

POLICY FOR THE
ALLOCATION OF
COMMUNITY GRANTS

2015/16

9th April 2015

1. 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 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, events and activities and community led planning that will improve the quality of life for local communities. Grants will be awarded which meet the Council's Residents First Outcomes:
 - 1.2.1. Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and supportive
 - 1.2.2. Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy
 - 1.2.3. Outcome 3 – People have the life skills and education they need to thrive
 - 1.2.4. Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place
 - 1.2.5. Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer
- 1.3. 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 Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder, (or whichever Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Community Grants at the time of making the grants decisions), 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 3.3 of this Policy.
- 2.2. The Community Grant budget is fixed and so there is a limited amount of money from which to pay Community 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 Portfolio Holder 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 Cheshire East Community Grants Scheme operates within set criteria, agreed by the Portfolio Holder and relevant Council Officers in line with the Council's Residents First Outcomes as follows:

3.2. How to apply

- 3.2.1. Applications for Community Grants must be made using the Council's Community Grant or Community Led Planning Grant application form (whichever is applicable) and associated guidance notes that are available online on the Council's website and as a paper version on request.
- 3.2.2. The application form must be completed in full. Incomplete application forms will not be considered and will be returned to you, which could cause a delay or deferral to your application. A copy of the Organisations up-to-date signed Governing Document and Safeguarding Policies must be sent with the application form or within 7 days of submitting the application. 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 9 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.
- 3.2.3. The closing dates for receipt and acceptance of complete applications are the last Friday of March, June, September and December each year.
- 3.2.4. Grants cannot be paid retrospectively therefore any work commenced prior to acceptance of the grant offer will not be eligible for funding.
- 3.2.5. All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as per section 5.0 of this Policy.

3.3. What can be funded

3.3.1. Community Grants

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

3.3.3. *Facilities – up to a maximum award of £5,000*

- 3.3.3.1. Renovations or improvements to buildings, sports and play areas, conservation areas etc;
- 3.3.3.2. Grant towards match or third party funding i.e. WREN, Big Lottery etc;
- 3.3.3.3. Equipment such as kitchen furniture, tables, chairs, sensory or play rooms etc;
- 3.3.3.4. Feasibility studies or architects fees up to a maximum of 5% of the costs.

3.3.4. *Activities – up to a maximum award of £1,000*

- 3.3.4.1. Equipment, materials or specialist kit to help the Organisation develop;
- 3.3.4.2. Training courses;
- 3.3.4.3. Specialist coaching or teaching sessions;
- 3.3.4.4. Contributions towards running costs, excluding salaries, (for new Organisations only).
- 3.3.4.5. Publicity / advertising / promotions;

3.3.5. *Events - up to a maximum award of £1,000*

- 3.3.5.1. Equipment/materials
- 3.3.5.2. Hire or purchase of equipment or performers
- 3.3.5.3. Publicity/advertising/promotions

3.3.6. Community Led Planning Grants

- 3.3.7. Community led planning grants are available to any constituted Organisation operating within the Cheshire East area which is completing a community led plan.
- 3.3.8. The purpose of a community led planning starter grant is to support Organisations, prior to becoming constituted, within Cheshire East to establish whether there is a desire to create a community led plan within their area.
- 3.3.9. The purpose of a community led planning development grant is to provide support for those Organisations undertaking a community led plan and assist in the development of the Organisation and production of the final plan.
- 3.3.10. Organisations can apply for both a starter and development grant within the same financial year (which runs from 1st April to 31st March). Applications for both grants cannot be made at the same time and, once granted, an Organisation cannot apply under these categories again unless they can demonstrate that their circumstances have changed and any further application can be properly treated as a fresh application.
- 3.3.11. **Community-led Plan Starter Grant, up to a maximum of £250** for initial start up costs of developing an Organisation. The starter grant can be used for:
 - 3.3.11.1. Hire of rooms or marquees for an event
 - 3.3.11.2. Hire of equipment
 - 3.3.11.3. Creation of promotional materials
 - 3.3.11.4. Administrative costs
- 3.3.12. **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:
 - 3.3.12.1. Equipment/materials to help the Organisation develop;
 - 3.3.12.2. Training;
 - 3.3.12.3. Specialist advice and support;
 - 3.3.12.4. Contributions towards facility hire.

3.4. What cannot be funded

- 3.4.1. Organisations which hold substantial free reserves, including local branches of national or regional Organisations which hold free reserves that could be utilised;
- 3.4.2. Applications from Town and Parish Councils;
- 3.4.3. Work which has already taken place before acceptance of the grant offer ;
- 3.4.4. Individuals;
- 3.4.5. General appeals, sponsorship or fundraising for your own organisation or others;
- 3.4.6. Activities of a mainly political or religious nature;
- 3.4.7. Assistance with providing transport;
- 3.4.8. Refreshments and/or accommodation;
- 3.4.9. Outings or day trips;
- 3.4.10. Travel expenses;
- 3.4.11. Projects, activities or events organised for the sole benefit of students of a school or college;
- 3.4.12. Events which do not involve members of the local community participating;
- 3.4.13. Repair costs where deterioration is due to neglect;
- 3.4.14. Loan against loss or debt;

- 3.4.15. Running Costs i.e gas, electricity, water, , insurance, telephone, broadband etc (unless this is for a new Organisation, which has been established for less than 6 months);
- 3.4.16. Salaries;
- 3.4.17. Land purchase;
- 3.4.18. Vehicle purchase;
- 3.4.19. Items that are purchased on behalf of another Organisation;
- 3.4.20. 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.
- 3.4.21. Organisations which are not based in Cheshire East, unless they can demonstrate significant community benefits within Cheshire East.

3.5. Who can apply

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

- 3.5.1. Operate within the Cheshire East area;
- 3.5.2. Provide value for money
- 3.5.3. Be a voluntary or community organisation, registered charity or other not for profit organisation;
- 3.5.4. 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;
- 3.5.5. Have a management committee with an up-to-date signed Governing Document;
- 3.5.6. Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their Organisation where children, young people or vulnerable adults are involved, which must include a requirement that staff / volunteers are cleared with the Disclosure and Barring Service;
- 3.5.7. Have their own bank or building society account with two signatories;
- 3.5.8. Complete the application form in full, providing all required information;
- 3.5.9. Have not already received a community grant within the current financial year.
- 3.5.10. .

3.6. Criteria for Funding

Priority will be given to Organisations and projects that build community resilience and reduce the demand on mainstream services. Activities can include:

- 3.6.1 increased community-led and managed activities
- 3.6.2 increased volunteer numbers
- 3.6.3 helping people to help themselves and support each other
- 3.6.4 reduced reliance and demand on mainstream services
- 3.6.5 improving the mental health and wellbeing of residents
- 3.6.6 engaging local people through community hubs, existing community groups and their social networks
- 3.6.7 putting residents first and contributing to outcomes 1, 3 and 5 with links to outcomes 2 and 4 as per section 1.2 of this Policy.

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 and have not received a grant from Cheshire East Council previously.

3.7. General Conditions

- 3.7.1. Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding;
- 3.7.2. Annual applications from the same Organisation for the same purpose will not be considered;
- 3.7.3. Activities Grants are only valid for a period of 6 months from the date of the offer letter and will be paid in advance.

- 3.7.4. Facilities Grants 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;
- 3.7.5. 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;
- 3.7.6. 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;
- 3.7.7. Any profits from events must be used to further develop the Organisation or for any future events and not used to support other Organisations;
- 3.7.8. 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;
- 3.7.9. 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;
- 3.7.10. 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;
- 3.7.11. 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, activity or event, plus photographs if possible, on completion;
- 3.7.12. Organisations must acknowledge the support of Cheshire East Council in press releases, publicity and advertising etc.
- 3.7.13. 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.
- 3.7.14. Expenditure must not be incurred on the project, activity or event prior to the grant decision being given. In these circumstances the Council will withdraw the grant offer/rescind the grant decision.
- 3.7.15. 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.
- 3.7.16. 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.
- 3.7.17. If the project, event or activity is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the Organisation is wound up, any unused grant money must be returned to the Council.
- 3.7.18. 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 3.2.3.
- 4.2. Having assessed all applications a Recommendations Report is prepared for consideration by the Portfolio Holder at a public decisions meeting.

- 4.3. Following the public meeting, a decisions report is circulated to all elected members who must make any comments within 5 days (the "Call-in Period").
- 4.4. Should any comments/objections be made during the 5 day Call-in Period a further public meeting is held to discuss the comments/objection(s) and adjust as necessary.
- 4.5. Special Conditions may be added in the recommendations report, by the Portfolio Holder following the public meeting and/or following comments received during the Call-in Period if considered necessary in order to ensure that the purpose of the grant funding is achieved. If the project is dependent on other factors such as securing match funding or obtaining planning permission a Conditional Offer may be made subject to these conditions being met.
- 4.6. If there are no objections (or after the follow up public meeting), the decisions will be treated as final and Organisations will be notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not as soon as possible after the Call-in Period has ended and generally within 6 weeks after the closing date for each round of applications.
- 4.7. 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 Activities Grants a report and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Council within 6 months of the date of offer letter.
- 5.3. For Facilities Grants a report and invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Council within 12 months of the date of offer letter to allow the grant to be paid;
- 5.4. The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.
- 5.5. The Organisation must allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 5.6. Organisations must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).
- 5.7. If Organisations do not supply the required 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.