader only.
5. Brighter Borough funding can only be used for a project that has not received funding from elsewhere and the monies allocated should comply with the priorities of the Deal 2030 as set out below:-

Best start in life for children and young people

Happy healthy people

Communities that care

Vibrant town centres

An environment to be proud of

Embracing culture, heritage and sport

Economic growth that benefits everyone

A well connected place

Confidently digital

A home for all.