

POLICY FOR THE
ALLOCATION OF
EARLY HELP AND COMMUNITY GRANTS
SCHEME

2018/19

May 2018



Working for a brighter future together

OFFICIAL

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Cheshire East Council operates a Community Grants Scheme, recently renamed the Early Help and Community Grants Scheme, within the boundaries of Cheshire East as we believe that a vibrant voluntary, community and faith sector is vital to our communities. Small grants awarded to the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) can generate a significant amount of community activity and positive impact. This Policy addresses the governance arrangements, procedures and monitoring process to facilitate the scheme.
- 1.2. The Early Help and Community Grants scheme is key to the delivery of our Connected Communities Strategy which aims to have connected communities across Cheshire East, where people and community organisations are embedded within local networks, providing mutual help and support.
- 1.3. The Early Help and Community Grants scheme aligns to the Council's Commissioning Framework – People live well for longer which has been developed to achieve improved outcomes for local people. This means anticipating and responding to health and wellbeing needs as early as possible to ensure that local people are helped to 'live well and for longer' building resilience, so that people are empowered to recognise and address their own health and wellbeing needs and to make the most of assets within communities (such as by connecting people with local groups / voluntary services), which is a core part of this approach.
- 1.4. The aim of the Early Help and Community Grants Scheme is to support organisations (which for the purposes of this Policy shall include voluntary and community groups, registered charities or other not for profit organisations) with small scale projects that will improve the quality of life for local communities. Grants will be awarded which meet the Council's Corporate Outcomes:
 - Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and supportive
 - Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy
 - Outcome 3 – People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive
 - Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place
 - Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer
- 1.5. Funding will only be provided where organisations can demonstrate that a defined impact will be made through their project or activity and that clear outcomes can be achieved.
- 1.6. When using the term grants in this Policy it refers to the giving of a fixed amount of Council funds to organisations through an application and assessment process which takes place 4 times each financial year.

2. LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. The Executive Director - People has responsibility for Early Help and Community Grants and has delegated authority to approve applications for grants from local Organisations to assist in developing community based activities and projects.
- 2.2. The Early Help and Community Grants budget is fixed each year and so there is a limited amount of money from which to pay grants under this policy.
- 2.3. All grant decisions will be made based on the set of principles, set out in this Policy, and within the agreed budget approved by Council each year. The budget for the grants is managed carefully and flexibly to ensure that the Council has money available throughout the year. As far as possible the Council tries to ensure that no one is disadvantaged due to the time of year they apply.

- 2.4. Given the fixed budget and the Council's aim to benefit as many organisations as possible, the Council cannot guarantee to fund the maximum amount applied for; therefore organisations must ensure that they have procedures in place to cover the balance of funding required. The Council will not pay a grant unless the organisation can demonstrate that the balance of the funding is available.
- 2.5. The Executive Director for People will be responsible for setting aside a proportion of the available budget for promotion and publicity purposes, as required.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1. The Early Help and Community Grants Scheme operates within set criteria, agreed by the Executive Director for People and relevant Council Officers in line with the Council's Corporate Outcomes:

How to apply

- 3.2. Applications for Early Help and Community Grants must be made using the Council's current Early Help and Community Grant application form and associated guidance notes that are available online on the Council's website and as a paper version on request.
- 3.3. The application form must be completed in full. Incomplete application forms will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant, which could cause a delay or deferral of the application. A copy of the organisations up-to-date signed Governing Document and Safeguarding Policies must be sent with the application form. If this is not received the application will be deferred to the next round of evaluation and may result in the application being declined. Supporting documentation (listed under section 12 of the application form) may also be requested prior to the application being fully considered. Failure to supply all required documentation will result in the application being treated as incomplete.
- 3.4. An organisation can only apply for one project per application and one application per financial year can be submitted.
- 3.5. The closing dates for receipt and acceptance of complete applications are the last Friday of March, June, September and December each year.
- 3.6. Grants cannot be paid retrospectively therefore any work commenced prior to acceptance of the grant offer will not be eligible for funding.
- 3.7. All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as per section 5.0 of this Policy.

What can be funded

- 3.8. Grants up to the following amounts are available to support and strengthen organisations who are looking to improve or enhance community life and offer wider opportunities to local people within Cheshire East, which in turn improves individuals health and wellbeing. See examples below:

3.8.1. *Start up grants and community activity – up to a maximum award of £5,000*

Community activity comes in many different guises and contributes to people's health and wellbeing. It can reduce social isolation through bringing people together to participate in an activity or develop their personal skills such as learning how to use the internet or a new sport. The Council wishes to support the continuation of community activity and the formation of new community groups to support the needs of local communities and will fund running costs for new

organisations and those which have been running for less than 6 months. There are also benefits to the members of the VCFS organisation such as volunteering, which often requires members to be trained in order to further support their communities. Examples of things we are looking to fund are:

- Equipment, materials or specialist kit to help the organisation develop;
- Volunteer training courses such as food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, sports coaching;
- Specialist coaching or teaching sessions from outside organisations;
- Contributions towards running costs, excluding salaries, for organisations that have been established for less than 6 months only;
- Publicity / advertising / promotions / establishing a new website.

Outcome	Proposed areas for bids
<p>Outcome 1: Our local communities are strong and supportive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Cheshire projects to promote and develop community safety • Supportive and inclusive communities • Projects to develop community cohesion • Projects that help communities play an active role in delivering good support and social networks and that help people to be better placed to help themselves and each other – including a better use of digital technology.
<p>Outcome2: Cheshire East has a strong & resilient economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that support economic growth • Projects that support under-represented groups and vulnerable groups in arts/culture/heritage/leisure activities • Emotional and mental wellbeing support through a range of diverse activities which could include creative arts.
<p>Outcome 3: People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that engage children and young people with the culture and history of the Borough and help them develop the skills and knowledge to become better citizens and reduce the frequency of anti-social or disruptive behaviours • Targeted services for youth • Summer play schemes • Projects that support children and young people to get the best start in life • Projects that create the conditions for children and young people to develop skills and acquire knowledge to lead successful adult lives with a particular focus on 16-24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.
<p>Outcome 4: Cheshire East is a green & sustainable place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based improvement schemes e.g outdoor gym equipment, public open space, recreation and improvement • Projects that promote recycling and waste minimisation • Projects that protect and enhance the natural and built environment so that the Borough is clean and green.
<p>Outcome 5: People Live well for Longer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects to support communities • Support to help people to be independent and lead active lives, especially older people and people with disabilities and complex needs • Projects that promote health and health outcomes • Projects that reduce inequalities • Projects that support dementia friendly communities • Projects to reduce loneliness and isolation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that support improved mental health and wellbeing and recovery • Supporting people in changing behaviour (such as to become more physically active).
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3.9. What cannot be funded

- 3.9.1. Organisations which hold substantial free reserves, including local branches of national or regional organisations which hold free reserves that could be utilised;
- 3.9.2. Applications from Town and Parish Councils or departments within Cheshire East Council;
- 3.9.3. Work which has already taken place before acceptance of the grant offer;
- 3.9.4. Individuals;
- 3.9.5. Activities that are for the sole relief or benefit of animals;
- 3.9.6. General appeals, sponsorship or fundraising for your own organisation or others;
- 3.9.7. Activities of a mainly political or religious nature;
- 3.9.8. Assistance with providing transport;
- 3.9.9. Vehicle purchase;
- 3.9.10. Meals and refreshments;
- 3.9.11. Accommodation;
- 3.9.12. Outings or day trips;
- 3.9.13. Projects taking place abroad;
- 3.9.14. Travel expenses;
- 3.9.15. Projects from schools or colleges that do not take place outside of normal school hours or in the holidays and do not include a wide proportion of the community who do not attend that establishment;
- 3.9.16. Events which do not involve members of the local community participating;
- 3.9.17. Repair costs where deterioration is due to neglect;
- 3.9.18. Loan against loss or debt;
- 3.9.19. Running Costs i.e utilities, insurance, room hire, telephone, broadband, website hosting etc (unless this is for a new organisation, which has been established for less than 6 months);
- 3.9.20. Salaries and/or volunteer expenses;
- 3.9.21. Paying someone to write your application or applications to other grant funders;
- 3.9.22. Land purchase;
- 3.9.23. Items that are purchased on behalf of another organisation;
- 3.9.24. Disabled facilities where there is no proven need for the work to be carried out or where upgrading is required for an existing facility to meet the statutory requirements of the DDA;
- 3.9.25. Organisations which are not based in Cheshire East, unless they can demonstrate significant community benefits within Cheshire East.

3.10. Who can apply

To qualify for a grant organisations must meet the criteria listed below:

- 3.10.1. Operate within the Cheshire East area;
- 3.10.2. Provide value for money;
- 3.10.3. Be a voluntary or community organisation, registered charity or other not for profit organisation;
- 3.10.4. Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and are able to provide such information as the Council reasonably requires in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisations financial position and its need for the assistance requested;
- 3.10.5. Have a management committee with an up-to-date Governing Document which must be signed by at least two members of the committee who are unrelated to each other;

- 3.10.6. Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation, which must include a requirement that staff / volunteers are cleared with the Disclosure and Barring Service where appropriate;
- 3.10.7. Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation applying with at least two signatories who are unrelated to each other;
- 3.10.8. Complete the current application form in full, providing all required information;
- 3.10.9. Have not already received a community grant within the current financial year.

3.11. Criteria for Funding

3.11.1. Priority will be given to organisations and projects that build community resilience, such as:

- Community-led and managed activities;
- Increasing volunteering;
- Helping people to help themselves and support each other;
- Reducing reliance and demand on mainstream services;
- Improving the mental health and wellbeing of residents;
- Engaging local people through community groups and their social networks;
- Contributing primarily to outcomes 1, 3 or 5 as per section 1.4 of this Policy.

3.11.2. Priority will also be given to organisations which are based in Cheshire East, have funding contributions from their own funds and/or funding support from other bodies. Organisations applying for the first time will be given additional priority, as long as all other conditions are satisfied.

3.11.3. There is a limited budget available in the Early Help and Community Grants budget. The funding is intended to benefit as many organisations as possible over time, provide one-off funding for projects and to support new initiatives by new organisations. It is not intended that Early Help and Community Grants will provide repeat funding or that organisations become reliant on this grant funding as a regular source of income. With this in mind, when assessing applications the number of grants previously awarded and total amount of funding previously granted will be taken into consideration.

3.12. General Conditions

- 3.12.1. Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding;
- 3.12.2. Annual applications from the same organisation for the same purpose will not be considered;
- 3.12.3. Grants of £1,000 and under are valid for a period of 6 months from the date of the offer letter and will be paid in advance. A report and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Grants Officer within 6 months of the date of offer letter;
- 3.12.4. Grants over £1,000 are valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the offer letter and will be paid upon completion of the project. A report and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Grants Officer within 12 months of the date of offer letter to allow the grant to be paid;
- 3.12.5. If an organisations financial position means that they are unable to begin the project without payment of the grant first they may be entitled to request payment prior to the project commencing. Monitoring information will still need to be submitted 12 months after the date of the offer letter;
- 3.12.6. Organisations who are in receipt of other funding from the Council may apply to this grant scheme if the grant is required for a one-off project which is considered additional to the service already funded;
- 3.12.7. Any profits from projects must be used to further develop the organisation or for any future projects and not used to support other organisations;

- 3.12.8. If the project involves work on land or a building, including refurbishment, the applicant must own the freehold of the land or building, or hold a lease that cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least 5 years;
- 3.12.9. If planning permission is required this must be in place before the grant application is made. The Council may ask for confirmation that planning permission is not required, or that it is required and has been granted. Grant applications without planning permission in place will be considered if the application is for a feasibility study or architects fees in order to establish the viability of the project;
- 3.12.10. Organisations must be committed to and have policies on equalities and inclusion and in delivering the services or activity the organisation must not unlawfully discriminate, directly or indirectly against any of the nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The organisation can direct some or all of its activities at specific groups where the intention is to address discrimination or disadvantage;
- 3.12.11. Organisations must be able to participate in a monitoring process and provide monitoring information to evidence how the grant money has been spent and adherence to the conditions of the grant. This must include receipts or invoices and a written report of the project, plus photographs, on completion;
- 3.12.12. Organisations must acknowledge the support of Cheshire East Council in press releases, publicity and advertising etc. Electronic copies of the Council's logo will be sent with grant offers;
- 3.12.13. The organisation will allow Cheshire East Council to use details of the grant award, together with any relevant photographs supplied, in newsletters and on the Council's website;
- 3.12.14. Expenditure must not be incurred on the project prior to the grant decision being given. In these circumstances the Council will withdraw the grant offer/rescind the grant decision;
- 3.12.15. Organisations must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used;
- 3.12.16. The grant must only be used for the purposes specifically stated in the application form, should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the Organisation may be asked to return some or all of the monies paid;
- 3.12.17. If the project is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, any unused grant money must be returned to the Council;
- 3.12.18. All conditions under which the grant has been awarded, including any Special Conditions, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the Organisation being asked to repay the grant monies to the Council.

4. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 4.1. The Community Grant applications will be considered at quarterly intervals as set out at section 3.5.
- 4.2. Having assessed all applications a Recommendations Report is prepared for consideration and approval by the Executive Director for People.
- 4.3. Organisations will be notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not within 6 weeks after the closing date for each round of applications.
- 4.4. Complaints about any aspect of the Community Grant process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the [Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy](#) is available from the Council's website.

5. MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

- 5.1. Following a successful application and in order to ensure that monies are used in an appropriate manner, as set out in this Policy, a monitoring report will be required following project completion. This report shall include, but shall not be limited to, how many people benefitted from the project, if a profit was made and how it was used, how the grant money was used and what difference the project made to the organisation and/or local people.
- 5.2. For Grants of £1,000 and under a report, invoices or receipts and photographs must be forwarded to the Council within 6 months of the date of offer letter.
- 5.3. For Grants over £1,000 a report, invoices or receipts and photographs must be forwarded to the Council within 12 months of the date of offer letter to allow the grant to be paid.
- 5.4. Invoices or receipts dated prior to the date of the offer letter will not be accepted or reimbursed as per section 3.9.3 of this Policy.
- 5.5. The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.
- 5.6. The organisation must allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 5.7. Organisations must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).
- 5.8. If organisations do not supply satisfactory monitoring reports and supporting information in full and within the set time scale they may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council. Failure to comply with the conditions of this grant may be taken into account when considering any further applications for grant funding made by the same organisation in the future.