



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

**Sports Development Capital Grants  
Programme**

**2026/27**

**Guidance Notes**

## **Sports Development Capital Grant Programme**

Applications to the Ards and North Down Borough Council Sports Development Capital Grant Programme should be completed in line with the guidance and criteria outlined below.

Ards and North Down Borough Council recognises the need for Capital Investment into our Sports Clubs and Facilities, to improve the quality of provision and sporting experiences for people living within the Borough.

The Sports Development Capital Grant Programme provides financial assistance to eligible Sports Clubs for the delivery of capital projects and the purchase of capital equipment. 'Capital Expenditure' is defined as expenditure for purchase, improvement, restoration, and construction of an asset directly related to the applicant organisation. It should have 'physical substance' i.e., be a tangible asset that can be listed on an asset register or a company's balance sheet (e.g. equipment, buildings) for use in the delivery of an organisation's activities; and it should have a useful life of more than one year.

The Council has set aside £90,000 for 2026/27 financial year and can award up to 60% of eligible capital costs with a maximum award of £6,000 in respect of any one project. Following grant assessment and allocations and if there is funding remaining, Council may consider awarding grants of more than £6,000 should the need be identified and in merit order.

### **Examples of Capital Projects that funding has previously part funded:**

- Renovation of Changing facilities
- Conversion of old changing facilities into gym/ training area
- Installation of new drainage scheme for pitches
- Equipment/Machinery e.g., Lawnmower/ tennis ball machine/ radios
- Support/ Rescue boats/ribs
- Ball stop fencing/ perimeter/boundary fencing.
- Installation of disability ramp to improve access to club house.
- Storage units/containers
- Flood lights + Bulbs

Please note: **Late or Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

Completed and signed application form (in PDF format) along with supporting documentation must be submitted to [sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk) no later than **12 noon Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026.**

## Timeline of Grant Applications

<b>Capital Grant Advertised</b>	WB Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2026
Capital Grant <b>OPEN</b>	Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 12noon
Capital Grant <b>CLOSES</b>	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026 at 12noon
Assessment of Applications	WC Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Letters of Offers/ Unsuccessful Letters	WC Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Letter of Acceptance <b>Deadline Return</b>	WC Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2026
Claim forms <b>Deadline Return</b>	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2027 at 12noon

## Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible to apply, applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements.

Should an application be received that does not meet the minimum requirements below, the application will not proceed to the assessment stage of the process.

- The applicant (sports club) must provide sporting activities recognised by Sport Ireland/ Sport Northern Ireland/ through the UK Sports Council's recognition policy and be affiliated to a recognised governing body.
- The Sports Club must be based within the Ards and North Down Borough.
- The Sports Club is engaged at amateur level.
- The Sports Club **must currently be** affiliated to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum and newly affiliated clubs must be outside the 3-month waiting period.

AND

- Sports Clubs must be properly constituted and have good governance in place. The following documentation must be submitted with Application:
  - List of Clubs office bearers
  - Copy of current and signed constitution or Memorandum & Articles of Association
  - Last 3 years' financial statements/accounts or life of club if less than 3 years

- Evidence of partnership funding being in place e.g. most recent club bank statement
- Full safeguarding policy (The **FULL** policy must be submitted. In addition, if you have adopted your Governing Body (GB) Policy then you must provide a copy of Committee minute of its adoption and the full GB policy)
- Clubs must have adequate level of public liability insurance in place; a copy must be submitted with Application
- Sports Clubs are required to have an up to date 3-year Club Development Plan in place. The Club Development Plan must be submitted with application and demonstrate the contribution which the grant would make towards the development of the club and/or wider community.
- For capital works, evidence of land / facility ownership must be submitted with Application. Applicants applying for equipment/machinery must demonstrate and will only be considered, if the equipment/machinery to be purchased has a permanent base and will remain in use for at least 5 years. It is not to be used by an individual for personal use. **Permission to store equipment on property must be submitted with Application.**
- If applicable, the project must be willing to go through the planning approval process, via AND building control. This **must** fall within agreed timelines, and the project must be completed within contract timeline.

## Purchasing

The Club must adhere to the Council's Procurement Control Limits:

Up to £3,000	No quotation necessary
£3,000 - £15,000	Seek three written quotations
£15,001 - £30,000	Seek four written quotations
Over £30,000	Public Tender

**Quotes must be submitted with the completed application.**

## Assessment Criteria

Due to the limited budget available, applications will be scored and ranked against the criteria below. This is a competitive scheme and therefore, funding will be allocated on the basis of merit.

Applicants must demonstrate within their application how their project meets the following criteria. **Only information within the Application Form will be assessed.**

Assessment Criteria	Scoring	Success Factors
<b>Criteria 1:</b> Please tell us why this investment is needed within your club.	25 Marks	The application describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why the investment is needed and for what purpose.</li> <li>• The project is clear and unambiguous.</li> <li>• The project has been well planned.</li> </ul>
<b>Criteria 2:</b> How will this investment contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of your sports club, including revenue generation, cost savings and economic benefits to the club and local community?	25 Marks	The application describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is clear and unambiguous.</li> <li>• Justifies why the funding is needed</li> <li>• how this equipment aims to supports and benefit the club</li> <li>• who will benefit from the equipment and how.</li> </ul>
<b>Criteria</b> How will this investment enhance social inclusion, community engagement and overall wellbeing of club members.	25 Marks	The application describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project has clearly demonstrated the: How, Who &amp; What</li> <li>• The project has the potential to bring about change.</li> </ul>
<b>Criteria 4</b> How will this investment increase/ sustain participation numbers within your club? <b>(25marks)</b>	25 Marks	The application describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the equipment will have long-term impact on whom and why (demonstrating positive contribution or change)</li> </ul>
	<b>100 Marks</b>	

**A quality scoring threshold of 50 will be applied. Any application that fails to meet the above threshold will not be considered for funding.**

## **General Guideline for applicants**

- All applications must be completed **in full**, submitted with all necessary supporting mandatory information. **Incomplete and/or late applications will not be assessed. Applications must be signed prior to submission.**
- Retrospective funding will not be considered and therefore the project must not have commenced prior to receipt of Letter of Offer.
- Only one application can be submitted per Sports Club.
- Applicants may be able to utilise other sources of funding to enhance their application. However, applicants must ensure that funding from the Council is additional and is not used to fund any element of the project which is funded from other sources. All partnership funding must be in place at the time of submission of application and evidence provided.
- Where other sources of grant aid are available applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have approached the other relevant source(s) and indicate the status of that application.
- Successful applicants must notify the Council of any additional funding secured after the submission of their application.
- Successful applicants must agree any changes to the project and its funding arrangements with the Council before implementation.
- It is a prime responsibility of Council to be accountable for public monies. To this end, successful applicants will be required to provide relevant supporting information when claiming funding e.g., original receipts, original invoices, and bank statements.
- Sports Clubs in receipt of public funding must comply with all statutory obligations regarding the delivery of their projects.

- The Council reserves the right to inspect the equipment/ project funded through this scheme and the Sports Club will be required to complete a Monitoring Form as part of the Monitoring Process.
- **Project must be completed, expenditure incurred, and all claim documentation submitted no later than 12noon on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2027.**
- **Failure to submit proof of payment may result in funding being withdraw**

### **What we do NOT fund:**

- If work has started or a contract is signed before the applicant is notified of Ards and North Down Borough Council's decision on funding
- Routine maintenance, repairs and renewals (i.e., no renewals on projects funded within the last 5 years)
- Routine running costs.
- Personal sports equipment/machinery and clothing
- Purely social or spectator accommodation
- Applications for car parking, access roads, perimeter, and site boundary fencing, (unless specified by the National Governing Body)
- Land purchase or property for long term development
- Proposed projects, which are likely to cause displacement of users from existing project.
- Projects, events activities undertaken or equipment outside the specified award period.
- Project, events and activities where the primary benefits outside the Borough.
- Events, projects or activities which conflict with any Council run project, event or activity.
- Organisations not legally established in the UK
- Projects, events, activities not compliant with the Councils' aims and objectives.

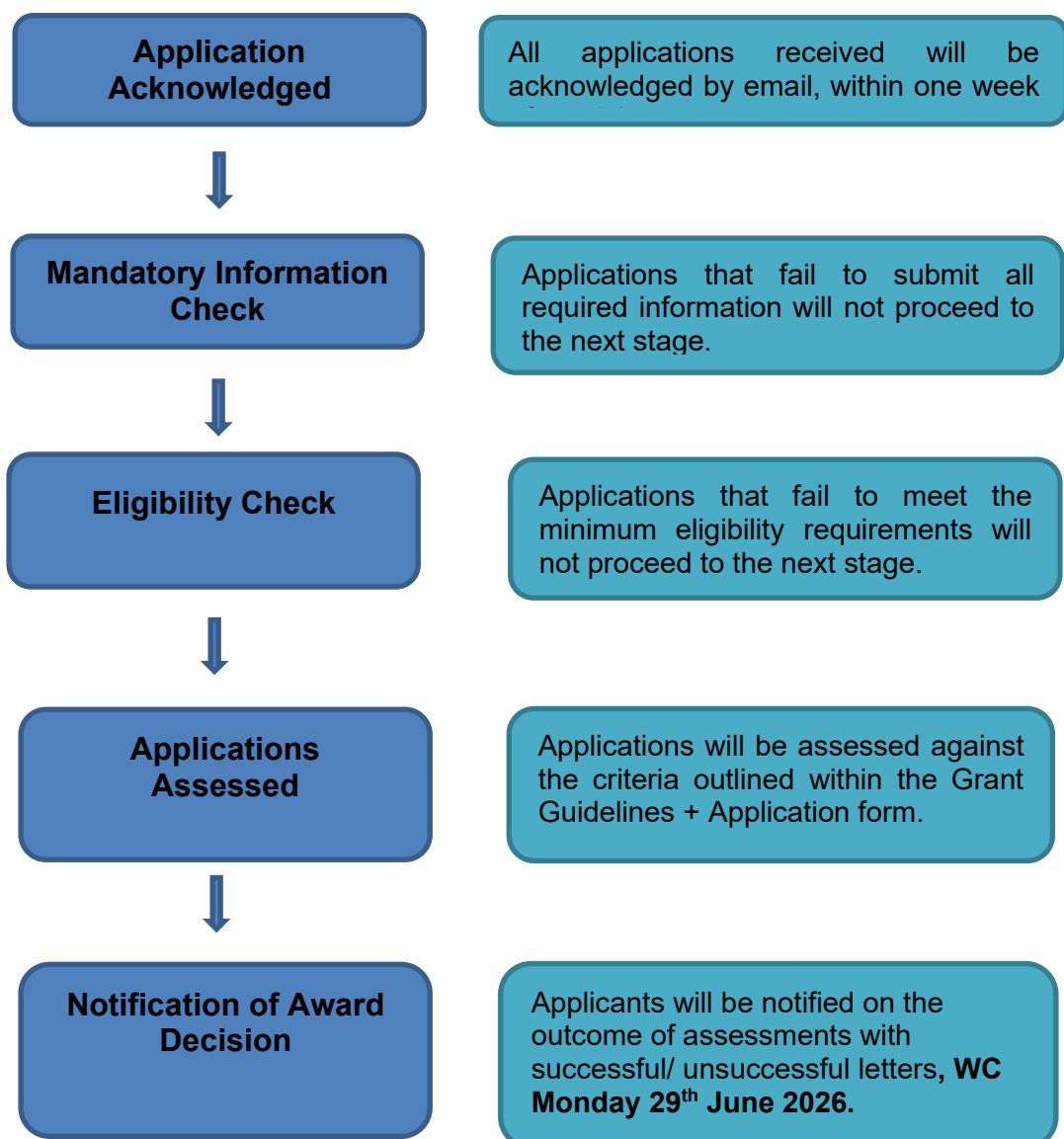
This list above is not exhaustive. The Council reserves the right not to fund any project which is deemed unsuitable for the Capital Grants Scheme.

Please note: **Late or Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

Completed and signed application form (in PDF format) along with supporting documentation must be submitted to [sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk) no later than **12 noon Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026.**

## Application Process

Following submission of applications, the following process will be completed:



## Ards and North Down 2026/27 Capital Grants



**For further information or any grant queries, please contact the Sports Development Team on:**

Tel: – 0300 013 3333 ext 40326 (Emma Hingston, Sport & Recreational Development Officer)

Email: [sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

### **Other useful Contact Details**

#### **Planning –**

Tel: 0300 013 3333

Email: [planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

**Building Control –** Tel: 0300 0133 3333

Email: [buildingcontrol@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

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