Leicestershire County Council
SHIRE Community Grants 2021-22
Guidance Notes for Applicants

Introduction and Strategic Background

Leicestershire Communities Strategy
Leicestershire County Council's Communities Strategy (2017-21) 'Working Together to Build Great Communities' is based around the following four priorities:

Priority 1: *Communities support themselves, individuals and families*

Priority 2: *Communities, in collaboration with public services, are supported to design and deliver better outcomes for the people of Leicestershire*

Priority 3: *Voluntary and community sector organisations, social enterprises and Town and Parish Councils are supported and empowered to provide a range of effective services and activities for individuals and communities*

Priority 4: *The council continues to be outward focussed, transparent, and open to new ways of working*

The Communities Strategy is further underpinned by the principles of social action. The Council is committed to promoting and enabling social action because it encourages people to come together to provide local solutions which improve the lives of people in communities.

Utilising the existing strengths within local communities is also fundamental to the Strategy. Rather than starting from the perspective of the problems in a community (a 'deficit-based' approach), the 'asset-based' approach aims to recognise the strengths that exist within communities, which can help to mobilise social action.

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan
The Council's Strategic Plan outlines the Council's key strategic priorities for the county and the organisation, by focusing on the strategic outcomes that will make life better for people in Leicestershire. The strategic outcomes are currently in the process of being reviewed, but are likely to focus on the following themes:

1. **Strong Economy and Infrastructure**
2. **Increased Opportunities**
3. **Keeping People Safe and Well**
4. **Great Communities**
5. **Clean, Green Environment**

VCSE sector organisations in Leicestershire are regarded as key stakeholders who can work in partnership to help us to ensure we achieve the outcomes within the Strategic Plan as effectively as possible.

Leicestershire County Council's VCSE Partnership Statement sets out how Leicestershire County Council will continue to work in a mutually beneficial way with voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations, in order to enable the VCSE sector to continue to provide services which improve the wellbeing and quality of life of people who live in Leicestershire.

In particular, there is clear recognition around the role played by the VCSE sector, during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21. VCSE organisations have been instrumental in the delivery of essential services, to maintain the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of local communities, during the pandemic. The financial impact of the pandemic upon VCSE organisations has also been considerable, and the Council recognises its responsibility to ensure the sector is supported appropriately, to help ensure the financial health and future sustainability of VCSE sector organisations.

SHIRE Community Grants are therefore a key mechanism for helping to achieve the Council's aspirations for happy, healthy, active, engaged and resilient communities, along with a strong and thriving VCSE sector. The Council wishes to develop, empower and enable communities to support themselves and rely less on Council and other public services, particularly in terms of delivering preventive services which focus on supporting those most in need. The Council also intends to ensure that VCSE sector organisations are supported in the most appropriate ways, which includes investment to help deliver vital services which improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Objectives of the SHIRE Community Grants Programme 2021-22

To help deliver the strategic priorities of the Council, approx. £900,000 is available for the SHIRE Community Grants programme in 2021-22.

Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations will be able to apply for a range of different types of grants, for community-based projects and activities that improve the lives of vulnerable/disadvantaged people and communities, in line with the objectives of the Leicestershire Communities Strategy and the Council's Strategic Plan.

The Council therefore welcomes applications from VCSE sector organisations, for grant funding to deliver community-based projects, services and activities which help to achieve the outcomes described on Page 4 of this document.

VCSE organisations can apply for a range of SHIRE Grants, including small grants and large grants, which include funding for core organisational running costs. Eligible organisations can also apply for capital funding (for items of equipment which help to deliver the key aims of the SHIRE Grants programme), along with applying for match funding, to enhance the delivery of activities for which grants have been secured from other specified funders.

The Council is also keen to support initiatives that provide innovative solutions to local issues, including partnership and collaborative ways of working. We are particularly keen to consider joint Partnership Grant applications from two or more organisations, which are developed in response to identified priorities and areas of need/demand for County residents.

SHIRE Community Grants Criteria and Definitions of Vulnerability

Broadly, we are seeking to fund activities which fulfil all or most of the following criteria.

However, to be eligible for funding, all activities must meet the first two criteria highlighted in bold:

- **Activities that improve the lives, health and wellbeing of vulnerable or disadvantaged people in Leicestershire, based on identified need/demand**
- **Grants will only be available for services/activities where the beneficiaries are residents of Leicestershire County (excluding the City of Leicester).**
- Activities that provide community-based early intervention and prevention solutions
- Activities that will help to reduce demand on Council and other public services
- Activities which complement existing services which are already being delivered
- New, innovative ways of working and/or models of service delivery
- Projects which utilise the existing strengths and assets within a community
- Projects that will develop the capacity to be sustained independently, beyond the period of funding
- Projects which demonstrate evidence of partnership working and/or engagement with other relevant services, projects and stakeholders
- Capital works which will enable delivery of essential services and activities specifically for vulnerable and disadvantaged people/groups. This could include new buildings; building alterations; equipment; tools; materials or vehicles.

Potential beneficiaries/target client groups we expect to be supported through SHIRE Grant funding will include (but will not necessarily be limited to) the following:

- Vulnerable and disadvantaged young people
- Older people, particularly those who are frail and/or socially isolated
- People with long-term health conditions, or those at risk of developing health conditions, including people living unhealthy or inactive lifestyles
- Carers/people with caring responsibilities
- People who are experiencing financial hardship or are economically disadvantaged due to socio-economic or welfare status
- People who are physically disabled
- People with learning disabilities and/or other special educational needs
- People who currently or have previously experienced mental health difficulties
- People who have a history of misusing drugs/alcohol
- People experiencing homelessness or other adverse housing related issues
- People from the Gypsy and Traveller community
- People with refugee or asylum seeker status
- People who have been the victim of crime or abuse
- Vulnerable people from the above groups who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) and/or face significant challenges accessing employment, education or training
- People who are socially isolated (including rurally isolated) who experience challenges or a lack of opportunities with regards to accessing services or support
- Residents of communities in areas of (multiple) deprivation

Examples of Outcomes to be achieved for SHIRE Grant funded projects

The following are examples of outcomes which SHIRE Grant-funded projects are expected to achieve:

- Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations are enabled to provide solutions and responses to local issues, based on identified need/demand
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are healthier, safer, less isolated, and have access to appropriate information and services
- There is a reduction in the numbers of vulnerable and disadvantaged people who need high cost, specialist support from statutory/public services
- There are more opportunities for vulnerable/disadvantaged people and communities to develop positive lifestyle choices, to equip them with skills, confidence and self-esteem
- Individuals who are NEET, including disadvantaged young people, have improved opportunities to access education, training and employment
- There is a reduction in crime, offending and anti-social behaviour in communities
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are empowered to become more independent and resilient; and are enabled to manage their lives more effectively
- Social inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, enabling them to participate fully in society, is actively promoted in communities
- Community projects which complement existing services (included those currently delivered or commissioned by the Council and its partners) are delivered effectively, in order to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of people
- There is a reduction in inequality within local communities, with people from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds supported to improve and enhance their opportunities in life
- New, innovative and previously untested models of service delivery are piloted, including collaborative/partnership approaches between different community organisations, in order to achieve common goals
- VCSE organisations are able to strengthen their future organisational sustainability and financial viability through grant investment and associated support
- The VCSE sector in Leicestershire is strengthened

What activities can't be supported?

You **cannot** apply for a SHIRE Grant for any of the following:
- projects or activities which are led by or benefit only an individual person
- funds to build up reserves or a surplus
- costs for any activities which have already taken place, before acceptance of any offer (i.e. no retrospective funding will be allowed)
- projects/services which are already/currently being commissioned/funded by other Leicestershire County Council departments will not be eligible for additional 'top up' funding (for the same project/activities) from the SHIRE Community Grant Fund
- repairs, new buildings or extensions to community buildings which are **not** focussed/targeted towards directly delivering services for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups, or where planning or building regulations approval have not been obtained
- creation of or upgrades to toilets/disabled toilet facilities, for community buildings, **unless** these are part of a wider capital project which is focussed on providing (or increasing) access to services for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups

- maintenance or repairs of equipment, fixtures or fittings (including accessibility improvements) which are otherwise deemed to be the ongoing responsibility of the organisation
- creation or resurfacing of car parking areas, or costs associated with roof repairs
- costs related to delivering sports activities which are for general community benefit, i.e. not specifically targeted at vulnerable/disadvantaged groups
- costs for one-off events which are not targeted specifically for the benefit of vulnerable/ disadvantaged people, or where the longer-term benefits for participants are unclear

Please also note that whilst faith-based organisations can apply for funding, we are unable to award grants for the purposes of delivering organised religious activities, including prayer and worship, or for any costs associated with the promotion of religion.

Grants Available through the SHIRE Grant Programme 2021-22

VCSE organisations, that deliver services and activities to vulnerable and disadvantaged people who live in Leicestershire, can apply for one of the following grants in 2021-22.

Small Grants
Small Grants (up to a maximum of £3,000) are available, primarily to support the delivery of smaller scale project activities. This can include funding for core organisational running costs, such as venue hire, staffing costs, utilities, etc. as well as any costs associated with delivering activities which meet the SHIRE Grants criteria.

Large Grants
Large Grants (minimum £3,001, maximum £10,000) are available to support the delivery of medium to larger scale project activities. Again, this can include funding for core organisational running costs, such as venue hire, staffing costs, management costs, back office costs, utilities, and general organisational running costs, as well as any costs associated with delivering activities which meet the SHIRE Grants criteria.

Capital Grants
Capital Grants (minimum £1,000, maximum £10,000) are available to assist with the purchase of capital equipment, including appropriate building works; ICT equipment; vehicles; or any other large capital items, to enable delivery of services which meet the grant criteria.

Match Funding
If your organisation has secured a grant (between £3,000 and £10,000) from the [Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation](), or the National Lottery Community Fund's [Awards for All]() programme, within the 2021-22 financial year, we will consider offering additional/top up match funding in the form of a SHIRE Grant. However, we can only offer match funding for costs/activities which improve the lives, health and wellbeing of vulnerable/disadvantaged individuals and communities in Leicestershire.

If your organisation wishes to apply for Match Funding, you will need to consider the following:
- Match funding can only be offered for projects/activities where there is still a shortfall/deficit in funding for the total project delivery costs, once the grant from the other funder has been secured
- Match funding will enable your organisation to deliver enhanced or expanded services for your target client group, by 'topping up' grants awarded by another funder

- Match Funding cannot be used to duplicate the funds awarded by the other funder and must be necessary/required as additional investment to enable the project/activity to be delivered effectively/in full, or expand/enhance the delivery of services funded by another funder
- For example, if the total delivery costs for a specific project/activity is £20,000, and £10,000 has been secured from another funder, the organisation can apply for the remaining £10,000 required from SHIRE Grants
- However, for example, if the total project delivery costs are £5,000, and £5,000 has been secured from another funder, the organisation will be unable to apply for £5,000 Match Funding from SHIRE Grants, as this will duplicate the grant award from the other funder
- Please note, if you have been successfully awarded a grant of between £3,000 and £10,000 from either the Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation, or the National Lottery Community Fund's Awards for All programme in 2021-22, this does not guarantee that SHIRE Grant Match Funding will automatically be made available to you. You will still need to submit a SHIRE Grant application for Match Funding, and this application will be assessed on its individual merits, in line with the SHIRE Grant eligibility criteria.
- Equally, a successful SHIRE Grant application does not automatically guarantee that equivalent match funding will be made available from either the Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation or the National Lottery Community Fund.
- If your organisation wishes to apply for a grant of over £10,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund, you may be eligible to apply for a Reaching Communities grant from the Lottery.

Please contact the Grants Officers to discuss an application for Match Funding prior to applying.

Partnership Grants
Funding (minimum £5,000, maximum £25,000) is available to partnerships of two or more organisations who are able to jointly apply for a grant to work collaboratively to develop or deliver a project, service or activity which meets the grant criteria.

One of the organisations will need to operate as the 'lead applicant' and if the funding application is successful, the funds will be paid to one organisation, on the condition/agreement that the lead applicant will ensure the grant monies are appropriately distributed to the project partners.

Please contact the Grants Officers to discuss an application for a Partnership Grant prior to applying.

Who can apply for a SHIRE Community Grant?

- Grants are available for registered charities, constituted 'not-for-profit' community groups, and social businesses/enterprises or Community Interest Companies, who operate a 'not for private profit' business model, i.e. where any income generated is re-invested back into the social aims of the group/community.

- Grants cannot be awarded to non-constituted groups

- Leicestershire based Town and Parish Councils can also apply for SHIRE Grants. However, funding for Town and Parish Councils can only be used towards activities which specifically benefit vulnerable and disadvantaged people within the Parish area.

- Organisations that apply for funding will need to demonstrate why the funding is essential to enable them to deliver the project (i.e. demonstrate that they are unable to undertake the project activity with existing resources)

- Applicants need to have a bank account, with at least two unrelated signatories

- Applications will not be accepted from:

    - Private, profit making businesses/companies/commercial enterprises
    - Individuals (unless it can be clearly evidenced that the individual is running a social enterprise where any income generated is re-invested into achieving social aims)
    - Local Authorities (other than parish and town councils) or other statutory/public sector agencies, e.g. District Councils, NHS, Police, etc.
    - Schools, academies, colleges, universities or other academic institutions (unless such an organisation is a partner within a Partnership Grant application)

- Organisations with income of over £10m in the 2020/21 financial year are not eligible to apply for a SHIRE Community Grant in 2021-22

- Please note, if your organisation was awarded a grant from the Leicestershire Communities Fund in 2020-21, you will need to provide details of the grant awarded, as part of your SHIRE Grant application.

- Your organisation can only apply for one grant in the SHIRE Grants 2021-22 programme

- However, organisations can also apply for a Partnership Grant, if they have also successfully applied for one of the other SHIRE Grants in 2020-21

Application Process

Applications for the SHIRE Community Grants will be completed through an online application form, via the [Leicestershire Communities website](#).

There is a separate online application from for organisations who wish to apply for a SHIRE Partnership Grant, which again can be found on our website.

Microsoft Word versions (blank templates) of both application forms are also available to download from the website. This is mainly for the purpose of initially drafting your application, prior to completing the online form. Electronic or paper applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. It is generally expected that applications are submitted via the online forms.

You will be required to include the following details in your application:
- Details about your organisation, including your track record and experience
- The type of grant and amount of funding you are applying for
- A description of the what you intend to use the funding for, with a breakdown of the specific costs/items of expenditure related to the activities you intend to use the grant funding towards
- The vulnerable/disadvantaged groups/communities (in Leicestershire) your project will benefit, including the target number of beneficiaries
- An explanation of why the project is needed, including evidence of need/demand
- The outcomes, impacts and benefits your project is expected to achieve
- Information about your organisation's future financial position (in terms of your organisational viability/sustainability)

You will also need to read and agree to the information contained in a Data Protection Declaration document on the website.

What happens with my application?

1) Once your online application form has been submitted, you will receive an electronic copy of the application form via email, along with a reference number for your application.

2) Your application will then be assessed by the Grants Officers, to ensure it meets the grant eligibility criteria. Where required, the Grant Officers will contact you to request any additional information as necessary, regarding your grant application. The Grant Officers will remain in contact with you to ensure all queries are resolved before the application is referred for a final decision.

3) If your application is not accepted as being eligible for funding, you will be advised of the reasons for this, how you can re-apply (if this is appropriate) and, if applicable, any other potential sources of funding.

4) Where required, we will share the details of your application with relevant colleagues from across the Council or from other partner agencies, to get their professional views on your proposed project/activity. We will be asking colleagues to comment on the following:

   - How your project proposal fits with strategic priorities
   - Clarification around how your project complements existing services
   - Aspects of your project considered to be particularly positive
   - How your project could be further improved or enhanced
   - Issues that would need to be resolved before funding could be awarded
   - Alternative / additional sources of funding that may be available for your project

5) Applications received and assessed in each round of funding will then be taken to a Decision Meeting (one for each round of funding) with the Head of Service (Communities, Policy & Resilience) and Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet Lead Member for Equalities, Communities and Rural Partnerships for final approval.

   The final decision will be one of the following:
   a) Offer the full grant amount applied for
   b) Offer a lower level of grant funding, i.e. a contribution towards the grant requested
   c) Offer a grant subject to conditions (e.g. upon receipt of further information/clarification as requested by the Grant Officers)
   d) Defer the decision pending further information/clarification being submitted, or request the application to be re-submitted with more information at a later date
   e) Refuse to fund the application

6) The SHIRE Grant programme for 2021-22 will be administered over 3 rounds of funding, with the following timescales and deadlines:

	Grant Round Opens	Grant Round Closes	Decisions Made
Round 1	Thurs 10th June 2021	Weds 28th July 2021	August 2021
Round 2	Weds 1st Sept 2021	Weds 27th Oct 2021	November 2021
Round 3	Weds 1st Dec 2021	Weds 26th Jan 2022	February 2022

7) Organisations who are successful in being awarded a SHIRE Grant will need to be provide evidence of how the grant was spent within 12 months of the grant being awarded, along with submitting an online Grant Outcomes Report.

How will the grant be paid?

If your application is successful, you will receive a letter from Leicestershire County Council confirming the funding offer, along with a Grant Conditions Form and associated paperwork.

You will need to sign and return the Grant Conditions Form and also complete and return a form giving your organisation's bank details, along with a copy of your bank account paying in slip, or a bank statement clearly showing the organisation's bank details.

Payment will normally be made up-front, once the Grant Officers have received your signed and completed Grant Conditions form, along with details of your organisation's bank account.

Please note that it will take approximately four weeks to process your grant payment, following receipt of your signed Grant Conditions form.

You will then be required to provide documentary evidence of the costs you have incurred, within 12 months of the date of the grant offer letter. A grant expenditure template document will also need to be completed.

If your final costs are less than originally estimated, the Council reserves the right to request any unspent/unused grant monies to be returned.

Where the applicant has stated on the application form that they can reclaim VAT, the grant offer is based on the net value of the eligible scheme costs.

Other Sources of Grant Funding

In some cases, projects may be more eligible for other sources of grant funding and applicants will be directed to the most appropriate funding opportunities. Further information around grants, funding and other related support for community organisations can be accessed via the Leicestershire Communities website.

Access for All

Where appropriate, schemes should comply with the Equality Act 2010. Further information about the Equality Act can be found on the Government's website

Monitoring & Evaluation – Demonstrating the Outcomes of your Project

At the end of the funding period, successful applicants will be asked to submit an online Grant Outcomes Report, detailing the activities which have taken place and the outcomes achieved as a result of the funding, including relevant case study examples. Additional evidence such as letters of support, testimonials and photographs may also be submitted along with the end of project report.

Successful applicants will further be expected to take up opportunities to network with other relevant organisations to share learning and may also be requested to present details of their project to relevant meetings and forums from time to time.

Publicity and Promotion

- If applicable, successful applicants will acknowledge Leicestershire County Council in any publicity material and press releases about the project

- Permission shall be deemed given for the project details to be included in appropriate publicity materials, such as press releases, websites and other communications/ publications issued by Leicestershire County Council

- Where possible, successful applicants should promote and publicise their project (e.g. via press releases, an opening event etc.), and notify Leicestershire County Council of such events. A 'Supported by Leicestershire County Council' image will be made available to grant recipients upon request, for usage in any relevant publicity or promotional material.

Disclaimer

Leicestershire County Council reserves the right to vary the terms of the grant programme.

For further information contact:

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