

POLICY FOR THE
ALLOCATION OF
COMMUNITY GRANTS

2013/14

Revised March 2013

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cheshire East Council operates a Community Grants Scheme within the boundaries of Cheshire East. This Policy addresses the governance arrangements, procedures and monitoring process to facilitate the scheme.
- 1.2 The aim of the Community Grants Scheme is to support small scale community projects that will improve the quality of life for local communities. Grants will be awarded to organisations projects or events which meet the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy – Ambition for All.
- 1.3 When using the term grants in this Policy it refers to the giving of a set amount of Council funds to organisations through an application and assessment process 4 times each financial year.
- 1.4 Administration of the Community Grants Scheme is through the Performance and Partnerships Team within the Places and Organisational Capacity Directorate.

2.0 LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The Cheshire East Borough Council Constitution states that each Cabinet Member is responsible for:
 - 2.1.1 Ensuring that budget control and financial monitoring is within the scope of their Portfolio;
 - 2.1.2 Approving the use of specific grants/and or funding for non-government sources and any annual delivery plans and agreements in relation to such funding.
- 2.2 The Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder will be responsible for the Community Grants Scheme and has delegated authority to approve applications for grants from local organisations to assist in developing community based activities and projects, subject to the maximum amounts set out in paragraph 3.2 of this Policy.
- 2.3 In order to assist the Portfolio Holder with the decision making process, The Partnerships Team Officers will offer administrative and professional support to ensure that all grants are made in accordance with the criteria set for grant applications.
- 2.4 All grant decisions will be made based on affordability criteria and within the agreed budget approved by Council each year.
- 2.5 The Portfolio Holder will be responsible for setting aside a proportion of the budget for promotion and publicity purposes, as required.

3.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 The Cheshire East Community Grants Scheme operates within set criteria, agreed by the Portfolio Holder and relevant Council Officers in line with the Council's Corporate Priorities.

3.2 What can be funded

Grants up to the following amounts are available to support groups who are looking to improve or enhance community life and offer wider opportunities to local people within Cheshire East. See examples below:

Facilities – up to a maximum award of £3,000

- a) Renovations or improvements to buildings, play areas, conservation areas (not sports grounds or single use sports clubs);
- b) Grant towards third party funding i.e. WREN;
- c) Equipment for (a) above i.e. kitchen furniture, tables, chairs etc.
- d) Feasibility studies or architects fees up to a maximum of 5% of the costs.

Activities – up to a maximum award of £500

- a) Equipment/materials to help the organisation develop;
- b) Training courses;
- c) Specialist coaching or teaching sessions;
- d) Contributions towards facility hire (for new organisations only).

Events – up to a maximum award of £250

- a) Hire of facilities for rehearsals or workshops prior to the event;
- b) Hire of equipment;
- c) Performers;
- d) Publicity/licences.

Community Led Planning – can apply for both of the grants below but not at the same time

1. **Community-led Plan Starter Grant, up to a maximum of £250** for initial start up costs of developing a Community-led planning group.
2. **Community-led Plan Development Grant, up to a maximum of £500** for costs involved in the development of the Community-led Plan and Action Plan. The Development Grant can be used for :
 - a) Equipment/materials to help the group develop;
 - b) Training;
 - c) Specialist advice and support;
 - d) Contributions towards facility hire.

3.3 What cannot be funded

- Organisations which hold substantial free reserves, including local branches of national or regional organisation which hold free reserves which could be utilised;
- Applications from Town and Parish Councils;
- Work which has already taken place before receipt of offer letter;
- Individuals;
- General appeals, sponsorship or fundraising for national or local charities (including local branches) or other local organisations;
- Activities of a mainly political or religious nature;
- Assistance with providing transport;
- Refreshments and/or accommodation;
- Outings or day trips;
- Travel expenses;
- Projects, activities or events organised for the sole benefit of students of a school or college;
- Events which do not involve members of the local community participating;
- Repair costs where deterioration is due to neglect;
- Loan against loss or debt;
- Administration expenses e.g. postage, telephone, utilities etc.

- Running Costs e.g. gas, electricity, water, salaries, insurance etc.
- Land purchase;
- Vehicle purchase;
- 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.
- Organisations which are not based in Cheshire East, unless they can demonstrate significant community benefits within Cheshire East.

3.4 Who can apply

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

- Operate within the Cheshire East area;
- Provide value for money
- Be a voluntary or community organisation, registered charity or other not for profit organisation;
- Have a set of accounts or as a minimum an organisation bank statement;
- Have a constituted management committee with a signed constitution;
- Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation where children, young people or vulnerable adults are involved;
- Have their own bank or building society account with two signatories;
- Have not already received a community grant in the current financial year.

3.5 Criteria for Funding

Priority will be given to applications for projects and activities which:

- Are based in Cheshire East;
- Enhance the quality of life for Cheshire East residents;
- Support the priorities identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy Ambition for All;
- Increase involvement in the community;
- Attract more participants/volunteers;
- Demonstrate the potential to be sustained in the future;
- Show innovation and creativity;
- Have funding contributions from the organisations own funds and/or funding support from other bodies in place or promised;

3.6 General Conditions

- Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding;
- Grants are awarded specifically for the purpose stated in the application. Should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may become liable to return the monies paid.
- Annual applications from the same organisation for the same purpose will not be considered;
- Grants for £500 and below 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. Failure to provide this information within the timescale will result in the Council recovering the grant paid;
- Grants above £500 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;
- 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;
- Any profits from events must be used to further develop the organisation or for any future events and not used to support other organisations.

4.0 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 4.1 Having assessed all applications and consulted with the Finance Department, the Partnerships Team prepare a recommendations report to be assessed by the Portfolio Holder.
- 4.2 A Public meeting is held for the Portfolio Holder to make decisions on the community grant applications received.
- 4.3 Following the decision making meeting, a Portfolio Holders report is circulated to all elected members by Democratic Services, allowing for a 5 day call in period.
- 4.4 Should any objections be made during the 5 day call in period a further Portfolio Holders meeting is held to discuss the objection(s) and adjust as necessary.
- 4.5 If there are no objections (or after the follow up meeting), the applicants are notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not.

5.0 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 the conditions for funding, a monitoring process will take place throughout the financial year.
- 5.2 The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application. The organisation will allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 5.3 Organisations need to retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).
- 5.4 Organisations will be required to submit a report along with details of expenditure against the activity or project.
- 5.5 If organisations do not supply the required reports within the set time scale they will not be eligible to apply to the scheme again.
- 5.6 The Community Grant applications will be considered at quarterly intervals with notification sent to organisations following the Portfolio Holder's decision.

POLICY APPROVED:

Portfolio Holder Signature:.....

Date:.....