

Essential Reference Paper 'B'

Policy on Discretionary Community Grant Giving East Herts Council

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of grant giving is so that the council can facilitate improved health and wellbeing, sports, cultural and civic opportunities and bring about positive change at the local level – supporting the efforts of the many volunteers in East Herts – and enhancing the quality of life for residents. (See Appendix 1 for outcomes expected.)
- 1.2 Grant giving also supports many ambitions in the East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013-2018).
- 1.3 Grants are provided so that the council can actively support opportunities for communities. Communities are defined as a geographical community such as a village or a community of interest such as older people with transport difficulties. Communities are defined by the common needs and circumstances of people within them, not just their common location.
- 1.4 Grant giving also takes forward the council's role as a community leader and contributes to the values and behaviours in "Here to Help."
- 1.5 Current areas of funding are:
 - Special themed funds (up to £300 grants). Recent examples are Victory in Europe and Queens 90th birthday celebrations
 - Support for volunteers who are delivering services/activities for the benefit of residents (Community Activities plus mini grants)
 - Community-led projects that improve well-used public facilities/community assets. (Community Capital Grants)
 - Sporting and artistic excellence for young people aged 11 to 18 (Performance to Excellence)

- Online giving - free subscription to Localgiving.com, a not-for-profit fundraising website
- Activities for children and young people over the summer holidays (Summer Activities Fund)
- Community-led projects that protect and improve the green environment (Local Environmental Action Fund - LEAF)
- Projects that help residents make sustained lifestyle behaviour change (Health and Wellbeing Small Community Grants Fund)

1.6 Note: LEAF grants are administered by Environmental Coordinator and not through Engagement and Partnerships Team.

1.7 For up-to-date information on active funding areas, go to www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants

2.0 Eligibility criteria

2.1 Council grants are available to voluntary and community organisations in East Hertfordshire, which is defined as Buntingford, Hertford, Bishop's Stortford, Ware, Sawbridgeworth and the surrounding villages.

2.2 Eligible organisations includes parish councils, voluntary/community groups, sports clubs, societies, charities, youth organisations, environmental trusts and community interest companies, social enterprises. Statutory organisations are not eligible.

2.3 Small businesses or commercial organisations are not eligible to apply to the community grants programme. These organisations may want to approach the council's economic development team who may be able to assist them to find alternative sources of funding.

2.4 To be eligible for a grant, organisations must meet agreed minimum criteria. They must:

- Have a voluntary management committee in place (at least 3 unrelated individuals)
- Have a constitution/set of governing rules in place

- Be financially viable and show evidence of properly managed accounts.
- Have a bank account in their own name.
- Have an open-door membership policy with services that are accessible to people from all backgrounds (Equal Opportunities).
- Be affiliated with Active East Herts Community Sports Network (Sports Clubs).
- Have one-third the cost of the project in hand at the time of application (capital projects only).
- Have permission by the owner to improve the building or outdoor space.
- Have already applied for planning permission (if required)

2.5 Applications from church halls may only be made where the halls are used for physical recreation, cultural, social and community benefit.

2.6 Applications from pre-schools that are registered charities may be accepted as these are not considered to be part of the educational establishment. Schools as statutory organisations, are not eligible to apply.

2.7 Organisations may receive a grant from a special themed fund and the general Community Activities pot in the same financial year. Organisations can only receive one capital grant in the same financial year.

2.8 Organisations applying for a grant from **Summer Activities** and **Community Activities** funds (more than £200) must be properly insured with appropriate health and safety policies, risk assessment, child protection (if appropriate) and any other relevant safeguarding policies in place.

2.9 Registered charities are encouraged to be members of a relevant advice and infrastructure bodies such as the Community Voluntary Services for Broxbourne and East Herts (CVSBEH) or the East Herts Village Hall and Community Buildings Network. This ensures that groups are aware of best practice and know where to get the necessary support and guidance.

2.10 All applications must be submitted by the advertised deadline and include all the required paperwork. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned. The paperwork required depends on the amount of grant being requested and type of programme being applied to. A full list of documents is listed here:

- A copy of the local group's own constitution (set of rules) or link to it on the group's website. It is sufficient for registered charities to provide their Charity Commission number. Organisations applying for a mini grant of £200 or less are exempt.
- Endorsement from East Herts Ward Councillor who represents the ward where the project mainly is to take place
- Copy of organisation's bank statements – current and savings (a budget spreadsheet is not sufficient)
- Copies of Health and Safety policies and Child Protection Policy (as appropriate)
- Detailed breakdown of estimated income and expenditure for current financial year 1 April to 31 March (Large Community Capital only.)
- A copy of the organisation's latest income and expenditure accounts. The council requires applicants to provide accounts that have been assessed by an independent person not connected to your organisation. This person does not have to be an accountant. (Large Community Capital only.)
- Two quotes or estimates of the proposed work. (Large Community Capital only.)
- Email or letter, showing evidence of contact with Town or Parish Clerk for a grant (large capital only).

2.11 East Herts Councilors can apply for a Community Activities grant to organise community engagement events. These are events that involve residents and inspire them to volunteer in East Hertfordshire such as:

- Promoting and building support for a proposed capital project
- Bringing people together to discuss key issues affecting the local area

- 2.12 It is recommended that organisations apply well before they plan to spend the money. The council will not fund projects that have already started.
- 2.13 Village halls and parish councils can apply to the Community Activities fund for a grant to organise community-wide events only. They are not eligible for a grant for running costs.
- 2.14 Service organisations are eligible to apply to hold social events for senior citizens from November to January as long as they apply in partnership with the beneficiary organisation, if reasonably possible.

3.0 Priorities for funding

3.1 The Council has limited funds so it will only grant aid projects that contribute to its corporate priorities and that are considered to make a real difference/benefit to people living or working in East Herts. Priorities are:

- Small, local voluntary groups in the East Herts district area (especially those that have little capacity to generate income or raise funds) where council support would have significant impact
- Projects that are targeted at vulnerable children or adults and will specifically help improve opportunities for this community. Note: projects that are more general may still receive funding if they show that people in this situation will benefit alongside the general population.
- Projects in identified disadvantaged areas of East Herts. Note: projects that are more general may still receive funding if they show that vulnerable groups will benefit alongside the general population.
- Projects that tackle inactivity and result in residents leading active and healthy lives
- Applications from groups that have not applied for a Council grant before
- Projects in rural areas where there is little or no New Homes Bonus (capital only).

3.2 As all five towns and some of the larger villages have been passed significant funds through the building of new houses,

the council's policy is to first fund capital projects in the rural areas. Projects in the towns may be considered later in the year if the budget is unspent.

3.3 Community Activity Grants can be awarded for social events during the November – January holiday season for frail elderly residents who are socially isolated. Priority funding is for events that would not happen without council support, where an informational talk is happening or one that takes place on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

4.0 What the Council will not fund under this programme

- Fundraising activities that are about redistributing the grant to any other group or persons
- Projects promoting religious or political beliefs
- Projects that are not value for money
- VAT that can be claimed back
- Public engagement events where there is a fee to attend
- Negative campaigns
- Projects/activities that have already happened before the council has assessed the application and made a decision
- Annual General Meetings or regular committee meetings
- Projects that the council consider to be the responsibility of another statutory body such as activities delivered during the school day as part of the educational curriculum.
- Projects that would go ahead without council funding
- Projects submitted by organisations that appear to have an excess or surplus of capital or revenue monies.
- Medical equipment
- Commercial organisations or any group that exists to make a profit
- Projects that are routine maintenance (capital)

5.0 Assessment process

5.1 All community applications are first verified to ensure they meet eligibility criteria (paragraph 2.0 – 2.4) and have submitted all the required paperwork (paragraph 2.10). Applications submitted to the **Summer Activities Fund** are

verified by Community Voluntary Services (CVS) for Broxbourne and East Herts which administers this fund.

- 5.2 Applications for **capital** projects/activities costing under £2,000 are subjected to a “light touch” assessment. This means Officers consider whether basic eligibility criteria (Para 2.0) are met, whether the proposed project is a priority (Para 3.0) and whether the project will realistically contribute to one of outcomes in the time frame.
- 5.3 Applications to the **Summer Activities Fund** are assessed by a Panel that includes the Executive Member for Health Housing. The Panel considers the degree to which applications meet agreed fund criteria stated in the Terms and Conditions. This panel has delegated authority and applications are not sent to the Head of Service for sign off.
- 5.4 Applications for **capital** projects costing more than £2,000 are assessed by a Finance Officer who considers: financial viability and whether the application has provided evidence of properly managed accounts.
- 5.4 An officer panel from finance, contract services, engagement and partnerships assess large capital applications on secondary criteria listed below and the degree to which the project:
- Helps the council achieve one of its corporate priorities
 - Targets or supports those experiencing rural or other geographic disadvantage, providing benefits to people in this situation
 - Is a new application by an organisation that has not received Council funding in the recent past
 - Has the support of the wider community and is a solution to an identified problem (consultation)
 - Is led by volunteers
 - Targets or supports vulnerable people and provides benefits to people in this situation. Vulnerable people include: frail elderly, unemployed, people with learning or physical disabilities, children/young people, people that are under-represented in East Herts.
 - Is realistic and achievable within one year of the grant being offered.

- Reduces carbon emissions by installation of energy efficiency measures (Applicants that own buildings only)
- Is in an area with significant amount of New Homes Bonus money

5.5 The Officer panel submits its recommendations to the Head of Housing and Health and the Executive Member with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing so that they may make a decision on whether to award funding.

5.5 Decisions and an conditional award is usually made within six to eight weeks of the closing date.

6.0 Award and payment of grants

6.1 Capital awards are made conditionally and require that successful applicants agree to certain responsibilities, stated in the Terms and Conditions.

6.2 For smaller revenue grants (maximum grant £500), the minimum criterion is that groups:

- Acknowledge the financial support of East Herts Council in any publicity and report back to the council after a year on outcomes.
- Submit photos of the grant-funded project (with appropriate consent) and information on achievements.

6.3 For larger capital projects, successful applicants are required to sign and return a Grant Acceptance Form – agreeing to the conditions in 6.2 plus the following:

- Agreeing to have the name of their group and contact included in the council's consultation database and participating in any public consultation.
- Providing information on their project to be included in any publicity that the council produces (as and when requested)
- Monitoring and evaluating the project and submitting an Evaluation Form after the project has been completed, detailing whether the activity met its original aims, what

difference was made and outcomes (expected or unexpected).

- Notifying us immediately if the project can not go ahead

- 6.4 Payment for Community Activity Grants (revenue) will be made immediately, prior to the activity taking place.
- 6.5 Payment for capital building projects or items of equipment, is not released in advance of the project being completed. Interim payments are allowed.
- 6.6 Large capital projects must be completed and requests for the grant must be made within **one** year of the grant award letter. Grants for small capital projects that cost £2,000 or less must be completed and claimed within six months.
- 6.7 Successful applicants are required to provide evidence of the actual spend on the project (such as invoices/receipts) when requesting payment as well as submitting a Grant Claim. Payment will not be made based on submission of a purchase order.
- 6.8 For projects costing up to £16,000, the council may fund up to 50% of project costs. The maximum grant is £8,000. This means if the actual project expenditure is less than the estimated cost, the grant will be reduced accordingly.

For example :

If the **estimated** project cost on the application is £16,000 and we offer a grant of up to £8,000, we are offering funding for up to 50% of your **estimate**.

Once your project is complete and the total cost is **actually** lower ie £16,000, then our funding would be reduced by the same percentage, 50% of the **actual** cost, ie £8,000.

- 6.9 For projects costing over £2,000, payment of the grant will be made following a site visit to confirm the satisfactory completion of the work (or purchase of equipment) in accordance with the specifications submitted.
- 6.10 Payment will be made by direct bank transfer.

6.11 The Council acknowledges that sometimes projects do not always go to plan and that things change. Groups wishing to dispose of buildings or equipment that are the recipient of a capital grant will be required to seek the consent of District Council to the disposal. The Council reserves the right to require repayment of the grant, in full, immediately following the disposal of the building or facility.

7.0 Monitoring and publicity

7.1 Since 2010, successful applicants have been required to submit a monitoring form detailing the outcomes of a capital grants project.

7.2 Monitoring forms are distributed at time of the capital Grant Claim and are expected back within 3 months. Due to limited resources, there is no formal monitoring of small revenue grants or follow up on the long-term outcomes of the grant.

7.3 Monitoring of Summer Activities is conducted by the CVSBEH and all applicants are expected to complete a formal monitoring form. A report is submitted to the Council in October and discussed with the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing.

7.4 Monitoring information is reported to the Council's Community Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

7.5 Availability of community grants is promoted through the Council's website, social media services, articles in LINK magazine and stakeholder partners such as the CVSBEH, Active East Herts Community Sports Network, Hertfordshire County Council and Herts Community Foundation. A presentation on grants is made annually to the Rural Parish Conference and at the Village Hall and Community Buildings Network.

7.6 Announcements are also sent via email to Parish Council Chairmen and Parish Clerks and groups on the Engagement and Partnerships' database. East Herts Members are

notified of grant deadlines and allocations through the Members' Information Bulletin.

- 7.7 The council aims to operate an open, equitable and transparent grants system. Grants are considered on an individual basis and feedback given. The council has limited funds available so it will not be able to fund all the bids it receive.

Updated 2016

Appendix 1: **EAST HERTS COMMUNITY GRANT PRIORITIES**

East Herts Council Corporate Priority	Outcomes	Benefits achieved
<p>Priority 1 – improve the health and wellbeing of our communities</p>	<p>Residents living active and healthy lives</p> <p>Support for our vulnerable families and individuals</p> <p>Communities engaged in local issues</p>	<p>Improved access to community facilities so it is easier for people, especially those who are less able, to take part in social activity, sports, arts and recreation, health and social care services and civic events</p> <p>A wider range of free fun and exciting play/sports activities for children in the summer holidays</p> <p>Development of talented young athletes and artists</p> <p>More local problem solving; where residents are working together for a common purpose</p> <p>Increased opportunities for people to feel connected with others (one-off social events)</p> <p>Community engagement; Members are supported to hold public meetings that engage their constituents</p>

East Herts Council Corporate Priority	Outcomes	Benefits achieved through grant giving
<p>Priority 2 – Enhance the quality of people’s lives</p>	<p>Attractive places</p> <p>Future development best meets the needs of the district and its residents</p>	<p>More places and spaces (both built and natural) are “fit-for-purpose” and provide pleasant places for social activity, sports, arts, and recreation alongside providing access to services and civic participation at the neighbourhood level</p> <p>Increased use of green open spaces and healthy activities</p> <p>Support for neighbourhood planning</p>
<p>Priority 3: enable a flourishing local economy</p>	<p>Support for businesses and the local economy</p> <p>Vibrant town centres</p> <p>Working with others to have achieved the right infrastructure for our communities</p>	<p>Improved sustainability of community-owned charitable village shops or social enterprises</p> <p>Increased footfall to the High Street by supporting large scale festivals and events</p> <p>New use of community assets by different audiences, ensuring their economic viability and sustainability</p>

**APPENDIX 2: GRANTS ASSESSMENT SCORE SHEET Community
Capital Scheme LARGE**

Applicant: _____

Verification conducted and passed Eligibility criteria. Any comments or concerns?

Assessors are asked to evaluate to what degree the applicant meets the following secondary criteria. Guidance notes for assessors are on the back of this sheet.

Secondary Criteria	Score
Corporate priority and benefits. What real benefit will this project bring about	
Consultation: To what degree has the applicant make case that the project is wanted by the community or members of the organisation	
Is the project directed at vulnerable people – ie groups experiencing some type of deprivation, unemployment, income poverty, lack of housing, access to services	
Is the project directed at people living in an area of rural disadvantage	
Financial position Is the balance to be raised realistic to achieve within 1 year?	Yes / No
Is the applicant applying for the first time	
Has any NHB been awarded to the town or parish If yes, how much ?	£
Is the applicant installing energy efficient measures (projects relating to buildings only)	
TOTAL	