



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

# Community Funding Grant Policy

<b>1</b>	<b>Contents:</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Policy Statement</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Scope</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Community Funding Principles</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Who Can and Cannot Apply</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>What We Can and Cannot Fund</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>How to Apply</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Application Closing Dates</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Assessment and Decisions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Unsuccessful Applications and Resubmissions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Policy Review</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Related Policies and Procedures</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Comments, Compliments and Complaints</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Contact Details</b> .....	<b>8</b>

Draft

## 1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this Community Funding Grant Policy (CFGP) is to set out the principles and criteria that govern how West Northamptonshire Council (the Council) will award Community Funding.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to distributing available funding fairly, efficiently and effectively. This CFGP outlines the Council's approach to Community Funding in relation to resourcing external bodies via a Community Funding Grant(s) (CFG) to assist in the delivery of the Council's corporate plan, strategic aims, objectives and priorities.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 A CFG 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, registered charities and to other bodies. Town and Parish Councils are excluded from applying for a CFG.
- 2.2 This CFGP, approved by Cabinet, is written for the Council and any who enquire about the CFGP, obtaining a CFG and the associated processes and procedures.

## 3 Community Funding Principles

- 3.1 This CFGP is built on a set of agreed principles and an understanding that:
  - CFG awards are made at the discretion of the Council and are dependent on the availability of funding which is determined in the Council's annual budget;
  - activities funded must be consistent with the corporate plan, strategic aims, objectives and priorities of the Council as approved by Cabinet;
  - to be eligible for a CFG the application must be clearly aligned to the Council's corporate plan, strategic aims, objectives and priorities, and the application must be evaluated and recommended for funding, in full or in part, by the Council's Sector Specialists'. This allows the Council to focus on supporting organisations that are clearly meeting local identified needs;
  - all CFG applications will be determined on their merits. No organisation is entitled to funding because it may have been granted a CFG in the past or for any other reason;
  - other sources of appropriate funding held or to be held by the Council, will be considered as an alternative to a CFG (for example, Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy, Community Benefit Funds). This will enable the Council to take into consideration the availability of all sources of funding for community investment and utilise accordingly; and
  - the Council must ensure proper, prudent and effective use of public money for the award of a CFG.
- 3.2 In order to achieve the above, this CFGP has been approved by Cabinet and there will be a single funding budget for all CFG. The initial funding round, within each financial year, will be open to all applications seeking a CFG up to and including £15,000 to determine the highest value projects / services the Council can fund for the financial year. All subsequent funding rounds within the financial year will be capped to projects / services where the total value of the CFG requested is up to and including £5,000.
- 3.3 In order to obtain a CFG, applicants must be able to demonstrate the following:
  - **the Council's priorities:** projects / services to be funded must be consistent with the corporate plan, strategic aims, objectives and priorities of the Council. Projects / services will only be considered if they meet one or more of the following of the Council's corporate plan priorities:
    - **green and clean:** environment & wellbeing;
    - **improved life chances:** health, social care & families;
    - **connected communities:** transport & connectivity;
    - **thriving villages & towns:** place shaping & homes;
    - **economic development:** growth & prosperity; and
    - **robust resource management:** transparency & financial probity.

See the corporate plan for more details, available [here](#);

- **need:** that there are identified local needs for this project / service within the population or local community (for example, a strategic aim, objective or priority of the Council, Councillor support (Unitary, Town or Parish Council), data, research, surveys, local community consultation, a new or existing community / wellbeing issue, environmental need, increased demand or development, the need to improve or increase partnership working);
- **reach:** that the project / service will:
  - benefit a defined group or groups of the community or existing users (for example, children, young people, elderly, residents, community groups); and
  - have a clearly defined issue or issues that the CFG will address (for example, improving mental wellbeing, enabling community participation, preventing or reducing the impact of poverty, addressing antisocial behaviour or crime, supporting marginalised groups, improving biodiversity and green spaces, enabling participation in physical activities);
- **outcomes:** benefit outcomes can be clearly established and realised from the award of a CFG that impacts on those within or outside the immediate vicinity of the project / service. And these outcomes can be measured and reported to the Council via an agreed monitoring process, return, business plan / delivery plan or Service Level Agreement as determined by the Council;
- **sustainable:** the project / service has in place:
  - future funding arrangements (short, medium and long-term) to sustain the Council's CFG investment (for example, ongoing budget provision, alternative sources of funding, the establishment of future repair and maintenance reserves); and
  - all consents are in place before the CFG application is made (for example, outline planning approval, building regulations, landlord / custodian trustee consent, deed and land title registration, lease, the right to occupy buildings or land for the expected use-life of the CFG);
- **value for money:** applicants are required to demonstrate value for money in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness for the:
  - award of the CFG (for example, multiple quotes and tenders have been obtained, that no other organisation operating locally provides a similar service, delivery of the agreed CFG project or service within budget and the grant awarded); and
  - added value has been obtained from the use of the CFG (for example, increased engagement / impact, reductions in antisocial behaviour);
- **other sources of funding and match funding:** applicants are required to demonstrate that other sources of funding have been considered, and, if appropriate, applied for. Where appropriate, the organisation will self-fund some of the costs towards the project / service or other grant funding bodies can match fund with any CFG contribution;
- **monitoring and evaluation:** the Council recognises that it is important to demonstrate that public money is spent in the right way, achieves value for money and delivers the required results. On the award of a CFG, a degree of Council monitoring and evaluation will need to be undertaken. This monitoring and evaluation will:
  - be proportionate to the funding awarded;
  - require the organisation to demonstrate that the CFG has been spent, the objectives have been met, and the terms and conditions of the CFG have been achieved; and
  - that this monitoring is kept as simple as possible to reduce the burden of administration for the organisation funded. This may range from the requirement to demonstrate costs have been incurred and paid for, to progress reporting, monitoring returns, performance indicators, or Service Level Agreements;
- **grant payment:** the Council recognises that cashflow can be an issue for organisations that have sought a CFG. If an organisation does not have sufficient funds / cashflow to pay a supplier for goods / services that relate to the CFG funded project / service, the Council is able to make a grant payment in advance. If in advance, the Council can pay up to 75% of the CFG at the start of the grant and the balance paid six months later following receipt of an agreed monitoring return or on project / service completion. The grant offer letter will contain the specific terms and conditions for CFG payment if the CFG application is successful;
- **grant awards:** CFG awards will cover either 100% of costs or an element of project / service funding. At no point can a percentage of funding be given towards an applicant's total project costs. It is

therefore important for applicants to provide a full breakdown of costs on completing the CFG application form. This will enable the Council to define the elements of the project / service it will and will not fund if part funding is awarded; and

- **grant defrayment:** the CFG awarded must be spent within 12 months from the date of the CFG offer letter. Any grant not claimed by the offer letter anniversary date will be cancelled unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council.

#### **4 Who Can and Cannot Apply**

4.1 In order to be eligible to apply for a CFG you must operate within the geographical area of the Council and be a:

- registered charity;
- community or voluntary group;
- local club;
- community interest company (CIC); or
- not for profit organisation.

4.2 Religious bodies are eligible to apply for funding for specified purposes\*. Schools and hospitals can also apply for the funding of evidenced based programmes or projects / services that benefit the wider community.

4.3 You cannot apply for a CFG if you are:

- a Town or Parish Council;
- a private business;
- a company that pays dividends to shareholders, awards shares or makes director drawings;
- a for-profit organisation;
- any organisation that does not have a written constitution;
- an individual who is applying for or as themselves;
- any organisation that does not have Public Liability Insurance and the following policies, subject to function, in place:
  - safeguarding;
  - Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) referral;
  - first aid / incident reporting and recording;
  - codes of conduct; and
  - GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations).
- where funding would contravene Local Government State Aid rules or other legislation;
- statutory bodies;
- \*religious bodies where the money will be used primarily for religious purposes or religious buildings, facilities or assets;
- political party, body or group;
- any organisation that exists for unspecified and unclear purposes; and
- any organisation that does not hold a UK bank account.

#### **5 What We Can and Cannot Fund**

5.1 Due to the nature of CFG there will be specific eligibility criteria applying to Community Funding and the list below only includes those elements which are common to all.

5.2 We can fund:

- core running costs (for example, heat and light, insurance rent or premises costs, office costs);
- programme or activity costs which are directly relevant to the CFG application;
- travel and transport costs;
- hire or purchase of equipment for meeting project needs;
- venue hire (excluding hire of own premises);
- technical assistance;

- training that will benefit the function or operation of the eligible organisation (for example, first aid, youth worker, wellbeing and mental health training);
- festivals and events;
- capital / revenue costs;
- publicity, marketing, website design; and
- salaries of staff and service providers.

### 5.3 The exclusions that apply include:

- projects or activities which are delivered outside of the Council's geographical area and do not meet the needs within the Council's area;
- organisations with material income or reserves held without a clear needs / risk based reserves policy;
- costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments;
- costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. Value Added Tax (VAT);
- costs towards banking charges or the repayment of debt;
- direct payments made to individual members of the applicant group or organisation;
- existing or operational costs that are not core activities or do not broaden the reach of the organisation into the community;
- programmes or activities which are considered the core activity of national, regional or local government, government departments or arms-length bodies, such as health, education, social care, maintenance and repair of the highway, public footpaths, bridleways, streetlighting;
- assets that do not enhance an existing project / service or have a measurable community function or use;
- activities which are discriminatory, political, or could be classed as religious conversion in nature;
- gifts and prizes;
- alcohol purchases; and
- retrospective costs i.e. activities completed, or costs incurred before the CFG offer has been made and the signed acceptance form has been returned to the Council.

## 6 How to Apply

- 6.1 The web-based CFG application link, contains comprehensive guidance notes and the online application form. The expression of interest form and contact details for the Community Funding Officer are available on the Council's website [here](#). The Community Funding Officer will triage enquiries made either by the expression of interest forms or via the telephone. If the CFG request proposal fits with this CFGP, the Community Funding Officer will issue the web-based CFG application link to the applicant once the CFG proposal has been discussed and if they are eligible to apply.
- 6.2 The triage process allows the Community Funding Officer and Sector Specialists' to work with potential applicants to develop their CFG proposal.
- 6.3 Approved applicants will be encouraged to make web-based applications. Only in exceptional circumstances will paper applications be accepted.

## 7 Application Closing Dates

- 7.1 The closing date for any application must always be adhered to and there are no exceptions for applications received after the closing date. Closing dates can be reviewed at any time, with the dates being published on the Council's Community Funding webpage [here](#).
- 7.2 To be fair to all CFG applicants, the Council will not accept incomplete applications or applications awaiting further information. These will require a new submission. This may result in your application missing the allocated funding round and, as a result, a delay until the next suitable funding round is opened.

## **8 Assessment and Decisions**

- 8.1 Once a CFG application has been received the Community Funding Officer will acknowledge this within 7 working days. As part of this acknowledgment process the applicant will be informed:
- if the application is classified as complete or incomplete;
  - what mandatory information is missing; and
  - if any additional information is required.
- 8.2 Complete applications will then be assessed by the Community Funding Officer and an assigned group of the Council's Sector Specialists' against the community funding principles contained in this CFGP and the Council's corporate plan, strategic aims, objectives and priorities. The Community Funding Officer, Sector Specialists and cross-party advisory group will then meet as a Community Funding Panel. The Community Funding Panel will be Chaired by the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities (or delegated to the Head of Service with responsibility for Communities). The Community Funding Officer and Sector Specialists' will present recommendations to award a CFG to the Community Funding Panel Chair for an approval decision. The Community Funding Panel Chair will present the approval decisions to the Executive Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer) for final determination to award the CFG.

## **9 Unsuccessful Applications and Resubmissions**

- 9.1 If a CFG application is refused the reasons for the refusal will be contained within a notification letter.
- 9.2 There is no right of appeal.
- 9.3 You cannot reapply for a Community Funding Grant for the same project / service if your initial complete CFG application has been submitted and refused and you are not asked to resubmit by the Council in writing. Any subsequent CFG applications for the project / service will only be accepted, for a following appropriate grant round, if there has been a material change to the application or the amount of funding being requested.

## **10 Policy and Application Form Review**

- 10.1 The CFGP and CFG application form will be reviewed at least once a year. These can be reviewed more frequently, if necessary, for example, to ensure that the Council's corporate plan, strategic aims, objectives and priorities are appropriately reflected within the assessment criteria.

## **11 Related Policies and Procedures**

- 11.1 The CFGP will be supported with working procedures, guidance notes and an online application form. All documentation will be aligned to ensure that applying for Community Funding is easy and straight forward for the applicant.

## **12 Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

- 12.1 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 can be emailed to [here](#). If an applicant wants to make a formal complaint they can use the Council's complaints process, details are available [here](#).

### **13 Contact Details**

13.1 If you have any questions relating to this CFGP or the CFG application process they can be addressed to:

**Peter Worth**  
**Community Funding Officer**

Healthy Communities Team  
West Northamptonshire Council  
Email: [Peter.Worth@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Worth@westnorthants.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01327 322227

Draft