



STRATEGIC FUND

Guidance Notes 2025/26

Grant Guidance Notes for application form which can be found here ([hyperlink](#))

WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC EVENTS FUND?

The Scottish Borders Events Strategic Fund can award funds to events that have the potential to grow, generate significant economic benefits for the area, attract new visitors to the Scottish Borders and increase the Scottish Borders profile on the national or international stage.

The Grant operates in line with the principles of best practice and Scottish Borders Council's Code of Practice for Following the Public Pound.

WHO CAN APPLY?

You will need to meet key criteria:

- Can your event attract more than 1,000 unique visitors building up to 5,000 as the event develops with at least 25% (1,250) of attendees from outwith the Scottish Borders?
- Will the event generate a media profile and publicity for the Scottish Borders?
- Do you have a viable budget in place (in excess of £25,000 to demonstrate a significant ROI) along with business, health and safety a marketing plan and event plan?
- Does your event have capacity to become financially self-sustaining and can you demonstrate this including timescales?
- Does your event align with local/ national/ regional strategies (tourism, economic and events) including Net Zero?

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

You will need to meet key criteria:

- Total funds available within the Strategic Fund will be agreed annually
- The minimum award is £5,000 and the maximum award £25,000. For requests over and above the specified amount a special dispensation will be required from Senior Council Officers as well as the panel.
- The funding requested must not exceed 25% of the overall event income. This means your event income should be no less than £20,000, if applying for the minimum award value.

WHEN ARE THE CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS?

- 31st August – Events taking Place January – 31st March
- 30th November – Events taking Place April – 30th June
- 28th February – Events taking place July – 31st September
- 31st May – Events taking place October – 31st December

STRATEGIC FUND

Guidance Notes 2025/26



WHAT CAN FUNDING BE USED FOR?

- Enhancing existing events
- Developing new and innovative ideas to strengthen and enhance an event or festival
- Supporting sustainable practices as part of a wider festival or event

WHAT ITEMS ARE INELIGIBLE?

- Core delivery costs for existing events
- Funding gaps left by other funds being withdrawn
- Hospitality costs
- Events taking place in a virtual format - all events core offerings must offer a live format

WHAT HAPPENS IF I RECEIVE FUNDING?

- If you have been successful, you will receive an award letter specifying the terms and conditions. You must sign and return a full copy to us within 3 weeks. Funding will not be paid until we have received a signed award letter. Following receipt of the signed award letter and acceptance of the terms and conditions, grants will be paid either directly into your bank or building society account or paid out by cheque.
- Please note: if you are successful, it can take up to one month for us to process your payment. You will also need to submit a full evaluation including impact and financial evidence following the event within 3 months of the date on which it took place.

HOW WILL PROJECTS BE ASSESSED?

- The applications will be reviewed by an assessment panel and the criteria for evaluation are

Generate a media profile and publicity for the area
Demonstrate evidence of demand
Link to other event/ tourism and sustainability strategies
Have detailed safety and event management plans
Have detailed marketing and media plans

Able to provide copy bank statements
Provide a detailed budget
Value for money (ROI)
Agree to provide an Economic and Social Impact Evaluation (post event)

Demonstrate compliance with existing and new legislation, (where applicable) including the Deposit Return Scheme, the ban on single-use plastics in Scotland and the Waste (Scotland) regulations

Showcase, promote and sell local produce/ services
Support local business
Aspiration to provide a legacy from the event



STRATEGIC FUND

Guidance Notes 2025/26

WHAT IS THE TIMESCALE FOR FUNDING?

- We aim to process the application and release a percentage of funding prior to the event subject to the application being approved and availability of funds. Please note: if you are successful, it can take up to one month for us to process your payment.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO COLLATE BEFORE WE APPLY?

You will need to provide

- A copy of your constitution or rules, dated & signed if you have one
- A copy of your bank statement, less than three months old
- A copy of your most recent annual accounts (less than 15 months old), dated & signed as approved (New organisations should submit estimates of income and expenditure for the first 12 months)
- Copies of 3 quotations/estimates for items of expenditure over **£1000**, unless there are valid reasons why fewer quotations are available
- A copy of your Equal Opportunities Policy or Equality Statement if you have one
- A copy of lease agreements, written permissions or planning permissions where appropriate. Failure to attach/enclose the requested documentation will result in the application being delayed. Please note: Constitutions, bank statements and annual accounts must all be in the same name as the name of the applicant.

SUPPORT

- For advice on other funding opportunities, please contact: Grants Administrator at Scottish Borders Council: events@scotborders.gov.uk or on 0300 100 1800 or The Third sector interface for the Scottish Borders; <https://borderstsi.org.uk/coming-soon-your-new-third-sector-interface/> on 01896 755370. For assistance in completing this form and all other queries please contact the Communities and Partnerships Team at Scottish Borders Council on 0300 100 1800. All completed forms and attachments should be submitted via email to events@scotborders.gov.uk. Further information can be found on the following website: scotborders.gov.uk. You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the above address.

STANDARD TERMS & CONDITIONS

- The grant will be used only for the purpose set out in your application form. The grant will not be used to pay for any goods or services ordered or paid for before approval.
- Acknowledgement of the grant may be given in your annual report, Chair or Secretary's reports at your AGM, the accounts which cover the period of the grant and in all publicity material produced. Any publicity material must include the Scottish Borders Council logo.
- The Scottish Borders Strategic Event Fund can use your name (and the name of your project) in its own publicity materials.
- As per the offer letter, the grant will be monitored using a Grant Evaluation Form this needs to be submitted to Scottish Borders Council within three months of the date of completion of the project at the latest. Receipted invoices will be attached to the Grant Evaluation Form.
- The grant will not be increased. Financial records relating to the grant must be kept for at least 2 years.



STRATEGIC FUND

Guidance Notes 2025/26

- The grant will be repaid to Scottish Borders Council in the following circumstances:
 - o If the application form is found to have been completed dishonestly or the supporting documents give false or misleading information.
 - o If equal opportunities practice is not followed when employing people, recruiting new members or in providing services.
 - o If any member of your governing body, staff or volunteers act dishonestly or negligently in their duties during the grant period You will not dispose of any equipment or asset without first receiving agreement, in writing, from Scottish Borders Council.

Your group shall comply with all relevant legislation that affects the way you carry out your project.

PRIVACY AND SUPPORT

- Your application may be made public with the appropriate information redacted.
- For assistance in completing this form and all other queries please contact the Communities and Partnerships Team at Scottish Borders Council at communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk, or on 0300 100 1800. All completed forms and attachments should be submitted via email to events@scotborders.gov.uk
- Further information can be found on the Scottish Borders Council website: (scotborders.gov.uk)

Appendix

Eligible Events

Open to the public cultural and sporting events taking place in outdoor, indoor or hybrid settings and environments. These are generally one off or annual occurrences. This includes but is not limited to;

- Agricultural events and shows
- Arts festivals
- Book, Poetry and Literature festivals
- Comedy festivals
- Dance festivals
- Design festivals
- Drive in events
- Fashion festivals
- Film festivals
- Food and Drink events and festivals
- Highland Games
- History and Heritage festivals
- Lighting trails and illuminations
- Maritime events
- Mass participation sporting events
- Music festivals, in all genres
- National and International Sports Championships / Competitions
- Nature and Wildlife festivals
- Piping events
- Science festivals
- Sports competitions, tournaments and festivals that are not part of regular fixtures, and which attract spectators
- Visual arts festivals
- Wellness festivals



STRATEGIC FUND

Guidance Notes 2025/26

Eligible Costs

- Innovations to develop, enhance or grow the event
- Strategic marketing & PR activity to increase audiences / profile
- Hired equipment to improve the visitor experience
- Hired equipment to increase capacity
- Initiatives or developments aimed at enhancing the event's environmental sustainability credentials and contribution towards responsible tourism in Scotland
- Specific new activity or event related projects which provide opportunities to inspire or engage the local community with the event or festival
- Initiatives or developments which improve accessibility and inclusion at the event or festival

Ineligible Events

Private events not open to the public are ineligible for this fund.

The following types of events and activities are also ineligible. This includes but is not limited to

- Civic Events and Ceremonial Functions
- Coffee mornings and jumble sales in community centres, church halls, schools etc.
- Conferences, AGMs, incentive programmes, awards dinners or social corporate parties, away-days, teambuilding, training, business to business trade shows or consumer exhibitions
- Demonstrations / Marches / Parades of a political nature
- Group activities, self-guided and guided tours
- Local markets including car boot sales and regularly scheduled or pop up craft fairs, food and drink/farmers markets
- Online classes
- Participative events with a principal focus on fundraising, generally these are run by the charitable organisation
- Private, social or family events such as weddings, birthdays, dinners, functions or parties
- Regular or recurring programming in year-round venues unless part of a wider festival. This includes productions in; theatres, cinemas, arts centres and galleries; seasonal promotions and activation in shopping centres; live music and DJ sets in venues, pubs and clubs; comedy gigs in venues, clubs and pubs
- Regularly scheduled sports fixtures and club championships e.g. football, hockey, rugby, golf, bowls or tennis club
- School, college or university group events including concerts, productions, proms and balls, school sports days and graduation ceremonies
- Series of events – an application should be submitted in relation to single events or festivals.
- Showgrounds and funfairs
- Community gala days and fetes
- Seasonal community celebration

Ineligible Costs

- Core event costs required to stage the event
- Significant capital costs, including equipment and infrastructure purchases
- Funding gaps left by other funds being withdrawn
- Hospitality costs