

Community Funding Policy – Grants up to **£25,000**

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NNC Small Grants v0.7 Sept 21

Document Version Control

HOUSING & COMMUNITIES – COMMUNITY & LEISURE

Title	Community Funding Policy – Grants up to £25,000
Type of Document	Policy
Owner	Kerry Purnell, Assistant Director of Housing & Communities
Author	Hazel Webb, Community Services Manager
Approval	<i>by who (CMT / committee)</i>
Approval Date	
Protective marking	
Intended audience	Voluntary Sector Organisations, NNC Officers
Publication	External via Council Website
Issue date	
Date for review	

Change History

Issue	Date	Comments
v0.1	7 March 2021	Original draft
v0.2	8 March 2021	Amendments from GC feedback Adapted to NNC Policy Format
v0.3	14 April 2021	Amendments from KP Amendments from JM
v0.4	15 April 2021	Amendments from MG
v0.5	27 April 2021	Review and amendments following discussions with KP, GC, JM and HW
v0.6	16 June 2021	Amendments incorporated
v0.7	7 September 2021	Amendments to list of consultees
V0.8	22 September 2021	Amendments incorporated

NB: Draft versions 0.1 - final published versions 1.0

Consultees

Internal	External
Kerry Purnell, Assistant Director of Housing & Communities	VCSE Assembly
Gill Chapman, Principal Community Support Manager	Northamptonshire Community Foundation
Mike Greenway, Community Partnership Manager	Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils
Julie McKinnon, Principal Leisure Officer	Northamptonshire Black Communities Together

Distribution List

Internal	External
Finance Business Partners	Local Infrastructure Organisations
Community Development Teams	General Public

Links to other documents

Document	Link
Corporate Plan	
Financial Procedure Rules	
Officer Scheme of Delegation	

Additional Comments to note

Information regarding grant amounts for 2021/22.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Community Funding Policy (CFP) is to set out the principles and criteria that govern how North Northamptonshire Council (the Council) awards Community Funding.
- 1.2. The Council is committed to distributing available funding fairly, efficiently and effectively. This CFP outlines the Council's approach to Community Funding in relation to resourcing external bodies to assist in the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and priorities.
- 1.3. A Community Fund is defined as a financial award the Council makes from its funds to support community activities. These awards can be made to Community and Voluntary Organisations, Town and Parish Councils, Registered Charities and to other bodies or individuals.
- 1.4. This CFP is written for the Council and any who enquires about the CFP and procedures. It applies to the process of Community Funding for grants up to £25,000.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1. The CFP is built on a set of agreed principles and an understanding that:
 - Community Funding awards are made at the discretion of the Council and will be dependent on the availability of the level of funding which is determined in the annual budget;
 - activities funded must be fully consistent with the strategic aims, objectives and priorities of the Council;
 - all funding applications will be determined on their objective merits. No organisation is entitled to funding because it may have been granted funding in the past or for any other reason;
 - a consistent, customer focused process is required in relation to Community Funding applications, with relevant assessment and evaluation procedures, and appropriate monitoring systems in place;
 - the Council must ensure proper, prudent and effective use of public money; and eligibility for Community Funding is aligned with specified criteria. This allows the Council to focus on supporting organisations to achieve their best and to meet clearly identified needs, which must be bound by the Council's strategic priorities.

3.0 Policy Outcomes

- 3.1. It is recognised that the Voluntary and Community Sectors and Parish/Town Councils have an important role to play in improving quality of life in North Northamptonshire.
- 3.2. Consideration will be given to applications that have a good evidence base, which demonstrate clear outcomes and links to the Council's agreed corporate and local priorities.
- 3.3. Projects considered must reflect the changing landscape of local communities and align to existing and emerging corporate priorities.
- 3.4. The Council's Corporate Plan explains in more detail the activities that will be delivered in order to achieve the Council's corporate priorities and objectives.
- 3.5. All service areas within the Council have a more detailed service plan which outlines the purpose, outcomes and actions that support the Corporate Plan, corporate priorities and objectives.

- 3.6. The key priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan are:
- To Be Confirmed
- 3.7. We invite applications which are able to demonstrate that funding will be used to support these priorities and in addition that:
- support volunteering, community involvement, neighbourhood and community led activities;
 - enable voluntary youth action and the development of services for young people;
 - prevent homelessness, improve social mobility and tackle inequality; and promote social inclusion and community resilience.
- 3.8. The overall aim of the Community Funding process is:
'To have a consistent, customer focused process with relevant assessment and evaluation procedures with appropriate monitoring systems in place.'
- 3.9. The objectives of this CFP are to ensure that all funding and grants allocated will also:
- target resources to meet identified needs;
 - maximise leverage (for example match funding);
 - maximise sustainability (economic, environmental and social);
 - achieve greater accountability and openness; and
 - provide guidance to officers, members and voluntary and community organisations on the CFP in relation to community funding and support of local groups.
- 3.10. Applications are assessed against the CFP criteria and any specific criteria relating to individual grant streams. Weighting and scoring will be utilised to ensure that all applications are treated consistently and fairly.

4.0 Small Grants Policy

4.1. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1.1 This section outlines the role of Community Funding Strategic Oversight Board, and officers and others as appropriate, in relation to the CFP.
- 4.1.2 Members of the Council's Community Funding Strategic Oversight Board are:
- accountable to the Council to ensure proper, prudent and effective use of public money;
 - accountable to the Council to ensure that activities that are funded are consistent;
 - with the corporate priorities and objectives within adopted strategies and the Council's Corporate Plan; and
 - accountable for the application of a consistent, customer focused process with relevant assessment and evaluation procedures with appropriate monitoring systems in place.
- 4.1.3 The Council's Community Funding Strategic Oversight Board (CFSOB) will provide updates to the Corporate Leadership Team and members, promote and manage the Community Funding scheme and provide advice and assistance to applicants as necessary.

The Community Funding Strategic Oversight Board will have representation from relevant Council services.

4.1.4 Once the assessment has been made by the CFSOB, Ward members will be consulted with on grant applications within their area.

4.1.5 Organisations in receipt of funding are required to comply with terms and conditions set out in any offer letter.

4.2. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

4.2.1. Underpinning Principles: the CFSOB acknowledges the need for a transparent and fair means of dispersing Community Funding, while maintaining due diligence in the management of public monies.

4.3. THE UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

4.3.1. The basic funding requirement is based on established need.

4.3.1.1. The overarching principle is that of meeting local needs which have been identified and prioritised by the Council or by others but acknowledged by the Council.

4.3.1.2. All activity must meet the following basic requirements in order to be provided with funding:

- have a clearly identified need;
- can deliver outcomes which meet this need;
- deliver cost effective and quality service provision, fitting with the purpose and remit of Community Funding;
- be delivered by a credible organisation with the capacity to deliver the project as stated; and
- align with the Council's adopted strategic priorities, Corporate Plan and Service Plans.

4.3.2. Accessibility

4.3.2.1. Information on Community Funding will be available through the Council's website and through other forms of media as required.

4.3.2.2. Advice on completing the application forms will be available.

4.3.3. Clarity

4.3.3.1. The Council will endeavour to keep the process straightforward, transparent and accessible.

4.3.4. Transparency, Equality and Accountability

4.3.4.1. All assessments of Community Fund Applications will adhere to this policy and criteria.

4.3.4.2. The CSFO Board must be able to justify recommendations made, and the rationale.

4.3.4.3. This policy will make it possible for the CSFO Board to be transparent about Community Funding recommendations taken and the process used to reach these.

4.4. ELIGIBILITY

4.4.1. In order to manage our community funding requests in a fair and equitable manner, the Council has established eligibility criteria with which all groups must comply with.

4.4.2. Applicants can only make one funding application per financial year from the Council.

4.4.3. Applicants cannot apply for additional funding towards existing projects funded by the Council.

4.5. APPLICANTS

4.5.1. Who Can Apply

4.5.1.1. Parish & Town councils, charities, community and voluntary groups, clubs, individuals, not for profit organisations and religious bodies are eligible to apply for funding for specified purposes.

4.5.1.2. School PTAs, Friends of groups and health charities can apply for funding which evidence programmes or projects that benefit the wider community.

4.5.2. Who Cannot Apply

4.5.2.1. Private businesses and for-profit organisations where funding would contravene local government State Aid rules or other legislation.

4.5.2.2. Statutory bodies (except for parish/town councils).

4.5.2.3. Religious bodies where the money will be used primarily for religious purposes or religious buildings or facilities.

4.5.2.4. Political parties or any application for unspecified and unclear purposes.

4.6. FUNDING CRITERIA

4.6.1. What can be funded

4.6.1.1. There will be specific eligibility criteria applying to Community Funding and the list below only includes those elements which are common to all:

- Core running costs (heat and light, insurance rent or premises costs, office costs, etc.);
- Programme or activity costs which are directly relevant to the application;
- Projects of activities that support positive climate and/or environmental sustainability;
- Travel and transport costs associated with events in Northamptonshire;
- Travel and transport relating to the activity in the application, either in Northamptonshire or within **30** miles of the applicants main address;
- Hire or purchase of equipment for meeting project needs, including sports equipment;
- Venue hire (excluding hire of group's own premises) relating to the application;
- Technical assistance;
- Festivals and events within North Northamptonshire;
- Capital costs;
- Best practice visits either in Northamptonshire or within **30** miles of the applicant's main address;

- Publicity, marketing; and
- Volunteer expenses.

4.6.2. What cannot be funded

4.6.2.1. Some exclusions will apply, unless specifically allowed for within specific funding sources:

- Projects or activities which are delivered outside of the Council area and do not meet the needs within the area;
- Activities which are discriminatory, political, or are classed as religious conversion;
- The Council will liaise and audit organisations accounts where there are considerable financial reserves, ascertaining its purpose of reserves;
- Where there is statutory funding provision available;
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT;
- Costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved Financial system;
- Costs towards banking charges or repayment of debt;
- Payments made to individual members of the applicant group or organisation who have a personal financial interest;
- Retrospective costs e.g. activities completed, or costs incurred before the agreement of funding;
- Programmes or activities which are considered the core activity of national or regional government, Government Departments or arms-length body, such as health or education;
- Gifts and prizes;
- Alcohol;
- Employee costs, including salaries;
- Training or facilitation costs and
- Works to facilities that are/should be subject to an insurance claim.

4.7. HOW TO APPLY

- 4.7.1. The Community Funding application pack comprises comprehensive guidance notes and a template application form. The expression of interest form and contact details for the relevant Officer are available on the Council's website.
- 4.7.2. The designated Officer will triage enquiries made either by the expression of interest forms or via the telephone and issue an application form if the proposal fits with this policy.
- 4.7.3. The designated Officer will issue electronic copies of the application form to potential applicants once they have discussed the proposal with them, and if they are eligible to apply.
- 4.7.4. The triage process allows the Community Services Team to work with potential applicants to develop their proposal.
- 4.7.5. Applicants will be encouraged to submit electronic copies of the application form by email to the designated Officer. Only in exceptional circumstances will paper applications be accepted.

4.8. CLOSING TIME AND DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

- 4.8.1. This must always be adhered to and there are no exceptions for applications received after the closing time.
- 4.8.2. Closing dates can be reviewed at any time, with dates being published on the Council's Community Funding webpage.

4.9. ASSESSMENT AND DECISION

- 4.9.1. Once an application has been received the designated Officer will acknowledge this within 7 working days. As part of this acknowledgment the applicant will be informed:
 - if the application is eligible for assessment; and
 - if there is any mandatory information missing.
- 4.9.2. Each representative will review and score applications submitted for coverage within their area. Where an application covers more than one area, an average score will be taken.
- 4.9.3. The CFSOB will be expected to follow the timescales and process for grant approval as per Appendix 1.
- 4.9.4. The CFSOB will discuss and review all applications for funding:
 - 4.9.4.1. Applications for small grants up to £2,500 and Individual Grants up to £500
Applications for small grants will be dealt with on a rolling basis.
 - 4.9.4.2. Applications for a Community Capital Grant Scheme
Applications for Capital Grant Scheme grants will be dealt within a set timeframe. Resolutions will be decided at a CFSOB meeting.
- 4.9.5. Each application must achieve a minimum score of **3** for each criteria for the application process to be successful.
- 4.9.6. Failure to achieve this by the end of the full application process will result in the application being rejected, however, the final decision for an organisation to receive funding is at the discretion of the CFSOB.
- 4.9.7. Small value applications (up to and including £2,500) will be assessed and awarded on a rolling basis throughout the financial year and panel assessment meetings held **quarterly** for applications over £2,500 (subject to funding availability).
- 4.9.8. Applications up to and including £2,500 will be assessed by the Assistant Director under delegated authority. The rationale is that for small value applications up to £2,500 being determined by the Assistant Director Housing & Communities is to enable the Community Funding Programme to be more responsive and allow smaller organisations to be awarded monies where appropriate and move forward to delivery quickly. This approach also allows the CFSOB to focus on the larger, strategic applications.
- 4.9.9. This policy will be informed of the Council's available Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding. This will enable the policy to take into consideration the availability of all sources of funding for Community Investment. CSFOB members can then make any necessary recommendations to the Board or officers accordingly.
- 4.9.10. Applications for funding grants in excess of £25,000 will be rejected.

4.9.11. Community Funding awards will cover either 100% of costs or an element of project funding (e.g. costs for equipment).

4.9.12. If an application is unsuccessful there is no right of appeal.

4.10. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

4.10.1. The Community Funding Policy will be reviewed at least once a year. It can be reviewed more frequently if necessary, for example, to ensure that the corporate priorities and objectives of the Council are appropriately reflected within the assessment criteria.

4.11. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4.11.1. The CFP will be supported with working procedures, guidance notes ('How to Apply' guide) and an application form. All documentation will be aligned to ensure that applying for Community Funding is easy and straight forward for the applicant.

4.12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.12.1. The Council recognises that it is important to demonstrate public money is spent the right way and achieves best value. In the allocation of funds, there will be a need to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation which focuses on outcomes. To achieve this, it is proposed that:

- monitoring should be proportionate to the funding awarded;
- monitoring should also be used to demonstrate achievement; and
- there is a need to keep information collection as simple as possible for groups.

4.13. COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS

4.13.1. The Council is always keen to hear feedback from applicants; both positive and negative. If an applicant wishes to leave feedback on how their application has been dealt with, details of the process can be obtained from the Communities Team at EMAIL.

4.13.2. If an applicant want to make a formal complaint they can use the Council's complaints process - details are available at [North Northamptonshire Council \(northnorthants.gov.uk\)](http://northnorthants.gov.uk).

4.14. CONTACT DETAILS

Any enquires relating to this Policy should be addressed to:

North Northamptonshire Council

Email: communityfunding@northnorthants.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 126 3000

5.0 Next steps

5.1. The new authority with elected members post-May 2021 elections will develop the Corporate Plan and Priorities, which once adopted sections 3.4 and 3.6 will be updated.

6.0 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition

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