



Brilliant Basics Fund 2025-2026/7

(Local Authority and National Park Round)

Guidance Notes

1. Introduction and purpose of the fund

This document provides guidance on applying for support from the Brilliant Basics Fund, a capital fund which will support Local Authorities and National Park Authorities to deliver small scale tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities.

The purpose of Brilliant Basics is to deliver improvements in basic but essential visitor infrastructure at strategic tourism destinations across Wales to ensure that all visitors have a positive and memorable experience throughout all aspects of their stay.

The Welsh Government's Strategic Plan for Tourism '[Welcome to Wales: priorities for the visitor economy 2020 to 2025](#)' identifies the importance of the Brilliant Basics Fund highlighting that we need to continue to invest in the basic tourism infrastructure around Wales, as well as in high quality visitor experiences. Allocating funds to support good infrastructure and establishing well-run, accessible visitor destinations, is therefore considered a key part of our future ambitions to support tourism.

While the projects supported by the fund will not in themselves drive visitors, the fund will invest in facilities that will improve visitor and local satisfaction, provide better facilities for disabled visitors and enhance the environmental sustainability of key destinations. These elements, if missing or not managed properly can deter visitors from coming or stop them from returning.

2. What projects will the fund support?

The 2025-2026/7 Brilliant Basics programme will focus on destinations and locations where there is a clear strategic need for improved tourism infrastructure investment with a particular focus on areas which experience high visitor footfall. All projects should be clearly identified in local authority Destination Management Plans, National Park Management Plans, Town Plans or an equivalent plan identifying a need for the project and gap in provision.

For this round of funding, all applications must meet priority **(i)** below and at least one of the other 3 key priorities:

(i) Environmentally sustainable destinations and responding to the climate emergency.

The tourism sector in Wales has a key role to play in responding to the climate emergency. In a change to the previous round, all projects will need to meet this objective by including elements that will make their destination more environmentally sustainable, helping to reduce their carbon footprint and facilitating the use of more sustainable modes of transport by visitors. Example projects include:

- Electric vehicle and e/bike charging points,
- Sustainable heating and lighting systems e.g. solar panels,
- Water fountains that encourage visitors to reduce the use of single use plastics,
- Smart bins and 'on the go' recycling bins,
- Infrastructure for park and ride schemes, bus and bike shelters,
- Bike/ e-bike hire schemes,
- Coach parking,
- Improved walking and cycling paths.

(ii) Alleviate pressure points at 'hot spot' locations and supporting high quality tourism destinations.

There is increased pressure in some areas of Wales, at certain times of the year, which is leading to a poor visitor experience and negative impacts on some local communities. If infrastructure needs are not addressed, the volume of visitors to certain parts of Wales can lead to significant impacts on sensitive cultural, heritage and environmental sites, as well as the day-to-day lives of residents, often resulting in negative perceptions or even resentment towards tourists. Furthermore, visitor surveys continue to highlight the importance of essential services such as the cleanliness and availability of public toilets to visitors' enjoyment of a destination. Example projects include:

- Development of 'aires' for motorhomes and facilities for overnight stops for campervans,
- The provision of visitor parking and traffic management schemes,
- The refurbishment of public toilets in areas of high visitor footfall,
- Visitor signage including destination, directional, and information signage,
- Projects that can proactively re-direct visitors as a result of queues and locations being at full capacity e.g. Digital signage.

(iii) Inclusive tourism and enhancing accessibility.

We will support projects that remove obstacles and barriers to disabled visitors within a destination and improve access to facilities for all. Example projects include:

- Upgrading / new accessible toilet facilities with dedicated 'changing places' toilet facilities in areas of high visitor footfall,
- Improved access paths and areas for pedestrians and those with accessibility issues including dedicated seating areas,
- Accessibility improvements might include ramped routes to beaches with handrails and / or wooden pathways to the beaches,
- Disabled parking bays,
- Mobility vehicles / beach wheelchairs.

(iv) Enhancing the visitor offer.

We will invite infrastructure projects that enhance the visitor offer through developing product experiences that provide a sense of place such as event spaces, trails and projects that showcase local food, heritage culture and the Welsh language. Example projects include:

- Interpretation schemes to enhance visitors' understanding of a destination's culture and heritage,
- Creation of viewing points/platforms at key scenic locations,
- Infrastructure for event spaces,
- Enhancement of existing walking and cycling trails,
- Development of new accessible and sustainable wet weather facilities,
- Public realm improvements.

Year of Croeso

2025 will mark the Year of Croeso in Wales as the latest in a successful series of themed years led by Visit Wales. As well as a broad welcome, marketing activity will celebrate aspects such as our iconic experiences, products, destinations and Culture, that can only be found in Wales.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to consider how their project can add to a *Croeso* that is inclusive, for example by making facilities accessible for all abilities and also how sense of place and for example, use of Welsh language, will be part of the complete experience.

3. Level of funding available and delivery timescale

Total grant available is £300,000 with a maximum intervention rate of 80%.

There is no minimum grant amount.

Any increase in costs to the project following the award of funding must be met by the applicant.

For this round of Brilliant Basics, applicants may be given either 1 or 2 years to deliver projects (if appropriate).

If you are successful at EOI stage (stage 1) you will be invited to submit an application (stage 2).

Applicants will be informed if their stage 2 application is successful from 01 April 2025.

Projects being delivered over one year must be completed, full spend incurred and claimed by 01 March 2026.

If a project can justify the need for a longer timescale the project can be financed across 2 financial years. 2 year projects must be completed, full spend incurred and claimed by 31 January 2027.

4. Eligibility

Who can apply?

Brilliant Basics 2025-2026/7 will focus on destinations and locations where there is a clear strategic need for improved tourism infrastructure investment.

This year's fund is open to:

- Local Authorities
- National Park Authorities

All projects must demonstrate partnership collaboration with wider destination partners and cross sector consultation. Local Authorities will need to demonstrate that they have engaged with wider destination partners and with the Destination Management Partnerships / Organisation where they are established. Local Authorities can also include projects delivered by third sector partners in their bids.

Eligible Activity

- Eligible professional fees that can be treated as capital costs are eligible. However these cannot exceed 30% of the total project costs and must relate to one off tasks specific to delivering the project e.g. project management of contractors, designer, architect, planning fees, or road safety & technical / specialist reports and audits. These can be in the form of internal expenditure, and we will need evidence (e.g. invoices) of the costs incurred.
- Workshops costs are only eligible if they can be treated as capital costs, for example if they are delivered by consultants and not existing staff.
- Retention costs are only deemed eligible if included with your final claim and the retention amount must be shown on the invoice/s.

The following activities are **not** eligible and will **not** be considered for funding:

- General repairs & maintenance work,
- Revenue costs such as marketing, overheads and internal/existing staff time for co-ordination roles,
- Tourism information centres (TIC),
- Consumable & low cost items such as linen, crockery, cutlery etc.,
- In kind match funding costs,
- Room hire costs and hospitality,
- Expenditure prior to the project start date.

This list is not exhaustive, and costs will be reviewed at offer stage.

5. Application Process

The fund opening dates and timeline are as follows:

Date	Project stage
22 November 2024	EOI closing date (1pm)
W/C 02 December 2024	Application stage to commence
14 February 2025	Application closing date (1pm)
from 01 April 2025	Grant Offer Letters issued

If you are submitting more than one EOI, you will need to rank your EOIs in order of priority. If the fund is heavily subscribed, we will invite your highest ranking EOIs to application stage.

Project Assessment

This is a two stage competitive process:

Stage 1 (Expression of Interest): Following the submission of the Brilliant Basics Expression of Interest (EOI) form, checks are undertaken to ensure that the eligibility criteria have been met.

Each EOI will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Is the organisation eligible to apply?
- Is the activity / expenditure eligible under the fund?
- Has the applicant addressed the environmental objective and at least one of the other fund priorities?
- Has the applicant provided evidence of consultation / discussion with wider destination partners?
- Does the applicant own all of the land applicable to the project or have a lease agreement in place for a minimum of 5 years?
- If applying for a short term project, can it be delivered and all costs incurred and claimed by 01 March 2026?
- If applying for a 2 year project, is there a clear need for the additional delivery time and can it be delivered and all costs incurred and claimed by 31 January 2027?
- If planning permission is required, has the applicant provided evidence of initial discussions with the local planning authority?
- Is the amount requested and intervention rate in line with the fund guidelines?
- Can the project be supported under the Subsidy control rules?
- Has the project been ranked by the applicant?

EOIs that meet all the eligibility criteria will be invited to submit a full application. Passing the EOI stage is no guarantee that the project will pass the Stage 2 (Application) process.

During the EOI assessment, we may identify certain elements of the application that are deemed ineligible or do not fit sufficiently with the fund priorities. In this situation, you will be informed of the outcome and expected to remove those elements from your full application and amend the costs accordingly.

Stage 2 (Application): The full applications will be assessed and scored against the criteria outlined below.

This is a competitive process and only the highest scoring applications will be recommended for approval.

The applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Appraisal Criteria
<p>Project Quality (weighting x10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of project idea/concept • Overall quality of application and description of proposal • Benefits and impact - Interventions must be clustered around strategic tourism destinations
<p>Strategic Fit (weighting x5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment to the Brilliant Basics Fund priorities • Fit with the own destination / local authority infrastructure priorities
<p>Evidence of Need (weighting x5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for undertaking the activity • Reasons for the strategic importance of the chosen location • Evidence and research regarding market need / consumer feedback
<p>Risks, Project Implementation and Delivery (weighting x10)</p> <p>Quality of information provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan • Planning permission submitted and timescale • Sustainable Drainage approval if required and timescale • Environmental risks • Land ownership or lease agreements in place • Risk assessment & mitigation • Project management team and structure • Claims schedule • Deliverability record on previous projects
<p>Project Deliverables (weighting x5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the project outcomes • Quality of the information provided on how the impact of the project will be monitored
<p>Project Costs & Value for Money (weighting x10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall proposal represents value for money to Welsh Government • Project costs are acceptable • Expected benefits are proportionate with costs • Match funding is identified and confirmed • The need for the grant funding is clear • Whether the facilities will be open all year round

6. Approval & Decision

You will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it. This is a discretionary fund and if successful in your application, a Grant Offer Letter will be issued. There is no appeal process for this fund. 'Start of work' on the project, or a formal commitment, must not happen prior to the decision as this will void the application. Welsh Government is not responsible or liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of an application. Whilst we are inviting Expressions of Interest, this is being done on a provisional basis only and we are unable to make any financial commitments until the Welsh Government's budget allocation has been confirmed.

7. Claims Process

As part of the full application process, you will need to provide a payment profile for the complete funding period for your project. Where the project is split over 2 years you will need to identify your spend for year 1 and year 2.

There will be a minimum of 3 mandatory claim periods for a project that completes by 01 March 2026 and a minimum of 6 mandatory claim periods for those projects supported until 31 January 2027. Even for 2-year grants, claims must be submitted in accordance to the agreed payment profile or the funding could be lost.

The payment profile will be set out in the Grant Offer Letter.

The Welsh Government policy is to make payments in arrears. Payments will be made in arrears based on costs **incurred** with supporting evidence provided.

Each project will have a set timeframe to be achieved and delivery targets will be included in the Grant Offer Letter. Expert project management is highly important as funding could be lost to the project if the delivery targets are not adhered to.

Claim forms must be submitted electronically and must be accompanied by expenditure evidence as identified in the Grant Offer Letter together with a project update, progress and forward plan. Updates can include photographic evidence. If claims are incomplete or inaccurate, this may result in payment being delayed.

8. Match funding

It is the applicant's task to secure the remaining match funding to cover all project costs. You will need to provide evidence that the match funding is in place with your application. The match funding can be sourced from other public funding sources. Other Welsh Government grants cannot be used as match funding. Where the match funding is a subsidy, the total amount of funding must satisfy Subsidy Control requirements. We cannot accept in-kind match funding.

9. Project Deliverables – Monitoring

The success of the Brilliant Basics Fund will be measured against the number of new and improved quality visitor facilities at key visitor destinations that will lead to improved visitor and local satisfaction and propensity to return.

At project level, you will need to demonstrate how you will measure the success of your project against the following outcomes:

- visitor usage (visitor numbers) and access
- visitor and local satisfaction

The project's outcomes could be measured by collecting and monitoring visitor and local feedback, e.g. feedback provided on social media or via visitor surveys; monitoring visitor complaints; collecting visitor numbers via footfall counters and photographic evidence.

We expect monitoring data to be collected and recorded against the outcomes for at least 5 years following completion of the project and this will be a condition of offer. You must complete and send us a monitoring report at 2 years and 5 years post project completion.

10. Operational delivery

All applicants will be required to set out the operational delivery arrangements of their projects relating to maintenance and cleaning, access and opening times. We expect applicants to demonstrate what measures will be taken to extend their existing opening hours above and beyond what they are currently offering.

11. UK Subsidy Control

On 4th January 2023, the new UK subsidy control regime entered into force.

In order to determine if a proposed scheme or individual provision of support is a 'subsidy', the Welsh Government will need to determine if the awards of funding meet the four - limbed test under the UK subsidy regime in advance of an award.

If the award is deemed to be a subsidy, then the Welsh Government will consider whether the award can be made either under MFA (Minimal Financial Assistance) where the aid does not exceed £315,000.00 over three fiscal years (current year plus two previous years), a relevant Welsh Government registered Subsidy scheme, or a standalone award whereby all 7 subsidy control principles will need to be met. The award will need to meet the conditions of the chosen route of support, which will be set out in your Grant Offer Letter.

12. Procurement

All projects will be required to follow their organisation's procurement policy when procuring goods and services with grant awarded under this fund. We may from time to time request evidence from you to demonstrate your compliance with your procurement policies.

13. Welsh Language

Applicants should seek early advice regarding the bilingual requirements of their projects and ensure that they have been costed and included in their proposals. The Welsh Language requirements that relate to this fund are:

- bilingual signage, educational, interactive and interpretative materials.
- bilingual publicity relating to the project.

14. Publicity

You will need to acknowledge the support on all publicity, press releases and marketing material produced as being funded by Welsh Government. Such acknowledgement must be in a form approved by us beforehand and must comply with the Welsh Government branding guidelines. All requirements will be clearly outlined in the Grant Offer Letter.

15. UK General Data Protection Regulation – Privacy Statement

Welsh Government is the Data Controller for any information you provide. Information collected may be shared with fraud prevention agencies who will use it to prevent fraud and money-laundering and to verify identity. Further details of how your information will be used by us and these fraud prevention agencies, is explained below.

The information that you provide will be used by Welsh Government to process and administer this application. Information supplied here and in the accompanying paperwork may be shared in confidence with other public funding organisations, and external technical advisers (as appropriate). It is necessary for us to collect this information for us to comply with our legal obligations under the scheme. Failure to provide all the required information may result in us being unable to undertake a full assessment of the application.

The collected information will be accessible by Welsh Government support service teams and its system technical administrators who support the I.T. system. System technical administrators will not use your details in any way.

The retention period for the data that we hold is explained in the attached [privacy notice](#), including your rights under the UK General Data Protection Regulation, together with the above.

16. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The objectives of the Act show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the 'well-being goals'. [The seven well-being goals](#) show the kind of Wales we want to see. The Act makes it clear that the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. The objectives of the fund have been devised to reflect all of the well-being goals.

17. Further Information

To discuss your application or project ideas please contact the Regional Engagement Manager for your region:

- North Wales: AndrewWallace.Forfar@gov.wales
- South East: Rebecca.Rees2@gov.wales
- South West: Ceri.Jones057@gov.wales
- Mid Wales: Nathan.Richards001@gov.wales